

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

# **Islamic Thought In The Quran**

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## The Editor's Note

The most interesting point – to which we may draw the attention of the reader to – is the fact that the lectures printed in this book were delivered in 28 sessions during the holy month of Ramadan 1394 A.H. (1976 A.D.) in Mashhad, Khorasan, under the strict surveillance of the Shah's horrendous security organization known as SAVAK.

A secret SAVAK agent present at these sessions thus reports to his superiors in Tehran: "...today, after the noon-prayers at the Imam Hassan Mosque, Khamenei said 'today we follow our discussion of prophethood and, as I have already mentioned, one of the goals of all divine prophets was the rejection of class systems and class distinctions; they strove to establish a classless society based on divine justice and equality, and to fight all sorts of oppression, despotism and exploitation. Khamenei then claimed 'there were 4 groups who always opposed and fought God's prophets. They were the wealthy, the powerful, the despotic rulers and the corrupt, privileged leaders of perverted religions... the audience, apart from some shop-keepers and old, religious people, consisted mostly of university students from the faculties of sciences and medicine."

In another report he writes: "... Khamenei, who has already published a small book titled "Islamic Thought in The Quran", tries to convince the audience that the faithful, believing in monotheism, prophethood and Imamato, do have certain moral obligations and practical, religious commitments to carry out, and that, without fulfilling those duties and commitments, they could hardly be called firm believers."

Thus it seems that the SAVAK authorities in Tehran had correctly understood the essence of the message that young Khamenei was publicizing: he was obviously calling for resistance and struggle against the Shah's regime which did possess all the qualities and characteristic of those four historic classes opposing the divine prophets!

Consequently, in less than 3 months after the delivery of these clever lectures, an order was issued by the chief of SAVAK in Khorasan ordering the local police to arrest him and dispatch him to ‘Tehran’s Joint Committee Against Sabotage’. (The original SAVAK reports are kept in the archives of the Documents Center of the Islamic Revolution).

## Preface

It is now more than forty years since these sermons were delivered, but throughout all these years, this great valuable work “The General pattern of Islamic thought In the Quran” remained unpublished!

When the young Hojjat-al-Islam sayyed Ali Khamenei began these series of sermons at the half-built Imam Hassan Mojtaba Mosque in Mash-had for 28 sessions in the month of Ramadan 1394 (1975), the city of Mash-had acquired a different atmosphere: The sessions were held following noon-prayers in the heat of summertime when people usually went to their houses to rest for a couple of hours; yet, in a locality in this city many people , young and old, were on the way to attend Khamenei’s unique lectures; if you could look at the audience, you would notice that many people belonging to different social strata: Theology students, high school pupils, university students, shop- keepers, local residents, both men and women, especially young ones, all attended these sessions; medical students had managed to hire two buses to transfer them from the vicinity of the university to this mosque.

In Khamenei’s lectures, everything is different from traditional, spiritual sermons: everyone is given one or two photocopied pages containing a summary of topics to be discussed in the session, the lecturer delivers his speech while standing g on a fasting day and after the end of the lecture, a fine-sounding Quran reciter chants the relevant Quranic verses discussed already. Khamenei’s sessions really resembles an educational class-room rather than a traditional preaching.

Another important point the readers should have in mind is the period these lectures were delivered: the years of the Shah’s despotic rule, torturing of the opponents to the point of death and suppression of all dissident voices. Dark days when Imam Khomeini was sent into exile, in religious gatherings no one dared mention the name Khomeini; nobody was allowed to use the word “Taaghoot” (an arrogant, godless

despot). The hellish security organization, SAVAK, had spies and moles everywhere, none was allowed to say anything against “Israel” and the recital of the Quranic verses on Jihad and Islamic struggles were forbidden.

But Khamenei, young man of 35, was already a veteran of the struggle against the Shah’s regime: He knew how to manage his lectures not to fall into the widespread trap of SAVAK; he arranged his lectures in such delicate ways that the listeners themselves were encouraged to think of establishing an Islamic society. He began his lectures with topics such as ‘monotheism’ and ‘true faith’ and then deals with the important themes of ‘*prophethood*’ and ‘*wilayat*’. Thus, towards the end of the holy month of Ramadan, he succeeded in planting the seeds of ‘conscious faith’ in the hearts of his audience, especially the youth among them to make them more familiar with the Holy Quran which often used to be recited only at weddings and mourning ceremonies.

For years those who had no clear understanding of the Quran had alienated people from the holy Book by stating various false reasons such as: the Quran is not for ordinary people to understand and you must only read it for its divine rewards! And of course such ways of thinking used to be most welcome to all repressive governments.

Khamenei considered such opinions as plots by the enemies of Islam or due to vague, defective understanding by some clerics. He himself was a lover, a devotee and an honest follower of the Quran and had dedicated his life to rise against the isolation of the Quran. Therefore he stood up, during these lectures, with a copy of the Quran in his hands, and clarified each and every verse of the holy Book and brought back the divine verses into the hearts of Muslims. He also cried out against those satanic elements who wished to do away with the teachings of the Quran and the Traditions of the holy Prophet: Woe to those who try to distance the Quran from the minds and hearts of the people, those who, under various excuses, do not let people read the Book in order to understand



it, oh, woe to such people. You, my brothers and sisters, must know how to benefit from the Quran in these days. As our holy Prophet said: ‘When seditions and disasters, like the black parts of a dark night, rush upon you, it’s only the Quran that will save you’. When is that night? Do we not see the darkness around us? Have our eyes become so short-sighted that we do not detect them? Do we not see crooks, brain-washers and deceivers of all kinds and deviated paths laid on our ways to mislead us? When then shall we refer to the Quran; for what periods must we take refuge in the Quran? Shall we wait until the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam (God bless him) appears? Well, the Imam is himself a talking Quran; so today is the day when we must learn a lot from the Quran.

After these daily lectures in the month of Ramadan came to an end, Mr. Khamenei began to explain Imam Ali’s Nahj-al-Balaagha but, after holding a few sessions, he was arrested and sent to one of the most horrendous prisons in Iran run by the dreadful “Joint Committee Against Terrorism”!

Now, as mentioned earlier, some 41 years have passed since those Ramadan lectures and, apart from the memories of hundreds of people who attended the sessions, these truly valuable lectures remained unpublished for all in our society; it was a pity that such a treasure of faith remained hidden for so long.

We need to mention that the copied pages showing the topics to be discussed in every session were once published in a booklet form, but they did not contain what Mr. Khamenei expressed in these sessions. We were, however, fortunate to come across an old shop-keeper in Mashhad who, in his youth, had recorded the lectures in some old cassettes and kept them in his house, and we had to listen to these semi-audible cassettes over and over again to extract the actual wordings.

Finally we should inform our readers that what Mr. Khamenei dealt with in his Ramadan speeches some 41 years ago, seems delivered only yesterday and that’s why we decided to publish them today. All this is

due to the miracle of the Quranic verses and Khamenei's clear and logical understanding of our holy Book.

Mr. Khamenei had this to say a few years ago about his lectures on those far-off Ramadan days:

“Many years ago I conducted some 28 lectures at the Imam Hassan (AS) mosque in Mashhad. Those days the recording of speeches were not as common as today, but fortunately, some interested, devoted people had recorded my talks at these sessions on some old cassettes. The contents of these lectures are good means to criticize me, that is, to see whether my position and understanding have changed as far as the Quran is concerned! In those gatherings I talked about monotheism, prophethood, imamat, wilayat and other fundamental issues; even now I stand by what I expressed then for they were the ideological pillars and bases for the establishment of an Islamic system. Of course when I delivered those lectures, none of us could imagine that an Islamic order was to come about us in some 5 years. But even if it were to realize after some 50 years, it was still necessary to lay the ideological foundation for an Islamic system, especially for the youth.”\*

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\* June 25, 2002.

## Some Special Aspect of these Lectures

To point out the most special features of these lectures, we may sum them up in some 9 important features:

1. Khamenei's style does not follow the genre of 'kalaam'\* in which only affirmation and negation are concerned; no, he tries to explain the most basic principles of Islamic thinking through the Quran.

2. Presentation of Islamic thoughts to the people of the world, not only to Muslims; the reasoning is so logical and unbiased that they could be beneficial to all.

3. Special interpretation of religion not as some abstract, spiritual principles but as faith and practice inseparable from each other.

4. Bringing Islamic thinking out of the trap of depicting Islam and the Quran as an individualistic belief and subjective engagement that the enemies of Islam had propagated about for many years, a religion that had nothing to do with the societies at large. Certainly Imam Khomeini was the main reviver of the true, Muhammadan Islam in our age; it was through the Imam's movement that Muslims were reawakened and Islam was once again on the lips of people throughout the world. Some informed religious personalities had felt this vacuum in the thinking of many people and some as Mr. Khamenei, who had benefited from the teaching of Imam as well as Ayatollah Motahhari, tried to draw up a general, ideological pattern of true Islamic thinking based on the holy Quran.

5. A fresh, novel way of looking at the fundamentals of Islam as expressed in the Quran; he often gave a new life to certain concepts that seemed to be worn out or taken for granted. Ayatollah Khamenei has this to say about that atmosphere prevailing when he was addressing these lectures: "A number of people made a lot of noise objecting to what I had said about '*wilayat*' whereas what I had expressed was not against what they believed in. they believed that '*wilayat*' meant loving the Shi'ite Imams. Well, we all believe in that and we all believe in the

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\* scholastic theology

'*imamat*' of Ali (AS). But what I explained in these lectures was more than that. I went through all verses in the Quran about '*wilayat*' such as "*Hunalika al-valayat lillah*" (S.18, A.44). Well, I expressed the opinion that only loving does not suffice, it must be followed by practice and by following the manners and actions of our Imams, an addition and expansion of the true meaning of loving the Imams. As an example, if a physician has something new to contribute, say, to healing a disease, how do people treat him? I think they at least respect him. So it must be in theological matters when a new idea is expressed that adds to, not negates the previous beliefs, it should not be opposed; unfortunately some people behave like that most unfairly!"

6. The cohesion in these lectures with the political ways of struggle by all our Imams for the establishment of an Islamic order and attracting the attention of the people to the characteristics of a true system of government. For this reason Mr. Khamenei often talks about an Alavite system of government. For this reason Mr. Khamenei often talks about Alavite order because mentioning 'an Islamic system' would arouse the suspicions of the Shah's brutal regime.

7. Emphasizing the roots of the prevailing disease in human communities which, according to him, was due to weaknesses in their faiths and beliefs.

8. Avoiding sectarian issues and stressing the importance of unity of the Islamic umma, for he saw clearly that encouraging sectarianism was the lethal weapon of colonialist and arrogant powers against Muslim nations.

9. Paying special attention to the youth as the builders of Islamic societies in the future. The Shah's regime hated to see so many young students gathering in a mosque and listening to the sermons of a young preacher and that is the reason he was repeatedly arrested after such sessions.

There are many more important points in these lectures which the interested reader will certainly find out for himself.

## The Author's Introduction

Explaining Islam as a social doctrine embracing coherent, harmonious principle overlooking the social life of humanity is one of most urgent needs in religious thinking.

Islamic discussions and investigations so far have often lacked the afore-mentioned important properties and, for this reason, a comparison of Islam with other social doctrines and ideologies, has not succeeded in satisfying the researches and truth-seekers to obtain fruitful and decisive results, that is, we have, generally speaking, not been able to draw a sketch or plan of Islam as a balanced and homogenous doctrine or to demonstrate its affinities and differences with other schools of thought or religions.

Additionally, as most such studies were subjective discussions, that is, divorced from their objective and practical aspects, specially ignoring the important, social effects, they have only increased people's subjective knowledge. Most of these researches and studies have paid due attention to people's social life, specially to the shape and form of an Islamic community and have not clearly discussed the people's commitments to their principles of faith at least, in a transparent theory.

In other words, the Quran, this indubitable, decisive and final document of Islam, has not had its share in enlightening the people and showing the right paths to them; instead we witness an abundance of minute references to semi-rational thoughts and many conjectured statements and weak traditions- sometimes quoting more credible sources- and as a result faith-related thoughts have been formed and grown in the absence of Quranic tenets. Perhaps such a distance from the Quran or feeling hopeless or needless of a rightful understanding of our holy Book –all due to certain reasons and circumstances-have been the real causes of not deliberating deeply about Quranic verses and being happy with only superficial readings of the Quran which may bring about no worldly or

other-worldly rewards. In short, the book of God has become a source of deceiving the ordinary people.

Taking such realities into account, we may consider three important characteristics as most necessary in our discussions of Islamic thinking; disregarding these three issues would be harmful to all Islamic thinkers in our time:

Firstly we should try to bring the Islamic, ideological system and our Islamic teachings out of its absolute abstractness and subjectivity and –like all other social schools–relate them to our practical obligations in our social life. All theoretical discussions should be looked at and evaluated from the viewpoints of what plans or programs they offer for human life and what means they employ to reach their goals.

Secondly it must be emphasized that the questions regarding Islamic thinking should be studied as coherent, connected questions and as parts of a whole, because they are as blocks of a complete structure, that is, harmonious parts of the totality of our religion and are not disjointed and irrelevant to one another. It is through such a method that we may know our religious principles and then reach a complete understanding of our religion as a flawless, unambiguous ideology containing proper dimensions for the multi-dimensional life of humanity at large.

And thirdly we must have in mind that in understanding and inferences of Islamic principles, our sources of reference should be the basic texts and documents of our religion not personal tastes and opinions or the subjunctive deductions of this or that personality; following such a procedure will make our investigation truly “Islamic”. And in this respect the holy Quran is the most perfect and the most authentic document we could resort to because “No falsehood may approach it by any means from any side”<sup>\*</sup> and “this is a Book with verses firmly rooted in

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<sup>\*</sup> The Quran, Sura 41, Aya 42

wisdom which is set forth with clearness...”<sup>\*</sup>; and, of course, as the Quran has addressed to deliberate deeply on its verses.

What has been collected in this book indicates a humble attempt to express the above-mentioned purposes as a report about Islam in the course of some successive speeches.

I have tried in these lesson-like lectures to search for the most fundamental, most constructive and the liveliest bases of Islamic thought through the eloquent and clear verses of the Quran and then, while explaining the best ways of deliberating deeply on them, show the audience to learn those fundamentals of Islam, and when necessary, to quote some tradition of our holy Prophet (SA) as well as some authentic traditions uttered by our Imams (AS). My purpose throughout was that people would muse over the holy verses of the Quran, get to know its principles for practical action, performance of their obligations in life and their commitment to God Almighty and the Quran in this worldly existence.

Sayyed Ali Khamenei, 1973

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\* The Quran, Sura 11, Aya 1

# Chapter One

## Faith



First Session

Faith 1 (in general terms)

2nd Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 19, 1974)

*“And obey God and the Messenger that you may be blessed by Mercy;(132) and hasten in the race to win your Lord’s forgiveness and a paradise, the width of which encompasses the heavens and the earth, which is prepared for the god-fearing pious(133) who freely give to charity, both in prosperity and in adversity, those who restrain their anger and forgive their fellow-men; certainly God does love the doers of good to humanity.(134)”*

*(Sura Aali-Imraan, Ayas, 132-134)*

In the Name of God, The Beneficent, the Merciful, the Christian monks choose a monastic, secluded life in order not to indulge in sins; they often isolated themselves from the community and went to live in mountainous areas, caves and abandoned places. The Quran says: “...but monkery had been their own invention, we did decree...”\*, that is, this form of isolating yourselves from the rest of the society, was not sanctioned by God, it was their own heretical innovation. In Islam, however, we do not have such monasticism, we shouldn’t isolate ourselves from our community and we must not escape from the people. As Muslims we are all responsible and we ought to help one another; every enlightened Muslim should behave like that; in Islam being a Muslim and being responsible are correlative, and inseparable. Muslims ought to assist one another, to help heal the sick and to save those about to drown; these duties are not compatible with neglecting one’s commitments only to salvage his own soul! A Muslim tries to be virtuous; his virtues are his shield against all sins and, once so equipped, he tries to save sinful persons.

Well, is virtuosity the necessary means for victory or not. The answer is ‘yes’. When you mean to heal and save a sick person, if you constantly fear that his disease may be contagious, you will never succeed in saving the lives of people struck by certain viruses. He should have already made himself immune, he must be sure of that in order to save others, he could then do it easily and also be triumphant, yes be “God-fearing”\*\* that you attain salvation and be successful.

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\* Sura 57, Aya 27. (Find Arabic version of verses at the end of book)

\*\* Sura 3, Aya 130.

“And guard yourselves against the fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers.”\* And then we read: “Obey God and the Messenger that you may be blessed by mercy.” Well, one may ask: there is no difference between obeying God and the Prophet? Why does the book say: Obey them both? Was it not necessary to add the Prophet? No, because if it only said: ‘Obey God’ and did not mention the Prophet, well, these people who were against the prophet of Islam, would claim that we too ‘Obey God’; because some people do easily claim whatever they want, anybody may claim that we are servants of God too and we do ‘Obey Him.’

At the time of the Prophet, there were many claimants of serving God and obeying Him. Those who were his enemies and even fought against him as well as Christian monks and Jewish rabbis also claimed the same: “And both the Jews and Christian make the claim that we are God’s sons and beloved ones.”\*\* Their claimed status was even some degrees higher than our Prophet’s, because he said that he was only ‘a servant of God’; they claimed that they were God’s sons and daughters! They believed that obedience to God was theirs only! Well, the general public may have not thought so but their leaders and some elements who did not really obey God, pretended so. There are some people who, in their seclusion, do know what a horrible record they have and what they say to other people are utter lies but in public they pretend that they are good, honest, God-fearing servants of God. We must separate this group from the real worshippers of God Almighty. That’s why the Quran says: Obey God and the Messenger; both ‘God and His messenger’. Thus if the Messenger was not mentioned, then even the enemies of the Prophet would claim that they too did obey God; this point should have been made quite clear, that is, what is clearly meant by ‘obeying God’; those who claim to obey God, but do not follow the injunctions of God, those who do not respect the laws of God, how could they say that they obeyed God? I repeat, ‘Obey God and His Messenger that you may be blessed by His mercy’.

Now, what is God’s mercy, what is it meant by being blessed by Mercy of God. Here we should make a comparison between the Quranic expression and our

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\* Sura 3, Aya 131.

\*\* Sura 5, Aya 18.

layman's interpretation. We suppose that if we are sinners, if we haven't obeyed God, if we do not do our duties, our obligations and our commitments and if we do not respect what God has forbidden, then we only have one hope; what's our hope? God's mercy and compassion! We usually say this: May God have mercy on us. That's what we often hear in the society. What use has God's mercy? It's useful, in our opinion, when we have not obeyed God and we have not fulfilled our religious duties, in such cases we say: we haven't practiced what God has ordained, so may God have mercy on us! As if God's mercy were a substitute for our inaction, irresponsibility and weak faith. But the Quranic verse is the opposite of such understanding, it says: you must obey God in practice, then you may be blessed by God's mercy. God's mercy is for a nation that fulfills its responsibilities. God has mercy on the people who obey Him and perform their duties. Should some 700 million Muslims\* just sit idle, do nothing and let oppressors and godless despots do whatever they like to them and wait for God's blessings to rain upon them! That's exactly what the enemies of Islam wish for.

Well, what is meant by obeying God and His messenger? It means the fulfillment of our obligations. The noble verse of the Quran says: The faithful, the believers are those who, when differences and contentions among them arise, come to you, they refer their affairs to you, the Prophet and when you issued an announcement or sentence "they cannot be believers until they come to seek your arbitration in their disputes, and have no hesitation in their hearts against your judicial orders..."\*\*. When you make such an order, they will not hesitate for a moment to carry it out without the slightest grudge in their hearts: "*yusallimu tasliman*", they submit to your order. That's how a true believer should be. If a nation, an umma or a community obeys God in such a way, then it will have the upper hand, then it will attain human growth, then it will overcome all sorts of servitude, then it will cut all chains at its hands and feet, and finally it will be blessed by God's mercy and by God's compassion, and I repeat the verse "Obey God and the Messenger to be blessed by God's mercy".

Next "And hasten in the race to win your lord's Forgiveness..." Yes, it is a

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\* Now more than one billion three hundred million

\*\* Sura 4, Aya 65

racing field, be speedy and overtake others in attaining ‘God’s Forgiveness’ and towards a Paradise “the width of which encompasses the heavens and earth” and it is “prepared for the god-fearing people”, for the virtuous and the pious. These are some signs to show you what real virtues are.

As you all know, many men compete with each other for some piece of land, for winning some auctions, for acquiring certain amount of capital, a company or a store, for any material privilege, yes, to get hold of these things, you are ready to compete hard, to leave others behind, even at the cost of trampling upon your honour and honesty. Now, certainly those who advise you not to employ your gifts, not to work hard and not to achieve anything, are only liars. Religion tells you, o human, speed up, compete, use your strengths and gifts, but it asks you: Towards what? You must drive toward some goal worthy of your humanity; you great human-being, the most perfect of what exists on earth, after the greatness of the Creator; you are the most sublime, despite your limited small body.

You great creature, do drive on, do compete, race faster, but towards what goal? Unto your Lord and towards God’s mercy and His paradise, towards that paradise which is superior to all skies and stars. One should think deeply about the Quranic verses in order to fully understand them. The Quran says: if you want to strive towards something, you must know that the heavens and the earth are very small compared with Paradise; to reach a higher goal, aim higher; God’s mercy should be important to you, it’s worthier than the heavens and the earth.

What is the exact meaning of God’s mercy and forgiveness? Let us cite some examples: say you have used some swear-words against somebody, then you may go to him and ask him to pardon you and he, may kindly say: well, I pardon you; you may go to some government office to pay certain amount of taxes that has been fixed for you, but you notice it’s too much, it’s not fair, you may beseech the officials or show them a letter of recommendation from some authority and the official may say ‘okay, we ignore the fixed amount, we approve of your excuse’. We notice such actions in our everyday life and we think that God’s mercy is also similar to such pardons! A person who has committed many wrongs and crimes, who has been most sinful and corrupt, could he, on the Day of Resurrection, when

his face is full of tears, and claim that he has loved certain Imams? And then God would say: alright now that you are in such a miserable state, We forgive all your sins and wrongdoings! Is this the kind of mercy and forgiveness we expect from God Almighty? Of course, not.

I have often talked about God's '*ghufran*' (mercy and forgiveness) and I want you, brothers and sisters who had attended those meetings, to delve in your memories and remember those points about God's '*ghufran*'. I have repeatedly said that this Quranic word means 'healing, remedy and filling up certain vacuums. Let's give some examples: if your body has suffered some injuries, or there is a cut in your arms or legs, the doctors give you some ointment, some medicine, vitamins or some injections, all these help bring together the separated parts of your flesh or a certain muscle, your whole body works towards healing that cut or injury. Now please keep this example in mind so that I could further explain what '*ghufran*' really is.

Let us say that your soul, like your body, receives a blow or injury whenever you commit a sin. Why do we claim every sinful act is a blow at your soul? Because our souls are there to elevate to higher and more sublime stages and sins are those elements that prevent this elevation and exaltation. In the simile about your body, every sin strikes the soul and creates a cut, an injury and is a draw-back.

If you have seized other people's property, if you have benefited from usury, if you have drunk intoxicated liquids, if you have made false or malicious accusations against others, well, by committing each of these sins, you have surely injured your soul and made it weak and vulnerable. This soul which was supposed to travel towards perfection, is now far from achieving this end. Here you are in need of '*ghufran or maghfirat*'.

How? As I said earlier, this shortage, this injury, this vacuum in the soul may be removed by compensation, by making amends, by doing good. The man, whose soul has been affected and injured by sins, could make up for them when he does elevate his soul. You may ask 'how'?

Well, let me cite another example. You're driving a car to reach a destination

fifty kilometers away in 45 minutes, now if you're stopped on the way for some reason, what should you do? Well, you drive a little faster; you shouldn't just sit down where you were stopped and do nothing, because then you won't reach your destination. Or, during a trip to some place, you have wasted your time in an inn on the way for fun, you can't then say: oh God, I made a mistake, I am sorry. This won't do because the mistake has already been made, you must move and drive a little faster in order to make up for the lost time; divine mercy works in such ways when you don't sit idly by.

God Almighty does not say that because you have sinned, no matter how hard you try to do good, we shall never forgive you, God has no grudge against anybody because "Certainly I am Most Forgiving"\*. In fact He never said that because of your previous sins and wrong-doings, we shall never pardon you; on the contrary God announces that if those sins were compensated, He is ready to forgive you if you repent and conduct a righteous way of living. He says: "Certainly I am Most Forgiving" and that God could remedy all your ills and wrong-doings. But to whom will God have mercy? To "Those who do repent, and do believe, conduct a righteous living and shall remain guided"\*\*. Now what does repentance (*tauba*) mean? It means 'returning'; one should return to strengthen his faith, to do good works and be true believers for talking is not enough, one must resort to action.

Therefore, God's forgiveness comes to heal those injuries to the soul, when you remedy this, you'll travelling towards perfection of the soul. It is worthy of men to struggle for their own good and to race on this path. This is most important for receiving '*Maghfirat*'. '*Maghfirat*' does not mean that God Almighty, willy-nilly, would be kind to someone without his own effort to be included in divine compassion. But "Hasten in the race to win your Lord's forgiveness and a paradise the width of which encompasses the heavens and the earth, which is prepared for the god-fearing, virtuous people".

It is common for some people to say to others: you will be a resident of paradise. Well it is a pleasant wish and, if God will, you're allowed to enter it, it's many

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\* Sura 20, Aya 82.

\*\* Sura 20, Aya 82.

people's desire. We do, in our prayers, often wish so, we even cite the characteristics and privileges of this Paradise in our prayers, such as Houris of paradise, its wonderful foods and the taste of special meat of its birds, etc. but God says: We have prepared it for the god-fearing, virtuous people; these are the ones who'll benefit from the amenities and pleasantries of Paradise, not all people.

Please pay special attention to every word I quote from the Quran. Who are the god-fearing? The Quranic answer is: "those who freely give to charity both in prosperity and adversity"\*. This is one of the conditions of the god-fearing people. I have already talked about '*Infagh*' (giving in charity, alms-giving). This is different from other kinds of spending. Giving in charity means removing the real needs of others and filling certain gaps in other people's lives. But those who spend millions for some apparently good goals which do not remove people's real needs, are unfortunate persons whose spending are not '*infagh*' at all; they are the subject of this verse of the Quran "Say: shall we tell you who have lost their labour most? They are the people whose endeavours, in the life of this world, have gone astray and yet they think they have done good through their labours"\*\*. If you give 10 Rials to someone who has much more than that and does not need it, this is not '*infagh*', but if you give the same amount to a hungry person who could buy a loaf of bread with it, this could be '*infagh*'. Sometimes, when there is prevalent hunger in the community, the giving of this amount to individuals is not enough, something more fundamental must be done. When a nation has dire needs, you must aim your '*infagh*' at those basic needs; otherwise you are just wasting your money. Therefore, '*infagh*' is the action of wise, virtuous people who understand what the basic needs are.

Then we have "those who restrain their anger" which means they do not act through their sentiments but always use their wisdom. Yet justified anger is something different; the Quran says "Muhammad is the messenger of God and his followers should be solid of heart against the disbelievers but most compassionate among themselves."\*\*\* In other words, anger against those who have suppressed a nation, is justified, the Quran says 'restrain your anger' so that you could de-

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\* Sura 3, Aya 134.

\*\* Sura 18, Aya 103-104.

\*\*\* Sura 48, Aya 29.



cide wisely and carefully against the enemies of Islam and the people wisely, not emotionally.

And then we read in the same verse “And those who forgive their fellow-men.”\* These are the people who forgive other people’s blunders, errors and even their sins. What can’t be passed over are sins not committed ignorantly or unintentionally; intentional sins or acts of enmity may not be forgiven and God may hardly pardon such sins. But blunders, errors, slippings and lesser sins, often witnessed in the behavior of ordinary people, could be forgiven. The verse goes on: “And God does love the doers of good to humanity”.

Now what are some other signs of the virtuous persons? Let me read another Quranic verse: “and those who, if they fall in sin or wrong their souls, they soon remember God and ask forgiveness for their sins.”\*\* This means that they should not remain in a state of negligence and inattention. There is a most surprising verse in the Quran about the utter importance of remembering God: “Surely when the god-fearing, virtuous people are tempted by a group of satans, they only should remember God and lo! They will be seers again.”\*\*\* Listen carefully, it says ‘a group of satans’, that is, in the wide sense of Satan, when they surround you, when they’re afflicting you with some temptations to lead you astray, only remember God, for the remembrance of God Almighty is the sharpest weapon in our hands against all sorts of satans, or a firm rope to save us from the depths of darkness brought about by our satanic enemies.

Yes, such is the remembrance of God; remembering God is truly invaluable. Thus when you do something wrong or sinful, if you remember God and repent and beseech God’s forgiveness, you may be pardoned, because even this asking for forgiveness, is not possible without God’s help and, of course, who else is there to forgive but God Almighty?

You try, you do your best and move forward in the right direction and God will bless you. It’s we who should make efforts, and God may approve of our efforts and endeavours. We should never omit actions and efforts from our worldly life.

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\* Sura 3, Aya 134.

\*\* Sura 3, Aya 135.

\*\*\* Sura 7, Aya 201.

God says: "...Those who would not knowingly persist in anything they have done amiss."\* And then we have: "their reward is their Lord's forgiveness and Gardens with running streams as their eternal dwellings; what a fine recompense for *workers of good deeds*."\*\* Here we notice again that reward and forgiveness is for those who practice and strive in the path of God. The question of action, struggle and doing something is one of the most important injunctions in the Quran.

In the course of these lectures, until the end of the holy month of Ramadan, one of the topics I shall explain and stress on shall be this very important question of *deeds*.

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\* Sura 3, Aya 135.

\*\* Sura 3, Aya 136.

Second Session

Faith 2 (in general terms)

3rd Ramadan 1394 (Sep. 20, 1974)

*“The true believers are indeed the people whose hearts are filled with awe and veneration when God the One is mentioned, whose faith is further strengthened when a verse of His revelation, is unto them rehearsed, who only in their Lord put all their trust,(2) who steadfastly keep up their prayers and spend of what We have for them provisioned;(3) such are the truly faithful: for them there shall be, with their Lord, exalted ranks of dignity, as well as pardon and provisions noble.(4)”*

*(Sura Al-Anfaal, Aya 2, 3 and 4)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, “O prophet, you’re asked about ‘anfaal’”\*. whose are *anfaals*?

Well, let us first clear the meaning of ‘anfaal’. We may explain briefly that ‘anfaal’ are the properties which belong to all Muslims. One example of it is the spoils of battle which fall into the hands of Muslims; another example is underground wealth such as mines and the like and there are also arable fields and forests in lowlands and on the mountains. Therefore ‘anfaal’ are special kinds of property that do not belong to any individual or group and, in short, ‘anfaal’ belong to the whole people or nation. The very first time that a question raised about this was after the Battle of Badr. Presumably the Muslims talked among themselves about the ownership of the spoils and asking ‘whom did they belong to’? And they asked the Prophet about this. Then the verse was revealed: “The *anfaal* belong to God and His Messenger”. The Muslims thought ‘what does ‘belong to God’ mean’? Does it mean that the spoils were not put at the disposal of some of His servants? Of course God is needless and therefore ‘belong to God’ means that they should be spent in the path of God and for divine goals. And now what does ‘belong to His Messenger’ mean? It means that it is the Messenger who decides about the best ways of exploiting them. Otherwise everybody would claim that they were servants of God and so God’s belongings should be given to them to use them for their personal needs. What is God’s should be used for the good of the community but it cannot be given to individuals under chaotic,

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\* Sura 8, Aya 1.

confused conditions. Who's going to decide about this? His Messenger who is the guardian and the sponsor of all Muslims. Here the meaning of 'Messenger' is not in the context of Prophethood; the Messenger here is the ruler of a divine state. And after the Messenger passes away, then the Imams who have God's approval for people's guardianship, will have to fulfill this role.

Anyway, despite the fact that all mines, forests, the battle-spoils and other such properties and treasures belong to the umma as a whole, but they must be decided upon by an Islamic ruler.

Now after the question of '*anfaal*' was made clear, the verse continues: "thus be god-fearing and set all relations aright among yourselves and do obey God and the Messenger, if you are true believers."\* This means that you must be god-fearing in the first place and try to settle any differences or disputes you have with one another with truth and virtue in mind, do not quarrel with each other over trifles, silly excuses. So the advice of God and His Messenger is to set aside such petty issues, don't fight each other, but if necessary, prepare yourselves to fight your enemies, you shouldn't be fighting your own brethren-in-religion. The third advice is a more general one "Obey God and the Messenger if you are true believers"; this includes doing all sorts of good deeds and avoid all wrongs, vices and sins.

And about 'real belief and faith' we should say that faith is not only a heart-felt attitude or intellectual, psychological, ideological tendency or attraction towards a person, to a group or to some centres. Faith or belief is only true when one does act and practice according to it. Only when you do behave according to the commitments and necessities of faith, you may call yourself a believer or a faithful person. You may say you are a believer in God but your life style and your behaviour and action do differ from those who respect God and do not believe in the Creator. We may ask about the difference between a believer and a non-believer. What is the difference of many so-called believers and non-believers in our age? Both commit acts of injustice, both are deeply involved in the material world around them and both are ready to trample upon all merits and virtues for a few more years of living, for further eating and drinking and for some passing

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\* Sura 8, Aya 1.

mundane joys. The only difference is that one party says ‘I don’t believe in God’ and the other claims ‘I do believe in God’! What sort of faith or belief is this?! Here the Quran is most precise; here it is not a question of some intellectual or rational suggestion which you may have doubts about. It says most clearly that if you are faithful, you ought to do such and such. One of these Quranic injunctions is “Obey God and the Messenger”; obey them and follow them without doubt and hesitation. What are God’s commands? We know that God Almighty has announced certain commands concerning men’s relation with God, with other humans, animals and even plants, and obliged men to certain duties and commitments about them. If you obey God in what He has ordained in these respects, you could rightly claim that you are a believer and faithful person. But the kind of faith only resides in your heart and mind and is never followed by actions, by what your hands and feet do, by what’s truly uttered by your tongue, will not suffice and will be of no use and you shall not be a believer in Islam. This is the obvious logic of the Quran: “Be god-fearing and virtuous and do away with petty quarrels among yourselves and obey God and the Messenger if you are true believers”\*.

And then because the word *believer* is mentioned, the verse goes on to describe who the believers are: “The true believers are indeed the people whose hearts are filled with awe and veneration when God the One is mentioned, whose faith is further strengthened when a verse of His revelation is unto them rehearsed, who only in their Lord put all their trust, who steadfastly keep up their prayers and spend of what We have for them provisioned, such are the truly faithful...”. As you see there are some 5 characteristics mentioned here as the description of the faithful. Of course people may not possess all these characteristics or qualities, yet if they try to acquire or strive to achieve them, and do something to strengthen their faith, they may also be worthy of the epithet of being a *believer*.

Let’s say a little more about believers. The verse says that the faithful or believers are those whose hearts are filled with awe and fear when God’s name is mentioned. What does fearing God mean? Is it like the fear in the heart of a criminal standing before a judge? Is fear of God a different and more delicate feeling? One may possibly claim ‘I haven’t committed a sin, so I don’t have a fear of God.

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\* Sura 8, Ayas 2,3&4.

Well, he may be right if he thinks that fearing God is the same as the fear of criminal before a judge or a prosecutor.

But there is another kind of awe based on knowledge, cognition and insight. Let me explain this in simple terms. Human beings, when facing great phenomena, astronomical wonder or glorious infinite facts, do feel some sort of awe in their hearts. This is not because they fear that the sky will fall on their heads, no, it is caused by the greatness of what they observe and the feeling of how small they are in such comparisons. Well, this kind of venerable awe or fear of God Almighty is a proper, pleasant and useful feeling. The person who knows how little and infinitesimal he is vis-à-vis God Almighty and is certain that God encompasses all and everything, tries to tread along the path that the God of the Worlds has shown him; he tries not to go astray. Therefore the firmest guarantee for Muslims and for the Muslim community as a whole is their actual movement, action and practices on the true path of God.

Amir-al-Mo'meneen Imam Ali (AS) writhes, wails and sheds tears in the middle of nights and in the nights of Ramadan, Imam Zein-al-Abedeen, Ali-bin Husain (AS) prays and moans and weeps most intensely and the Messenger of God puts his bed aside on the last 10 days of the month of Ramadan (because he says these are special nights for beseeching God and worshipping Him more than other times, not a time for sleeping); these are not artificial performances as some people suggest; they say the Prophet and the Imam did so to educate the people. How unaware and uninformed is the person who thinks that the Imam, through Abu-Hamza Prayer, intended to educate others but he himself did not share it. No, they shed tears because their knowledge about God was far greater than we ordinary people feel.

Those who say that the Imam, in Abu-Hamza Prayer, is only teaching others how to pray, must be most ignorant about the spirit of such prayer and the sublime quality of these righteous servants of God. Those who think that the Imams' weeping and their shedding tears were artificial acts for our education, are really mistaken; they wept and shed tears because their knowledge of God was much higher than ours. Imam Ali (AS) sees such greatness in the holy Creator that

our short-sighted eyes fail to see. The small mirror of our spiritual entity cannot reflect the awe-inspiring greatness of God, but the Imam sees it clearly and thus weeps and wails so deeply.

When God is remembered, a true believer visualizes that immeasurable greatness and then considers his infinitesimal existence, and that is why this venerable awe dominates his soul. In other words, under such conditions, God is not just a name we habitually use. God for him then is not the Allah we habitually use in such phrases as *Ya-Allah*, *Al-hamdu lillah* and *Insha-Allah*! Such usages are a result of not paying due attention to the greatness of God or hopelessness and tiredness! That is why the Quran says: “The true believers are indeed the people whose hearts are filled with venerable awe when God is mentioned “. This feeling is due to the lofty holiness of God and the smallness of human beings.

The other sign of a true believer is: “...their faith is strengthened when a verse of His Revelation is unto them rehearsed...”. Whether you yourself are reading the Quran or somebody else reads it, which makes no difference, it should increase and strengthen your faith. This faith is like a seed in your soul, it grows and it enlarges as a plant, and its roots gradually become so firm that it cannot ever be uprooted. Those people who learned something about being a believer when they were children, if they have doubts about it as adults, then the seed in the soul becomes smaller and weaker as they age; maybe some half-truth remains in their souls but even that may become slenderer because of certain events in their lives. Such faiths may one day fade away completely. A believer’s faith should not be like that. A true believer strengthens one’s faith daily by deeply thinking and deliberating religious and divine truths; a true believer will never allow his faith to fade away.

According to this verse of the Quran, by reading the Quran a believer’s faith is strengthened. And on the authority of this Quranic verse we say we should counter those who keep saying: ‘Don’t translate the Quran, don’t explain its meaning and don’t interpret it because our human intellect cannot understand it’! Well, if we cannot understand the Quran, then how could our faith be strengthened by reading it? So, it is clear that the Quran is not a book of riddles, mysteries and



codes; it is a Book that ought to be read for the purpose of understanding it so that we could increase and strengthen our faith; this is the second characteristic of a believer.

Then we have: "...who only in their Lord put their trust..." What does trust in their Lord mean? Does it mean that they should do not do anything, sit idly by and say that God Almighty will put everything right for them? No, this is not real trust in God. The person who does not do a thing and does not employ his gifts and powers to fulfill all his duties, obligations and commitments but waits for a miraculous act on the part of God, should know that the Quran rejects all such nations. The Quran addresses the sons of Israel who told Moses: "...thus go, you and you Lord, and fight them, we will be sitting down right here."\* This means: you and your Lord go and fight them, we are sitting here comfortably in the shade and when you win, let us know and then we'll join you! The Quran clearly rejects this. This was the attitude of those Israelites who were really ignorant of their religion and strangers to a real faith. The Muslims should never behave like that, for this attitude lacks any trust in God. And I should add here for all to hear and understand that true trust in God is not the sort of trust some people have and thus claim:

'Well, God will put everything right Himself, poor human servants of God cannot do anything'. This is quite wrong because if people were not able to try and eradicate corruption and other vices, then God Almighty would not mobilize His prophets and would not ordain that people should follow those divine prophets who did their utmost in earthly battle-fields to fight vices, evil practices and all sorts of corruption.

Now you may have this question in mind: What does 'trust in God' mean then? Well, truly our hope and our trust should always be in God Almighty but this trust should not have the form and function of a pain-killer, a kind of narcotics which gives you an opiating effect. No, the way I see it, and have already explained, trust in God has a motivating, energy-giving and encouraging effect for striving further on the path of God.

What do people do when they face hardships, insurmountable obstacles or

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\* Sura 5, Aya 24.

certain crises in their lives, and they cannot remove them? What do they do? Some three attitudes or approaches have often been observed. One is to give up, to submit to superior powers and say to oneself: what can I do but being submissive? They may kneel down at the foot of an enemy or a more powerful person; some others force themselves to be content with what's going on. Another group tends to end their lives by suicide under such circumstances. In short, these are some of the so-called solutions chosen by those lacking any faith in God. When such people are in a cul-de-sac in their life, when they think there will be no doors opened to them, and when they believe there is no way out, no escape, no solution, as I said, they will submit to force or let themselves be playthings in the current of affairs or commit suicide. But for true believers in God who do have trust in Him, there are no cul-de-sacs; all dead-ends could be opened up by God for there are no dead-ends as far as the Almighty God is concerned.

Was there a dead-end in the battle of Uhud for the Muslim troops? No, but as they thought that they had defeated the enemy, they were covetous of the spoils of war, so they abandoned their tactical positions, specially those bowmen who were guarding a mountain pass which did not allow the enemy horsemen to enter the battle-field. So, when they were busy gathering spoils with their swords and horses away from them, the enemy assaulted them from left and right; as a result many of them were killed and many ran up to the mountain to take shelter. And some people, inspired by Satan, always most active at such times, cried out that the Prophet was also killed. Under such tough conditions, what are believers really to do? Horses and swords are away from them, there is no escape route and the armed enemy has dominated the battle-field and, worst of all, the false news that the Prophet was also killed.

Is this now the worst cul-de-sac for the believers? A true believer should think 'even if the Prophet is killed, well, his God is alive'. What does a Muslim with trust in God do under such adverse circumstance? They should have acted just like Imam Ali (AS) who was shielding the Prophet from harms together with a few other brave trustful believers in God and, as you know, from various narrations, they did save the Prophet's life. And what did those do who had no trust in God? They ran away like frightened dogs to reach the walls of the city of Medina!

Those who think that ‘trust in God’ means sitting and doing nothing, no effort, no movement, in the hope of some unknown future, with no faith in the powers and gifts God has bestowed upon them, such people neither know what Islam is, nor what ‘trust in God’ means. There are also some people who lack honour and dignity and interpret ‘trust in God’ in such ways as to lead other people astray.

Anyway, in my opinion, trust in God and patience as understood in Islam are two powerful wings for Muslims to fly for their earthly efforts. In fact any *umma* who employs these two wings could be immune from all shots fired at them by earthly enemies. Well, this was the third sign in a believing person. But about the quality of faith and its peculiarities, we must talk further in detail (and I shall have a full discussion about it tomorrow, if God will).

Now after the verse ‘and in their Lord they trust’, we have, as the fourth sign of a believer: “...who steadfastly keep up their prayers...”. Please pay attention to the two verbs *Yusalloon* and *Yughimoon*. *Yusalloon* means ‘doing the prayers’ and if it was only the question of a physical performance, that is standing, bowing and sitting, then it would not be necessary to use the verb *Yughimoon*. It is obvious that by stating “steadfastly keep up prayers”, something much higher is meant; there is a superior truth.

Thus you may ask: what is this higher truth? There are a few probable interpretations and all of them may be right. One is to say that because the root meaning of *Yughimoon* is *iqaama* in Arabic and it means ‘to do a thing in perfect manner’, then we must perform this precept or ordinance of God, in a perfect way as the Quran says: “Thus set your face upright towards the Faith...”<sup>\*</sup>. If one performs one’s prayer in the best possible way, with complete attention and in its most perfect form, he could certainly expect his soul’s salvation. (I have already talked about the topic of daily prayers and their importance for a few weeks in our other mosque<sup>\*\*</sup> and so I don’t repeat them here.

Let me add that for a person who performs good prayers, all problems become solvable. You must have heard that some Islamic dignitaries, when faced with

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<sup>\*</sup> Sura 30, Aya 30.

<sup>\*\*</sup> The Keraamat Mosque in Mash-had.

hardships and disasters, performed two units of prayers. You must have heard also that the holy Prophet, during certain hardships and crises, would tell Balaal: ‘Please let us at ease, freshen up our heart’\*, meaning ‘go and say *azaan*’.\*\* Truly if a person performs his prayers as it should, with proper attention, humbly and consciously, he shall definitely attain what has been promised to the believers.

Well, that was one probability. The other probable interpretation is that by “those who steadfastly keep up prayers”, is meant that you should try to keep up prayers throughout the community. As we know there are people who do perform their prayers, all the 17 units and even more than that by also performing many recommended prayers. If they’re warned that the prevailing conditions are driving many people from religion, they don’t care at all because they’re only engaged in saving their own souls; they say that they’re hardly saving themselves, they don’t have time for others! This attitude is not a sign of faithfulness. If you only do your own prayers and are not concerned with others, your behavior is not properly Islamic, that is, your prayers are not perfect.

So again, what are the signs of faithfulness? This interpretation obliges you to keep up the performance of prayers throughout the society, and to encourage each and everyone to do prayers. This doesn’t mean that such and such a person does not perform prayers. I would like you to go above the meanings of ordinary words; we have to consider the more sublime meaning of the words. We must be thinking of a community that is remembering God all the time and striving in the path of God every moment. A community who says in unison: “Thee only do worship and unto Thee alone, do we appeal for help.”\*\*\* This means that a true believer never worships anybody or anything but God, he has no trust but in God and never asks for help and assistance but from God. A true prayerful community is one that constantly declares its immunity from the chiefs of corruption on earth, that is, the people who are the objects of ‘the wrath of God’ and their followers who ‘have gone astray’ from the path of God.

So *Iqaamat-al-Salaat* means that you try to urge others to perform their prayers;

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\* Traditions of the holy Prophet / (Man-la-yahduruh Al-Faqih - Chapter salat wa hodoudoha)

\*\* call to prayers.

\*\*\* Sura 1, Aya 5.

this would be a great effort on the path of absolute servitude to God Almighty, an attempt to eradicate corruption and removing the question of ‘I or we’, trying to establish human, social unity among all people as well as among the members of the Islamic *umma*. To urge others to do five times of daily prayers when they say repeatedly that “Thee only do we worship and from Thee only we seek help”, is a great act by the true servants of God. Therefore the *Iqaamat-al-Salaat* could also be interpreted in its social sense as I explained.

What is the next sign of a true believer? The Ayah continues: “...and those who spend\* of what We have for them provisioned...”. Yesterday I pointed out the meaning of *infaagh* and explained it on several occasions, and today I repeat that its real meaning is to fill up certain gaps and remove certain needs in other people’s lives. But there are actions which may not be considered as such. For example, the walls of this mosque we’re in are oil-painted and they look alright, now if you spend some money to paint it afresh, it is not *infaagh*. ‘Of what provisioned for them’, it is not a question of money. What We have granted them may include the life God has granted you, children He has granted you, everything else God has granted us: our reputation, our physical powers, our tongues, our brains and our intellect and all other potentials because the Quranic verse says ‘of what We have provisioned for you’; what should they do with all these powers and potentials? They ought to employ it in the right way of *infaagh*.

Yes, O faithful brother, apparently a believer, when someone calls you a believer, you enjoy it, but if you are rightly admonished for something, you hate it. You say you spend in the path of God; I know, in these evenings of the month of Ramadan, you prepare all sorts of delicious food and set up colorful food-tables and invite some people who do not really need them, you spend a lot but do you really perform an act of *infaagh*?!

There are preachers and lecturers who breathlessly talk about doing good, using their utmost powers of speech, exhausting their nerves and lungs, yet the question is: how much of these efforts are really in the way of *infaagh*. Talking too much is not an appreciable art. And there are people who, using their reputation and in-

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\* Spend in alms-giving, charity and the like.

fluence, try to find a good-salaried job for someone they like; and there are people who spend a lot of money in the name of religion, but are they all done as acts of *infaagh*. This is a bitter fact, and don't be surprised by hearing this from me because such actions do not really fill up a gap or remove a real need, they don't heal any social pains and do not really help the community. So true *infaagh* is another sign of a believer. From now on take care and think deeply whether what you're spending is *infaagh* or expenditure for other purposes.

Finally we read in the same Ayah: "These are the rightful believers and the truly faithful; for them there shall be exalted ranks of dignity with their Lord and Pardon...". I explained the word *maghfirat* (Pardon and Forgiveness) in full yesterday. When God grants Pardon to a person, He is healing an injury in his soul caused by committing some sins, and this Pardon is followed by '*rizghun karim*' (noble provisions); God grants people such noble provisions without any adverse conditions attached to it.

There are some apparently faithful people who claim 'thank God, we obtain our daily bread, without begging others and we are living comfortably'. But if you do some investigation about their deeds, you find out that they win their daily bread through most shameful ways and they are not aware of the shamefulness of their jobs, their behavior and their deeds. In a wider sense, a community will obtain its provisions properly only when it obtains them through honourable, pure and spotless means. If we are true believers and behave righteously, then all those slogans and ideals that today some false politicians promise about peace, freedom, welfare and brotherhood in a highly-educated, most progressive societies with a really high human culture, would be realized in practical terms. Yes, all such promises and prospects will be realized only in a faithful society.

Well now I call on our dear Quran reciter to come here and recite the verses we have already explained in order that you may, God willing, pay more attention to their real Quranic meanings.

I will, in our coming meeting, tell you more about true faith, conscious faith, faith not being based on prejudice, ignorance or blindly following others in order to make the question of faith most clear for you all.

Third Session

Faith Based On Consciousness

4th Ramadan 1394 (Sep.21, 1974)

*“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the nights and days, surely are many Signs for those who see with open eyes;(190) those who remember Allah always, standing, sitting or lying down, and who reflect on the creation of heavens and the earth with prayers. Our Lord, You have not brought about all this in vain; Your Glory is above and over such things, so pray deliver us from the scourge of Fire.(191)”*

*(Sura Aali-Imraan, Ayas 190&191)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Ayas we recite today (also written down in the copies you have in your hands), show some two or three characteristics of faith or being faithful. The first and foremost is that faith is an outstanding characteristic of the prophets of God and their followers. The great difference between the divine leaders and the world statesmen and politicians is the fact that those politicians have no faith in what they say.

It has been reported that, after India gained independence, one of the atheist leaders of Soviet Union, who visited India on this occasion, had pointed the figure of one of India’s spiritual leaders on his forehead to impress the religious masses of India!

By the way, for your information, I may add that most of the leaders of India’s independence movement were Indian religious authorities as well as Muslim *maulanas*\* such as Maulana Shah-Mahmoud Dehlavi, Maulana Mahmoud-al-Hassan, Maulana Abol-Kalaam Azaad, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali. By mentioning the Independence Movement of India, I meant to stress how important the role of spiritual leaders was; they practiced what they believed in and fought for it, and I believe that in their action and behavior you do find very special, spiritual and metaphysical aspects.

Now, as we said earlier, the divine prophets do practice what they preach; they were the very first to act upon what they advised the people and their followers; it would have been unfruitful if they did otherwise. But many worldly politicians

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\* This title is the equivalent of Ayatollah in India.



and leaders do not practice the advice they give to others. If you and I are a group who is dying of thirst due to certain condition and I keep saying to you: ‘there is a wonderful fountain up on the mountain with refreshing, drinkable water, so make haste, run fast to reach it’, but I myself sit down in the shade of a tree and don’t make a move, then you would be justified to object: ‘you’re as thirsty as we are, so if you’re telling the truth that there is such a fountain up there, why aren’t you running for it with us? So we think you’re lying, you don’t believe in what you say.’

This is the reason that divine prophets were always the first to move towards their goal, they were the vanguards and the carriers of divine flags who firmly and steadfastly paved the way and went ahead. The Prophet Abraham says ‘my God, I was the first person to submit to you, then others followed. A divine prophet should behave like that. The Prophet of Islam also behaved like that; he was always the one who welcomed the most dangerous events of early Islam. It is true that some of his most sincere followers went through intolerable hardships: Abdullah Mas’oud\* was badly beaten, Khabbab\*\* was brutally tortured and Ammar Yaaser\*\*\* was the target of many scourges, but he was the one who suffered most and was the target of all sorts of tortured, violence and insolence.

True faith is one of the characteristics observed in divine prophets and here faith means a firm, unshakable belief in what you aim at, and the sign of this belief is that you move forward before others. That’s why the Quran says: “The Messenger has faith in what has been sent down to him from his Lord”.\*\*\*\* And those who joined and followed the Prophet also enjoyed such a firm belief for the same verse goes on: “...and so do all the men of faith; each one believes in God, His angels, His book as well as in all His messengers.” All prophets of God and their true followers had such firm beliefs in God, in His angels, His revelations and made no difference between His prophets as in the same verse uttered by believers: “...and we make no distinction between a single one of His messengers.”

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\* One of the first converts to Islam who used to read Quranic verses in Mecca among the infidels despite being beaten and tortured.

\*\* He was a former slave who answered the call to Islam and suffered intolerable tortures for this. Later on he joined Imam Ali (AS) and fought at the Battles of Seffen and Nahrawaan.

\*\*\* The Meccan infidels tortured his parents to death and made him denounce the Prophet under tortures; later he joined the Prophet and was with him to the end.

\*\*\*\* Sura 2, Aya 285.

This is because they all were treading the same godly path. We, as Muslims, do the same today; we respect and revere them all: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Jesus, and Jerjees.\* They all were apostles of God; they all gave us the same good news to win God's paradise. I will give you a brief account about the question of prophethood in coming days.

And now listen to this 'they say we heard and obey'; this confirms what we have already said, that is what all prophets and all the faithful people declare. This 'we heard' means we understood the message; hearing is different from understanding, now that I am talking to you, say, ten meters away, of course you hear me but what those believers said was different, they meant we received the message, we understood it and we shall obey it. Our obedience is based on conscious understanding not a blind following. What we want from you, our God, is your 'Pardon' because 'to you is our final return'. And about this 'return to God' there are interesting things to say and, God willing, I shall briefly explain them if these meeting continue and if I am still alive by then!

Up to here what we understood from the Quranic verses was that our faith really depends on our firm belief in what Islam calls us to. Those who have no faith but have only followed others as a precautionary measure, cannot be included in the sphere of Islamic thought; no need to stand on ceremonies: Faith means a firm belief, clearly understanding and following the attraction of the Quran and our Islamic religion and if these have not found their place deep in your hearts, that is, if the faith is not rooted in the hearts, those hearts are dead, because our hearts beat through the energy of Islam.

The next topic-marked 2 in the copied papers you have in your hands- is the fact that we observe two different kinds of faith. The first is the kind of faith based on imitation and prejudice. This means believing in something because our parents and elders so believed or just because something is written in the books we read, we follow it without deep thinking. Many among ordinary people are like that. If you ask them: How do you know that our Prophet was right and truthful, they don't have an answer; they may only say: 'Because our parents said so or our

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\* Known as St. George among Christians

teachers so taught us'; such people just follow others; they do have some kind of faith in the holy Prophet, let's admit it, but this faith is blindly imitative.

The faith based on prejudice is similar to the faith based on imitation. Such people sometimes are disrespectful of other prophets of God because of their intense love of our holy Prophet! Some such people think that, even in the kingdom of God, there are disputes and differences among the prophets of God! I'm afraid to say that such prejudices are even witnessed among some intellectuals from whom we do not expect such opinion, which I don't wish to elaborate upon! In short, such faiths are not based on logic and reason. This kind of sentimental, prejudiced opinion that everything they do in other divine religions is wrong, does not stand to reason.

I should tell you, dear audience, that this sort of prejudiced or imitational beliefs is not valuable in Islam. This kind of faith may as easily be done away with as it was ignorantly acquired in the first place. A faithless generation may succumb in the face of material attractions of the world. Some think that this is true about the young generation but I say: hail the young generation who search for religious facts on the bases of logic and rationality. I'm actually addressing the generation before our present-day youth whose faith resembles the faith of the blind followers; of course many of them attend mosques, go to mourning ceremonies and are often present at Friday Congregational Prayers but because their faith is not based on logic and reason, they may even, under certain circumstance, set fire to a mosque, forget about Imam Husain (AS) and commit other incredible vices. Today one of our misfortunes is the beliefs of this former generation who lack the knowledge and consciousness of our youth and are divorced from the firm beliefs of the two generations before them. Many among this former generation lack the religious common sense not to be attracted by money, status, false popularity and temporary welfare; they don't even enjoy the imitational faith of Muslims before them.

True faith must be based on clear thinking, knowledge, understanding and correct evaluation. If so, people would not be constantly worried about their faith and belief. If we desire to witness firm beliefs and if we don't want to worry about beliefs being shaken, we ought to try constantly to be more conscious,

more informed and help others on this path, and when such cognition is rooted in the hearts and minds and souls of the people, then their faith cannot be taken from them by any means, and as our elders used to say: ‘machine-guns cannot overcome their faith’. And as we understood through those verses quoted from the Sura House of Imraan, faith must be based on consciousness and cognition.

Now let’s go over those verses again: “In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the nights and days, surely are Signs...”. Well, we ask ‘for whom are these Signs’? Are they signs of God to those with confused minds, to the ignorant, to those who never think?! The Quran answers this question ‘Li-Ulil-Albaab’ meaning the wise, the thinkers, those who see with open eyes and those who ponder over God’s creations. But who are those wise thinkers? They were not born with such higher intellects. Billions of people in the world do have this intellect; only they have to use it, so ‘the wise thinkers’ are those who employ their faculty of reasoning and their intellect to acquire a higher thinking and to become ‘wise thinkers’. If you own a certain machine or apparatus but you leave it at home for long and never oil it or use it, then through the passage of years, it rusts, it no more operates properly and is of no use. Well, whose fault is it, isn’t it your fault who never use it? This is true in the case of your intellect, your mind, your intelligence and common –sense: you never used it, so it has rusted!

So, who are the sagacious, intelligent or wise persons according to the Quran? The answer to this question is one of the most delicate points in the Quran. Let me explain. When ordinary people say someone is wise or intelligent, they usually mean that the person is successful in all his affairs, that he may never be fooled or duped, that he is cleverer than any rivals and that he always has the upper hand in dealing with others. The Quran does not approve of such definitions because, according to the Quran, the real value in a person is his connection and spiritual proximity to God. The intelligent person who possess certain values in the highest form are “those who remember God, standing, sitting or lying down”, this means always remembering God but remembrance of God is not a Sufi-like state of ecstasy or constantly uttering *Hou* (meaning ‘He’) as dervishes do which some people are proud and happy about. The Quranic remembrance of God is an active kind of remembering, that is, practical remembrance. How is this? The Quranic

verse goes on: "...and who reflect on the creation of heavens and the earth". These are the people who ponder over God's creation, who are always thinking about these phenomena and, as a result of this in-depth thinking, they say: "...O our Lord, You have not brought about all this in vain". This means 'You are far from doing something vainly and with no divine purpose; this is the most crucial point in Islamic ideology.

All life-building ideologies claim that they intend to bring about better individual and social lives, whether their philosophies have their essence in the existence of God or not. Those who believe in God say: 'O our Lord, you did not create everything in vain' and "Your Glory is over and above doing something in vain". So the believer in God says: 'then I do have some responsibility, I must tread a certain path within this great, astonishing order God has created, I have a certain position in this creation, and if I don't fulfill my responsibilities and obligations properly and rightly as you have directed, I will be guilty of working against Your immense creation'. There we read in the same verse: "...so pray deliver me from the scourge of Fire. This fire of Hell, though a reality, also symbolizes the wrath of God for lack of appreciation concerning His perfect creation and bringing everything into existence.

Please pay attention, what I said so far was an introduction, an introduction to understanding the conscious faith and intelligent belief which is understood by pondering over the Quranic verses we read. Now listen to the next verse: "Our Lord, whomever You will cast into the Fire is disgraced forever, and such wrong-doers shall never have any helpers."\* This means that the wrong-doers, the despots, the cruel, the hypocrites and the infidels whom you cast into fire, will have no helpers; no invisible hand may be stretched towards them, they will have to suffer there forever.

Let us now say a few words about the sagacious, intelligent people, the thinkers about the heavens and the earth, those who have found out that they have not come into the world in vain or without purpose, and so we read the next verse relating to proper faith and belief. According to the Quran, they call on their

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\* Sura 3, Aya 192

Lord and say: “O our Lord, we heard a *crier* plead for Faith ‘Believe in your Lord’ and so we did believe.”\* These believers say ‘we heard and we believed’; this *crier* may apparently be a prophet but in fact it could be their wisdom, their insight and their thinking that has addressed them and called them to have faith in God, therefore they received the call but it was their own wisdom and spiritual insight that helped them to become conscious believers. This is the kind of faith approved by Islam.

There is a third point which I explain briefly as we haven’t got much time left. Well, as God Almighty, according to the Quran, only approves of people’s conscious faith and does not value imitational, blind and ignorant beliefs, we do notice that in many verses the Quran harshly rejects this sort of false belief. Let us cite an example here in this respect: “When it is said to them come to what is sent down by God”\*\*\*; the addressees of the verse are the disbelievers and reactionary-minded persons and they are asked to come and listen to God’s revelations and what the Prophet teachers, come and use your brains and see if the holy Prophet has something to teach you, what is their reaction? Instead of accepting the invitation to come, to think, to understand and choose their ways, they say: “...the ways we found our fathers and fore-fathers on are quite enough for us...”\*\*\*\*! This means that our traditions are sufficient for us, we don’t go after new thoughts or concepts! According a Quranic researchers, such ignorant imitators and reactionaries are a group distinct from the rest of unbelievers; these people hate any new, intelligent and truthful advices. The holy Prophet of Islam is the most enlightened personality, but they don’t want to even listen to him and they say ‘our fathers and mothers behaved in certain ways and we are not going to change them’. The Quran comments on them in the same verse: “what if their fathers knew nothing and had been far astray”! Although their fossil fathers were ignorant people and could not distinguish between good or bad and right or wrong, they still follow them. That’s why the Quran admonishes them and blames them for their blind imitation. Now I invite our dear Quran reciter, Mr. Fatemi to come and recite the same verses we discussed for our further deliberation.

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\* Sura 3, Aya 193

\*\* Sura 5, Aya 104.

\*\*\* Sura 5, Aya 104.

4th Session

On

Productive Faith

Accompanied By Practical Commitments

5th Ramadan 1394 (Sep.22, 1974)

*“And strive in Allah’s cause, a striving worthy of your devotion; He has chosen you and laid no burdean upon you in religion: it is the Faith of Abraham, your own forefather, and he has given you the name of Muslim before this\* and in this one \*\*, that the Messenger be a witness to you and you a witness to all men; keep up salaah and pray zakat and do hold fast to God the One, it’s He Who is your Patron, oh, what a Gracious Patron, excellent Helper next to none”.*  
(Sura Al-Hajj, Aya 78)

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the main topic in our present discussion is that, according to the undoubted culture of the Quran, faith is not merely a feeling in the heart. It’s true that faith means belief and belief concerns your hearts but the Quran does recognize certain kinds of belief as real faith. A subjective faith, a faith only in the heart and the sort of faith that is not reflected in the deeds and behavior of a believer is not of value in Islam. Well, the first believer in God was Satan (Iblees) himself. Satan had been worshipping God Almighty eons before the prideful sons and daughters of Adam come down to this earthly world and his heart was an abundant centre of God’s cognition. Yet when things came to a head and when the moment comes to decide and make a choice, his faith did not help him, it only remained in his heart. And I tell you that the kind of faith that merely resides in the heart, will dry up and wither away. That’s why I said that the sort of faith in the heart that is not reflected in one’s deeds and behaviour and in one’s power and energy, is not of value in Islam. In the copies we gave you, I have briefly called it *productive faith*. By this I mean the sort of faith that is like a flowing spring, a faith together with commitment, a faith that involves responsibilities to be fulfilled.

The Quran tells us: “...those who believe and perform virtuous, good deeds”; I began to count and I found out that this phrase in the Quran ‘Belief and good deeds’ have been repeated dozens of times. This means that a faith devoid of any responsibility or any commitment will be of no use in this world or in the next.

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\* In former scriptures

\*\* In the Holy Quran



What we shall recite from the Quran in tomorrow's meeting, will include similar verses for us to ponder over their meanings with more deliberation. Those who think that Faith is something only for the heart and one's sentiments without considering what faith requires, are wrong. Those who think that true faith is mere believing without any action and endeavour, without striving in the path of God, should not expect any *good news* promised to the believers to also include them. Those who suppose that Paradise will be enjoyed by people who have some actionless faith, should know that not acting on the basis of faith, would leave them with empty beliefs in empty hearts. In short, the faith valued in Islam is the one accompanied by practice, with responsibility and as duty and obligation.

If you don't feel that you have to carry out certain commitments as a Muslim, you should doubt that you are a Muslim. Some people, who do not want to fulfill their responsibilities, resort to the Quranic verse: "Be not infirm and do not grieve, and you shall gain the upper hand if you believe."\* Those Muslim who neglect their duties, ask themselves 'why isn't this promise realized'?! Because you have not properly performed the deeds the same Quran has laid upon you as Muslims. And some people, in order to justify their inaction, claim that the promise will be realized after the reappearance of the promised Mahdi (AS). We know that divine promises will be realized after Muslims fulfill their obligations according to the Quran itself.

If it were only the question of verbal acceptance, then I could claim that people such as Amr-bin-Aas\*\* or Valid-bin-Mughaira Makhzoomi\*\*\* could be counted among the very first people who had faith in the Prophet of Islam! These people among the Quraish were very smart, they well understood that the Prophet was

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\* Sura 3, Aya 139.

\*\* He was known as a smart, intelligent person among Arabs, he opposed the Prophet and traveled to Ethiopia to bring back the Muslims who had taken refuge there. But days before the conquest of Mecca, he converted to Islam and asked the Prophet to pardon his past wrong-doings. At the time of the second Khalif, he commanded the army that conquered Egypt and became the governor there. The third Khalif dismissed him from this post. Then during the fourth Khalif he sided with Muawia against Ali (AS). He was once again appointed the governor of Egypt; he went there, killed Muhammad-bin-Abi-Bakr and died there in 61 AH.

\*\*\* An intelligent, influential, wealthy man of the Quraish clan. After the Prophet's call to Islam, the notables of Quraish asked what to call the verses of the Quran read by the Prophet; he went to him and the Prophet read out to him some verses of the Sura Al-Sajde. He was very impressed and did not go back to the Quraish notables. Finally Abu-Jahl went to see him and urged him to say something about what he had heard and he said: you could only call them magic or sorcery!

not a liar, so they put their heads together how to besmear the Prophet. They used to listen to what the Prophet read and in the evening they got together to consult; they admitted among themselves that the verses read out by the Prophet were not ordinary, human speech. So you see that despite their enmity with the Prophet, they indeed confessed that the Prophet's message must be a divine message. But we, after some fourteen centuries do not consider them as *believers*. Why is this? Because such people never acted upon their apparent beliefs and were not faithful to the Faith. This goes for us too; if we don't act and behave according to the commitment of the Faith, could we call ourselves believers?

As I said, if some sort belief in the heart was enough, then Amr-bin-Aas should be considered as an early Muslim or even a Shi'ite! He was quite aware of what happened at Ghadir-Khom; he was the person who wrote poems in praise of Imam Ali (AS). Also it has been reported that he, on his death-bed, the moment when no worldly belonging matters, was deeply regretful of what he had down in his life; he's reported to have said 'I sold out my religion to the world of Muawia, and I fought Ali (AS) who I knew was the rightful person'. On the basis of such reports we must conclude that he was more aware of the *wilayat* of Ali (AS) than many of our contemporary Shi'ites. But why isn't he really a believer or even a Shi'ite? Because his first commitment was to swear allegiance to Muawia-bin-Abi-Sufyaan. Therefore such a man who does not act upon his beliefs is neither a believer nor a Shi'ite.

On the basis of what was made clear so far, we may turn to ourselves and ask the question: 'Are we true believers, could we be sure of being Shi'ites ourselves? Are we practically Shi'ites? The Quran is absolutely clear about this in the verses we recited today (and those we'll recite tomorrow). The Quran categorically rejects the people who are not committed to their own faith and do not act upon their beliefs. Finally, the sort of faith creditable in Islam- the most fundamental principles of Islam and in Shi'ism- is the productive faith, the faith together with its commitments. So if you don't act on the basis of your faith, do not wait for any good result, do not expect any victory in the world and do not hope for security in your worldly life. On this point the Quran is again most clear: "...those believers only who do not taint their faith with Wrong (idol-worships), shall attain real pro-

tection and security, for they are already on the right, guided path.”\* This means that those who believed and did not taint their faith with wrong-doing, cruelty and oppression will only enjoy safety and security, but the sort of faith that is mixed and polluted with wrong-doings or idol-worship will enjoy no security; the kind of faith not accompanied by commitments and obligations does not guarantee the faithful’s success and victory and it does not bring along God’s help and the help of all atoms in the created universe and, in one word, He will not grant believers any paradise on earth or the Paradise in the world to come.

The thoughts of easy-going, comfort-seeking people suggest otherwise. As a matter of fact, there is a characteristic in human-being to go after what is easy and easily available. If one is to choose between two choices, he would select the one which requires less endeavouring, less hardships and less expenses. In this case the religious faith tells us that we have lost our paradise, therefore, such lazy, uncaring people have to come up with some phony formula to facilitate their entering the paradise of God. Well, I say we have to make a revision and see whether the pretext, the excuse and the formula we have forged are really correct or not.

The Quran is the final, decisive and spotless text we have in our hands, and there are hundreds of Traditions uttered by the Prophet and by the Imams (AS) about what I am about to tell you. This is about *intercession*. All our religious texts and narrations inform us that you shall not gain intercession except through your own actions and behaviour. Now there are lazy, careless people who moan and wail about their past actions and fear of the future while engaged in useless deeds and behaviour without honour, but expect and hope for intercession by the Imams, whereas the Imams themselves tell us that we will not enjoy their intercession if we haven’t done anything to gain it. This is exactly the opposite of what is in our minds.

Imam Zein-al-Abedein, was worshipping God in a mosque at midnights while weeping and moaning; he was a man who always tried, during the day, to work for the realization of a truthful, righteous government, but at midnights, proved

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\* Sura 6, Aya 82.

his humility and servitude to God (his prayers seem strange to us and I haven't got the time to explain about them).

Then a simple-minded Muslim goes to him and asks: 'O You, great-grandson of the holy Prophet, the grandson of Ali and Fatima and the son of Husain, why do you weep at all? You should be weeping and moaning for us'. It's reported that the Imam told him: 'Throw away this story of parents and grandsons\*', the simple-minded Muslim does not know that the thesis of humility, servitude, mournful prayers and tearful worshipping is meant to polish the soul, to make you more determined and deeper reliance on God. The Imam (AS) goes on: 'paradise is for the most obedient,' and this way he stresses on the Islamic, Shi'ite thesis that faith and practice must always accompany each other.

Why do I put so much emphasis on this issue? Because, for long years, no, for centuries, a lot of deceitful work was carried out to convince Muslims that practicing is not necessary for being Muslims and to make them believe that a pure heart was enough for a believer, not his pure deeds. Our easy-going, our negligence and our false, big claims have helped those treacherous, mercenary elements to convince us that the Paradise of God will be granted us for a small deed. These elements were evil, but others who followed them did it through their utter ignorance.

In fact, some of these distortions began shortly after the death of the Prophet. The most interesting case in this respect is Muawia himself. I don't think there is a worse person than him, a most irreligious man in the early history of Islam. But it's reported that Muawia, presumably stating his will before dying, tells his companions, 'once the Prophet of God was shaving and clipping his nails, I collected some of those hairs and nails, please put these in my coffin, may God have mercy on me'!! What a ridiculous nonsense! He's hoping for the intercession of the holy Prophet on his behalf! Well Muawia, used to listen to the Quran being recited and respected it and he performed his prayers, but for what purpose? He did them as such these gestures helped his interest and his rule.

Anyway, for many years certain elements have been influencing the minds and

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\* Manqib Ale-Abi-Taalib

souls of the Muslims that faith devoid of practice, Islam without performing it in action, a heart-felt faith without any ensuing obligations, is real Islam. But the Quran itself is loudly and clearly declaring that "...such people aren't truly faithful." This means the believers are those who are with you, those are your brothers in faith who do, in the path of God, behave and act according to their commitments of faith and do their best to realize them; this is the logic of the Quran.

Let's read further from the Quran; "O You believers! Bow down, prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord, and do every good deed in order to succeed. And strive in Allah's cause, a striving worthy of your devotion; He's chosen you and laid no burden upon you in religion..."\*. Let us discuss the verses a little more. You true believers, you must be humble in worshipping your God and do good deeds in order to succeed and gain salvation. Once you perform these commitments, you'll embrace safety, success and salvation. You should feel these gains yourselves. Then 'strive in Allah's cause, a real striving'. How much do you try, all day-long, to make a living and how hard do you strive? On this basis how hard should you strive in the path of God? Look at your own lives and everything you do and consider how striving in God's cause should be. Obviously, according to the unique greatness of God, how should the volume, the depth, the quality and perseverance of your striving be in this respect, in respect of God Almighty? So, the greatest efforts possible should go into the cause of God. Then we have "he has chosen you ..." what is the meaning of this? Firstly we should know that God has chosen us not as some spoiled darlings of His, and He does not care if we commit sins and do all sorts of wrongs against God's orders; and that we will be pardoned and go to Paradise, as many Jews and Christians wrongly claimed. Any Muslim who thinks so is terribly mistaken. The Quran admonishes such people who thought of themselves as lovers, friends and even sons and daughters of God and tells them that all such feelings and emotions towards God, are conditional and dependent on carrying out God's injunctions and fulfilling one's obligations. It's true that God had chosen the Sons of Israel for His divine purpose and later God chose the Islamic umma, both choices are the same; it's like choosing the best person for a great job. The important point is, at any time, to fulfill our com-

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\* Sura 22, Ayas 77&78.

commitments to God, but if you fail in this, you will not be the chosen people of God any longer. Therefore, the choosing of the Islamic umma was just like the choosing of the Sons of Israel. They were, at their own time, the best people to carry out God's injunctions, and if Muslims, like the Jews, fail to take this mission assigned to them, will also end up like them and be the object of the verse revealed about the Jews: "...to shame and squalor were they thus condemned and did incur the wrath of God..."\*, and their final abode will be Hell. The verse goes on to say that '...we have laid no burden on you in religion'. This means that if you are true believers in God, it would not be too hard, too burdensome to fulfill your commitments because, according to the Quran, Islam is the same religion that your ancestor Abraham promoted and that he was also called a Muslim, that is, a submitter to the will of God: "...Our Lord, make us submissive to Your Will, and from amongst our offspring, raise a nation of true submitters to Yourself..."\*\*. Now what is the purpose of this conception?

The Quranic answer is: "...that the Messenger be a witness to you, and you witness to all men..."\*\*\*. This means that the Prophet is directly responsible for you and you are responsible for all humanity, that is to say, the Prophet is your keeper, your witness and watchful of you, and you have the same responsibilities concerning the whole mankind; so you as administrators, as vanguards and the look-out men for all; should not ever fall asleep!

Well, now that such a great mission is laid upon you by God, you ought to fulfill certain duties: 'keeping up *salaat* (prayers), paying *zakaat* (the legal alms) and do hold fast to God', that means: take refuge in God, resort to God, rely on God only and do not fear any power other than God. When you find yourself in an impasse and when all doors are shut out on you, do not despair of God's help and kindness; 'it's He who is your Patron' (Huwa maulakoom). God is your keeper and guardian. (God willing, I shall explain the meaning of *walee*, *maula* and *wilayat* in another lecture in full). The Quran then says: "...oh, what a Gracious Parton, excellent Helper next to none." What we said so far is about a believer's commitments and responsibilities towards his God.

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\* Sura 2, Aya 61.

\*\* Sura 2, Aya 128

\*\*\* Sura 22, Aya 78.

In the Sura *Anfaal* we find certain other obligations for the truly faithful and one of these is *Hijra* (migration). The Quranic verse says: “those who believed and left their homes risking their property and lives, and those who gave them shelter and support, are certainly each other’s friends and allies”.\* What does migration mean? Is it only going, say, from Mash-had to Tehran? Is it travelling from one city to another? No, *Hijra* is not that simple. *Hijra* is purposeful, it means leaving everything and everyone behind you to join an Islamic community and to play a role, according to the obligations of your faith, in that community. It means leaving all your belonging behind in Mecca for the enemies to plunder. Imagine you were a Muslim but your wife, your father, your son or others of your kith and kin had not converted to Islam, you had to forget about them all who were now your potential enemies. This is *Hijra*, washing your hands off everything and everyone you loved and facing all sorts of deprivations courageously and whole-heartedly.

On the other hand, *Hijra* meant participation in building up a great fortress of the Islamic community, even if one could contribute a few bricks to set it up. Imagine, you want to lay down the foundation of a big building, well, if each individual could carry one brick, one stone or one piece of wood, it will certainly help. The community established in Medina was in need of faithful, powerful Muslims dedicated to Islam with a proven background of deeply understanding the new faith. The people who migrated from Mecca to Medina were such resolutely faithful individuals; each of those people had in fact taken a great step in setting up this Islamic community, no matter how small or big their contribution was.

That’s why the Quranic verse says: “Those who believed and left their homes risking their property and lives to fight in Allah’s cause, and those who gave them shelter and support, are certainly each other’s friends and allies...”. I repeat these glorious verses of the Quran so that you may deliberate on them more deeply. Yes, they are all friends, allies, comrades and brethren; they all were parts of the great effort to set up the first, Islamic community in Medina. As the verse says: they are bricks of one wall and one block, they hold one another, they support one another and establish an impenetrable fortress.

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\* Sura 8, Aya 72

The Quranic verse goes on: "...however you do not owe such support and guardianship to those who have believed but did not leave their homes until they do so..."\*. This means that they believed in the Faith, but did not act upon it, and until they do so, they cannot enjoy your support and guardianship. In other words, an empty faith, a faith that does not end in action, will not be of any use to the Islamic community.

Well, I am a little tired now and so I ask Mr. Rouhani, our Quran reciter, to come here and recite the same verses we explained and discussed, in his pleasant voice, so that we could, God willing, muse more deeply over the verses to be able to tell the difference between true believers whose faith is followed by their actions and behaviour and those who have embraced the faith but fail to act upon it.

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\* Sura 8, Aya 72



5th Session

Faith & Its Ensuing Commitments

6th Ramadan 1394 (Sep. 23, 1974)

*“The sole response by true believers, when they are called to God and His Messenger that he may judge between them, is: We heard and we obey; these are the people who will be the final winners.(51) Yea, only those shall be successful who do obey Allah and His Messenger; who are god-fearing and are most careful about their duties unto Him(52)”*

*(Sura Al-Noor, Ayas 51&52)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, on the question of faith and its ensuing commitments, it should be made clear that a believer's duties and commitments are not arbitrary, occasional or optional. Whenever something is profitable to your own person, whenever you may gain something by pretending to be a believer, then you talk and preach about faith in Islam. But when belief, faith and Islamic commitments do not bring about profits, and I say 'unjust profits' for you, you turn your back to all Islamic teachings and Quranic obligations. I call such people 'unfaithful profit-seekers'; they only think about their worldly gains and are quite ready to sacrifice other people's interests. In my opinion they are violators of rights and interests of other Muslims.

Such people's approach is simple! As far as they could gain whatever they like and make some profits through feigning to be believers, they do so. But from the viewpoint of Islam such persons are not believers and the verse quoted clearly says that lack faith. And in our discussions so far about faith and obligations, we concluded that faith devoid of commitments, responsibilities and without fulfilling one's duties and 'carrying out good deeds', according to the Quran, is not true faith indeed. In other words, a subjective, abstract and empty belief is not faith at all.

There is another important point in being faithful: the permanence and comprehensiveness of faith. If one is a true believer and intends to remain so to reap the fruits of being a believer, he ought to always feel responsible vis-à-vis God's injunctions and orders and feel responsible at all times. The person who is committed to God and is a true servant of God, also believes that all humanity must

become servants of God and he does his best in this respect. The faith in the Prophet and ‘witnessing and confirming the Prophethood of the Messenger’, means that we follow the Prophet and tread on his path. Thus, when you so believe and witness, you are most angry and most emotional by observing a trivial incident that is against the Prophet’s manners, but then, when faced with a much greater incident that is absolutely against the Prophet’s teaching and behaviour but involving a lot of risks and hardships, you forget all your commitments and responsibilities! And as the Arabic proverb goes: ‘Against me you are like a roaring lion but when you’re faced with an armed enemy, you behave like an ostrich!’ A faithful Muslim’s commitment cannot be like this.

So we see that the requirements of being a believer are not seasonal, occasional or locational; they are for all times, for all individuals and for all occasions and locations. In this respect, the Quran cites the example of some Jews who used to say that all the Sons of Israel are our dear brethren whom they will always support and defend, but the same brethren, when clashing with one another over certain worldly concern, fought and killed their brothers or took them captives and even sold them at good prices! The Quran truthfully asks these people: “...do you believe in some parts of the Scripture and disbelieve in others?...”\*. In days of comfort and joy and for personal gains, you seem to be faithful people but when it comes to injunctions of your faith about commitments and obligations, you are forgetful and neglectful! This cannot be because you may not draw lines between verses and commands issued by one single sublime Source!

Imam Baqer, our 5<sup>th</sup> Imam (AS), in a tradition cited in the Waafi Book also mentioned in the Book ‘Principles of Kaafi’\*\* - quotes the Imam as saying that there are such believers who perform their prayers and do fast, actions that are not too difficult to carry out, but they are neglectful of other duties such as ‘Enjoining to do good and prohibiting what is evil and unlawful’ which may bring about troubles and risks. The Imam (AS) does not go on to say whether such people are believers or not, or if they are hypocrites; yet the Quran clearly says that those

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\* Sura 2, Aya 85.

\*\* Al-Kaafi - Chapter Al-Jihad

who are only after their own interests and personal pleasures and do not act upon the commands of their faith, are not believers.

There were people, at the time of the Prophet, who listened to the Prophet's judgment in certain affairs and obeyed him when the Prophet's sentence was in their favour, but when they knew that the Prophet's judgment might go against them, they avoided the Prophet and did not obey the injunctions of their religion. The Quran asks: Did you fear the Prophet's judgment, did you have doubts in your hearts and were you uncertain of the truthfulness of your religion? On the question of fearing the Prophet's judgment- which is tantamount to disbelief, the Quran asks them: "...Do they fear that God and His Messenger may unfairly settle their affairs...?!"\* Therefore, we may conclude that believers are committed to their faith requirements in all affairs of life, at all times and in all problems facing them, not only when their interests so require.

I must again talk about the example of Muawia because he is well known. As you know, whenever his interest dictated he did his prayers, even set up Congregational Friday Prayers and served as the imam of such prayers, he pretended to be a follower of the Prophet and the Quran. He went as far as praising Imam Ali (AS) for high qualities when he met with followers of Imam Ali to deceive them and attract them to himself.

It is widely reported that when meeting Abdullah-Bin-Abbas, he asked him to tell him about Imam Ali's virtues. Abdullah asked him for a quarter and Muawia said: You'll be safe and secure to tell about Imam Ali's virtues and high moral qualities.

The reports say that he did weep after hearing Abdullah's impressions of Imam Ali (AS)!\*\* So you see, whenever necessary he talks about his affections for the Imam. He frequently talks about the Quran and the teachings of Islam because he is an opportunist, populist man whose only goal is to continue his rule and so he does try to attract the favourable attention of the common people. In such circumstances he pretends to be a most faithful Muslim.

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\* Sura 24, Aya 50

\*\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Al-Fitan wa Al-Mihan

Yet under different circumstances, when respecting the injunction of Islam and the Quran do not serve his interests he turns into a most irreligious person; he plunders people's properties, forgets about social justice, and harms the oppressed and the deprived people in the interest of his own family members and his close courtiers! Islam is for carrying out justice, for raising the living standards of poor people, for raising the consciousness and awareness of ordinary people- which has also been the sublime goals of all divine prophets. Yet these important Islamic values mean nothing to Muawia; his faith lacks all religious commitments.

I spoke about Muawia in order that we could compare ourselves with him. If being a faithful believer means performing some Islamic duties and neglecting other commitments, then Muawia could be a first-rate believer! I have often said that Muawia did perform many Islamic rituals and he was one who did his prayers at the earliest moments and often led the public's Congregational Prayers. Well, the Muawia sort of faith is easy and comfortable, it raises the believers' emotions and it is a harmless faith.

But the Faith whose Prophet is, according to the Quran, chosen to educate people and raise their knowledge and awareness is a different faith: "Certainly God has blessed the believers by raising a Messenger from their midst to read His revelations to them, to purify and teach them the Scripture and the Wisdom..."\*. Well, this Islamic faith is there to advance people, to deepen their insight, to increase their knowledge and wisdom and help them fight against vices, wrong-doings and corrupt actions which the faith forbids. Our Islamic faith fights against anything and anyone that blocks people's common-sense, consciousness, insight and wisdom; it fights all elements that hinder people from thinking and understanding. This is our faith.

The kind of religion that has been described as 'the opium of the people' is a completely different faith than ours. In the actions and behavior of our holy Prophet, our religious leaders and our Islamic teachings, one may not find a single sign of that 'opium-of-the-people religion'. Islam struggles against unbelief and godlessness and any kind of deviated cult or religion.

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\* Sura 3, Aya 164

Imam Ali (AS), our great Islamic leader says: God has sent His prophets to open up the treasures of thinking and wisdom inside the people. Therefore, anything or any factor that may bury these treasures deeper or does conceal under tons of earth, that is, elements such as prejudices, superstitions, illusions or suppression- are operating against the philosophy of the missions of God's prophets and it does not matter when and where these elements operate.

Prophethoods have something to do with the wisdom, knowledge and the intellect of the people; the better and higher the people's wisdom, the more effective the missions of the prophets would be. The prophets tried hard to elevate the thinking power of the people. So all factors, whether in one's own person or outside it, that would hamper this mental and intellectual growth and block people's free-thinking and their insights, should be considered as anti-religion. Muawia was a good example: Islam enjoins that Muslims should do away with hunger and poverty, that they should abolish all discrimination among people, that they should not appoint their ruthless friends and relatives to govern people and that they should not lead people to the fire of Hell, but for Muawia such Islamic, Quranic injunctions were of no importance; he never took a step in the direction of enlightening the people about their Islamic teachings.

It is reported that Muawia once told Ibn-Abbas: please stop reading the Quran. Ibn-Abbas said: How on earth should I not read the Quran? Muawia said well, if you read it, then don't interpret it. Why must I stop interpreting the Quran for the people? Protested Ibn-Abbas. Muawia noticed that what he asked was not at all pleasant because those days people expected such eminent scholars as Ibn-Abbas to explain the verses of the Quran for them. So Muawia changed his request and asked him: Okay, if so, please don't interpret the Quran the way your family did, especially that of Ali (AS); don't tell the people what you and Ali understand of the verses of the Quran! It goes without saying that Muawia does not want the general public to really understand the Quran; the less they think and the less they understand, the more beneficial to Muawia!

Thus if you look at Muawia's record, you'll see that, apart from all the crimes he committed-including burying some people alive, letting many rot in horrifying

prisons, murdering such important, Islamic dignitaries as Hojr-bin Udai\* Rushaid Hojari\*\* and Maytham Tammar \*\*\* - he did commit a crime that more than equaled all other crimes. Let's explain this a little:

Muawia could greatly advance the newly-established Islamic system during his 20 year-rule but he not only did not preserve the same Islamic system founded before him, he in fact took the society back for many decades. How did he manage this backwardness? Did the riches of the state become less? No, they didn't. Were the Islamic territories curtailed? No, they didn't. He managed to lead the Islamic community backward, morally, intellectually, mentally and, in one word, he changed the people's bright Islamic insight and led them to ignorance and darkness. This was his greatest unforgivable crime, a phenomenon that would not be easily reversed even through some good, proper administration for some twenty years. In fact it took some 3 decades before Umar-bin-Abdulaziz, the just, honest Khalif of the Umayya dynasty came to power, but even he could not do away with the evil heritage that Muawia had left behind! He, however, did not have much time to execute his reforms because those corrupt elements who had become wealthy and powerful under Muawia poisoned him and then killed him at the end of the second year of his rule as the Khalif.

During Muawia's reign, people were kept in utter ignorance and were to believe in what the government's publicists used to declare. There are numerous narrations and reports about the ignorance of the people in Syria (then called 'Shaam') during the reign of the Umayya dynasty. I have cited some of them in my lectures and sermons in the past. It may be interesting to narrate one of them as a joke:

During the reign of Abdul-Malik Marwaan, Mecca was conquered by one of his commanders called Hajjaaj- bin- Yousof. He was a powerful, competent military leader who dealt most ruthlessly with the Shi'ites. Mecca at this time was ruled by Abdullah Zubair. Hajjaaj finally defeated Zubair and entered the city; he and

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\* In his youth he came to Medina and embraced Islam. Later he rose in status to become a commander in Ali (AS)'s army; he was put to death by Muawia because he did not swear allegiance to him.

\*\* He was taught by Imam Ali (AS); and became a scholar. The Muawia's army cut off his tongue and hands and legs and let him die a painful death.

\*\*\* He was a slave who embraced Islam and became a good interpreter of the Quran; he supported Imam Ali (AS); when a Muawia commander came to Kufa, he had Maytham hanged on a date-tree.

his soldiers climbed the Mount of Abu-Qubais in Mecca. Hajjaaj wrote a message to Marwaan in a symbolic manner: Thank God we are on top of Abu-Qubais. The Khalif ordered that this message be read to the people from all pulpits in Damascus. But when the preachers read it loudly to the people, they shouted: No, this is not enough, you must put this heretic\* Abu-Qubais in chains and bring him to us, then we shall believe it! They thought that Abu-Qubais was a man! There are many other reports about the lack of knowledge, insight and understanding among the general public.

Well, who is ultimately responsible for the public's low level of consciousness. You may say that such eminent people as Shuraib-bin-Haarith, the Judge\*\*, Muhammad-bin-Shahab Zohri\*\*\* and Abu-Yousuf, the Judge\*\*\*\* are also responsible; they should have enlightened the people, but they did not, and committed many crimes. I too agree with this. But who created the conditions and who gave the chance to these personalities to carry out what they did? Was it not the Muawia's un-Islamic system of governing that carried the responsibility for all their atrocities? It is ridiculous that Muawia and his henchmen sometimes talked about Islam and the Quran.

Well, we don't know how to describe such people as Shuraib, Zohri, Abu Yousuf, Mughaira and Zaid-bin-Amr because, according to their records, they sometimes adhered to Islamic principles and some other times they did commit big crimes. Were they faithful persons or heathens?

The Quran is outspoken about them: Such people are not faithful; they are not believers with such shaky, occasional faithfulness. Firm believers are those who act upon a true faith at all times and at all places: "Those are true believers who do good deeds...". And the promises that God has given: That believers will be

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\* Meaning 'Shi'ite'!

\*\* Shuraib was appointed as the Grand-Judge in Kufa by the second Khalif, and Ali (AS) also kept him in this position but he was a Mammonist and later committed many crimes and treasons including his edict to allow the shedding of Imam Husain's blood.

\*\*\* He was a student of Imam Sajjaad (the fourth Imam) but he later became a servant of the Umayya system; he was also the first person to collect the Traditions of the Prophet at the behest of Umar-bin Abdul-Aziz.

\*\*\*\* A student of Abu Hanifa. He became the Supreme Judge of Baghdad and kept this position for some 18 years under 3 different Khalifs.



victorious, that God's Hand accompanies the believers or that the laws of nature cooperate with the believers, all these are for the kind of believers as described in the holy Quran. The least benefit we may gain from this discussion is that we'll find out whether we're true believers or not. If we notice that our prayers are not responded to, and that we are not blessed by promises God Almighty has given us, then we should realize that we are not true believers.

Now let us go over the verses\* that were recited before I began my discussion. I try to translate them. Verse 46 says: "We have now sent down plain, enlightening verses and God will guide, whomever He will, to the right path". Here you notice that Quranic verses are quite enlightening, so those people who do not try to understand the Quran, they deprive themselves of enlightenment. And then we have "God guides whomever He will", what does this mean? What does the will of God mean? Does that mean that God wants one person to be guided and He does not want another person to be guided?! This means that God favours some people and rejects others! Not at all, this interpretation is not right. The true fact is that God's will, in ordinary affairs, is not manifested but that we are the objects of usual, natural causes. Thus if you do not try your best in your life and if you block your way into the understanding of the Quran, does it mean that God intends that you don't understand! No, because you yourself have not decided to make use of all your God-given senses, talents and existing natural causes. God did not will, so I could not decide! No, you enjoy the freedom of deciding for yourself; 'God did not will it' means that you did not employ the necessary means God has already provided for you.

Now why do we say that 'God did not want' instead of saying that the necessary means were not provided to have results? The answer is that God Almighty is the Creator of all causes and it's He who wills that causes shall have effects. Let me explain this a little more: say there is this burning fire near me, now if I stretch my hand over it and it burns my finger, did God want it to burn? And if I don't do this, was it God who didn't want it to burn? What sort of reasoning is this? Well, God wanted it to burn means that the natural causes for burning were there; what are the natural causes? A fire being at hand, lack of any obstacles to block it, my own

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\* Sura 24, Ayas 46-54.

will and stretching my hand towards the fire are the reasons. In the second case the natural causes for burning were not there: I did not approach the fire, maybe my hands were wet or the fire was not flaming and other reasons. Now why is it that we attribute everything related to causes to God Almighty? Because He is the ultimate Creator of all causes. I have previously also explained this phrase “man yasha’...” which you come across throughout the Holy Quran; today I made a short reference to the subject.

Then we have: “And they claim ‘we do believe in God and His Messenger and we obey’, yet, after this, a party of them turns away...” Here the Quran is not referring to the disbelievers or to renegades who suddenly put Islam aside and went their own ways. No, the verse is about believers, the ordinary believers who are found among the Muslim community at large, and the Quran says categorically that “... such people are not truly faithful”! Could it be clearer than this? And then the Quran says: “But when they are called upon to God and His Apostle that he may judge between them, lo, some parties of them withdrew...” Under such conditions some believers are not ready to listen to the Prophet’s judgment or his decree.

Apparently the verse is about judgment and jurisprudence but the interpretation of governing and government in the Quran is more comprehensive than that. Then we have: “...but if the right be on their side, they will submissively stride towards him.” You see if the Prophet’s judgment is for them, they obey him, but if he rules against them, they don’t obey him; this means that they do not believe in Islam, in the Quran and in the Prophet. Why is it that when something goes against them, they don’t accept it? The Quran answers this question and says that it is due to one of three causes: is there a sickness in their hearts which may be the sickness of hypocrisy, the sickness of whims and carnal desires or the disease of pride and ignorance; they do have one of these sicknesses inside them. Or “are they harbouring doubts? That means they do not really believe in their faith, if it’s not so, why then do they not obey their religion when it is not beneficial to them, when they face some hardships or may lose something? At such times they reject some injunctions of their faith. The Quranic verse go on: “Or do they fear that God and His Messenger might unfairly settle their affairs”? This kind of feeling is far worse than doubtfulness; this is mere faithlessness, that is, a believer not knowing or be-

believing that God and His Apostle will not be unfair to humanity. The person who thinks that God and His Messenger will be unfair to them, the one who has such fear, is a believer who does not know God and His Prophet and does not approve of them. The verse continuous: "...Nay, nay. In fact these are wrong-doing people themselves." God never oppresses or is unfair to people; it's they who are unfair to themselves; they are treacherous to themselves and to other people.

But who are the true believers? The Quran contains an exact, special lexicon; it defines the word believer: "...the sole response by true believers, when they are called to God and His Messenger that he may judge between them is: "we have heard and we obey; these are the people who will be the final winners...". Yes, they say "we have heard" which does not only mean hearing by the ears, it means that we deeply understand and that we consciously believe; as I said earlier, faith and belief must be based on awareness, knowledge and consciousness.

"We have heard and we obey" is what the true believers say, that is, after our conscious belief, we now obey what God and His Messenger declare. "These are the winners". The word 'falaah' in this verse means: to be successful, to reach the ultimate, desired goal and to gain salvation. Other characteristics of believers are also described in the same verse: "those who are god-fearing and most careful and virtuous about their duties to Him, these are the successful ones." Being successful also means that they have reached their desired goal.

After this verse (Sura 24, Aya 52) there are two verses that are not related to our today's discussion, but the following verse (Ayah 55) says: "Allah has promised unto those amongst you who do believe and do good deeds that He will make them masters in the land...". This again is God's promise to believers, true believers, committed believers, please pay attention, God says most explicitly that we have promised to the believers that they will be rulers of the earth, that is, your religion, your school of thought and your Islamic ideas will overshadow the whole earth and will tower over all other schools of thought. God further says that your fears and troubles shall turn into safety and security; if you have suffered a lot in the course of history, then you could worship your God at ease and without worries and you will remove all anti-God elements from the face of

the earth. Such a great promise has God Almighty given to the truly faithful and committed Muslims.

There are some short-sighted Muslims who claim that all such promises will come about when the invisible Imam (AS) shall reappear. Of course the ultimate manifestation of this promise relates to the reappearance of the Imam, there is no doubt about it, but where in the verse quoted does it say that the realization of God's promise is only at that time? Which tradition claims this? Why should the meaning of the verse be limited? Didn't God made his promise good to the faithful at the early stages of Islam? This Quranic verse helped Muslims to enter Medina and people such as Balaal, who did not dare to utter 'La Ilaha Illallah' from fear of the Quraish tribe, proclaimed it most loudly from the tops of minarets. Those who had to bow down in front of some 300 man-made idols and some other human icons and who had been submissive to their carnal, animalistic whims went to Medina to worship God the One in that secure land without any worries or fears; there were no false partners, animate or inanimate, for God Almighty. So you see, this verse was realized there once, it could be realized a thousand other times. But what are the conditions for its realization?

The answer to this question lies in the same verse "God has promised" but to whom has God made this promise? "...to those who do believe and perform good, righteous deeds," that is, to those who try and act properly according to the requirements of their religion, yes, if so, "we will make them masters in the land." In this Quran I have in my hand, the translator has made a big mistake: he translates this part of the verse: "we will make you in *this* land! It means 'in the Arabian Peninsula'! But the phrase 'fil-ardh' means 'in the earth' throughout the earth', not this peninsula! This mistaken translation means that you will never be masters, say in Baghdad, in Persia, in Byzantium, in Andalucia and other spots on the earth!

Anyway, the verse "He will make them masters in the land, just as He made others before them" has a comprehensive meaning. We Muslims sometimes think that believers in God Almighty, since the beginning of human existence, have always been the underdogs whenever they were! And that being a Muslim, being

a believer in God and acting as God has ordained are correlatives to being punished, being tortured and being defeated. Such observations are quite the opposite of what the Quran teaches us. One or two years ago I delivered some sermons at Mirza Ja'far School of Theology and there I did elaborate how religion has, since its very inception, been progressing all the time. Religions have never taken a step backward and what some people consider as going back has in fact been progress.

Anyway, what we understand from the Quran is that it declares that the whole earth is yours, governing over it will be yours as it used to be under the rule of some ancient believing rulers. Further in the verse we read: "...and that He will certainly make firm the Faith that He chose for them in truth..." this means that He will help you establish the religion, the school of thought and the way of living; the religion He has chosen for them is the best, and this means: Islam, Islam that embraces all aspects of this life and the next world, the present and the future and the body and the soul; in short, it answers all your needs. The verse continues: "And He will change their fears to peace and safety."

Well, we may ask: what happens after they are safe and secure? Well, this godly safety and security does not mean that believers could now relax, do nothing, drink tea in cozy places and have fun all the time!

No, this kind of safety and security is for the believers to take steps and long strides towards the final destination of humanity or human perfection and to worship God and obey His injunctions and never bow down to anything or anybody but God Almighty "and serve no one beside Me" as the verse proclaims. Of course each word in these verses could be the subject of further careful discussions. Anyway, at the end of this verse (Sura 24, Aya 55) we read: "...wicked are they indeed who deny Me after this." The word 'faasigh' used here really means 'an ungrateful renegade and one who has stepped out of religion.'

And now I request Mr. Faatemi, our dear Quran reciter, to read the same verses we talked about today in order that his eloquent, sweet recitation will help the Quranic verses to penetrate your minds and souls, and I do ask all people to stay on and listen carefully to these verse if they don't really have something urgent to do. And before his recitation, let me say:

O God! Let our hearts be pure in what we say and do make us completely yours,

O God! Let us taste the sweetness of a unitarian life through Muhammad (SA)  
and his respected progeny,

O God! Remove all polytheistic tendencies from our hearts,

O God! Bless us with your own good; do away with misfortunes, calamities and  
differences from among all Muslims,

And: O God please engage the enemies of Muslims against one another.

6th Session

Good News (1)

7th Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 24, 1974)

*“O Humankind, you now have lucid evidence, from your own Lord, for it is indeed a Glorious light We have to you revealed.(174) Now those who do believe in God and hold fast unto Him, shall be admitted soon to His Mercy and to His graceful Boon, and He will guide them to Himself upon a very Direct Road(175)”*  
*(Sura Al-Nissa, Ayas 174&175)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, our discussion on the question of Faith is in fact a rudimentary one. All of us, in order to comprehend our religion and to recognize the basic principles, need to seriously follow the comprehension and cognition of the religion and do this in an enthusiastic manner and, to attain this comprehension, we ought to first come to know the value and the quality of Faith; so we do talk about Faith from this angle.

We have already talked about two or three fundamental aspects concerning Faith, that is, Faith being a conscious, not a blind, profession; the other aspect was that Faith must be accompanied by commitment and action, not based on a barren, dry belief resting in your mind or soul. The third point we mentioned was that Faith could not be occasional; this means that a believer's faith should be a continuous, comprehensive one. It should not be an opportunistic, occasional one or for some personal benefits; we discussed these in our previous sessions.

Now before I enter the main subject of Islamic teachings today, I must briefly explain a topic rather necessary and so I begin today's talk, and I think the whole discussion will take two sessions to complete, today and tomorrow. Therefore the main thing to discuss about Faith, the faithful and the consequences of being a faithful person or a true believer is to first find out what promises and good news God has given the believers, that is, to find out and comprehend what God gives the believers for their firm belief and their good deeds. Men who are used to trading things and to giving and taking will want to know what they get in their deals with God Almighty and what good news He shall give them.

I searched throughout the Quran and came across some 600 verses in which God has given the believers promises and many pieces of good news and pleasant



things to come about. And I think that in some 40 verses God has made His promises dependent on the firmness of the believers' faith. I give you these figures for you to know how my style of research is. All these 30 to 40 promises are great privileges for the believers absolutely necessary for their happiness and solution.

One of these good pieces of news is the question of Paradise: "They shall deservedly be living in the Gardens of Paradise, with streams beneath them flowing..."\*. As I said I noticed some 40 such verses but if we were to go over all of them, it would take 4 to 5 days. So I selected two verses for today's discussion but I'll take about a few more of them tomorrow, if God will.

Well, as I have jotted down in the pieces of papers given to you, we face the question: What does man require in order to embrace complete, comprehensive happiness and success? Everything required for this perfect happiness, have already been explained; they are about 12 subjects which I have written down for you. They include everything that provides the conditions for all human needs that we may imagine.

What I say is not based on prejudice about our religion and beliefs. No, these items written down for you, cover the conditions for the happiness of materialists and disbelievers also. Now we read these verses one after another and we'll see, whether even a materialist, if he possesses such conditions, will feel happy in his heart or not! And then, after we explain them fully, we'll return to the holy Quran, listen to its heart-pleasing verses about all those pleasant things that have been promised to the believers; and certainly: "...Allah and His Apostle did speak the truth..."\*\*. God and His Messenger never tell lies; this of course is our own belief who do believe in God the One, not that of the materialists!

The first need of men is 'guidance'; I try to explain this. What are the needs of a human being? He needs to know his goal of happiness and prosperity, what he wants to achieve, what his aim is in his life and how he wants to reach his goal. In addition to recognizing his aim, he should know from the beginning which ways he should travel on to reach it and which ways will take him there earlier. Isn't

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\* Sura 18, Aya 31.

\*\* Sura 33, Aya 22.

happiness the very element in man's life? And do not think that in this respect the view-point of a believer in God and a non-believing materialist differs at all; the latter also feels this and agrees with it. In the notes I handed to you I have called this need 'for having a goal and knowing the ways to reach it' as 'guidance'.

The second need of man in life is to do away with ignorance, arrogance and whatsoever dulls his wisdom and prevents him from understanding things clearly. There are many such obstacles to rational thinking and wisdom: ignorance, arrogance, illusions and superstitions are factors that prevent an individual, a group or a nation from using their God-given wisdom. Some despotic and oppressive systems also try to keep their people in utter darkness. All sorts of external and internal factors could block man's clear thinking and understanding and leave him in darkness of ignorance. One of the firm pillars for people's happiness and prosperity is to free themselves from any element that dulls their senses and their wisdom so that one could not see and understand things in the bright light of truth, so I called this second element 'light' as you read in your copies of my short notes.

The third point is that man should, in the long march towards happiness, free himself from all sorts of *internal* temptations, whims, anxieties and fears. Here please pay attention to my emphasis on 'internal' because internal factors that block man's progress to happiness are much stronger than external ones. Let me give you a simple example: sometimes a person's advance is blocked; he's told 'you have no permission to go this way, we don't let you'! Experience tells us that such people become more resistant and will defy the blockers in any possible ways; this is the external factor which is usually accompanied by force. But, at other times, the road is open but the intention to walk the path is weak, he says to himself: could you really walk all this long way? Maybe you'll never reach it! Perhaps there are thieves and robbers on the way, maybe there are wolves. They advise you, cool-heartedly or even in a fatherly tone; yet the road is open and you could go on. This sort of tempting and indirect urging is much more discouraging than creating a barricade of stones and ladders and saying: you can't go beyond this barrier.

This kind of unjustified anxiety and confusion has often been witnessed in our human history. You know how intensely some Jews supplicated to Moses and claimed that Moses could be mistaken and that God's promises to him might have been false! The Quran says that poverty, distress and affliction were so bad that they even shook some eminent believers and made them ask Moses: "...when will the help of God come...?"\* You see now that internal doubts and uncertainties may even shake the belief of some strong believers. So if one is to win happiness and success and to reach his desired destination, he must overcome such internal uncertainties and doubts, his spiritual non-safety and other anxieties. Thus, in the course of the long march towards a happy ending, one of the most important requirements is to do away with all internal and external factors that make him doubtful or uncertain. Perhaps it would be apt to mention a line from the famous Kumail Supplication when we say: 'O God, O God, O Lord, pray make all my limbs and senses strong enough to serve You, and make my heart and mind able to decide\*\*'; this means: please make me able to decide, to overcome all doubts, whims, temptations and weaknesses.

The fourth point is being sure that your actions will have results, fruitful results. Those who are hopeless of attaining their goals, will certainly not reach the destination of success and salvation. One must be absolutely certain that his actions and behaviour will definitely bring about pleasant results, that every step one takes on the right path, he or she will be one step nearer to the final goal. If you happen to be in a desert, when you already know which direction you must take, you'll finally reach your destination, but if you don't know which way you must go, you will be bewildered, going different directions, coming back or go in circles. That's why we say that you should be certain about your direction, and certain that you are on the right path and that your endeavours will be fruitful.

The fifth point, and a very important point, is that one's errors, wrong-doings and deviations could be compensated and could be forgiven. Any person, in the course of one's life, could commit mistakes and do wrongs. Now if one's wrong-doing stays on as an incurable wound or some act that may not be rec-

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\* Sura 2, Aya 214.

\*\* Mafaatih-Al-Jinan - Supplication of Komayl

ompened, he or she may commit more mistakes and always remain in a state of hopelessness. But if one is sorrowful of one's mistakes and sins and resolutely decides not to repeat them and truly repents, then his enthusiasm and hope for reaching the desired goal is redoubled; this is what we have written down for you as 'forgiveness and mercy'.

The sixth point is that the believer must always have something to fall back on; he must be certain that everywhere and under any condition, there is something or some assistance he could resort to. It's like a person who has a detailed, comprehensive road-map; he has this map in his pocket and so, whenever in doubt, he takes it out, looks at it and finds the right path.

The seventh point is that the believer, facing enemies and adverse circumstances, should seek and beseech God's help; this is another factor for attaining success and prosperity. Of course, a materialist does not believe in God, so with such a person, we do not bring in God, but we tell him: "Sir, while you are engaged in what you do, in your social activities, in the campaign for certain goal, if you were aware that a certain power, say, a metaphysical power, is behind you to assist you, even if you presume there could not be such a power, what would you then say?" His response to such a supposition might be: "it would be quite good, very interesting that a man could have some metaphysical power to help him when faced with enemies, adverse conditions, plots and ruthless violence and butchery." Well, believers do believe that such a great, metaphysical power is their patron and helper. Of course, materialists never have God in their calculations, they don't believe in the existence of God despite the fact that they are not absolutely certain that He does not exist! But believers do believe in God the Creator. With their reliance on God's boundless dominion over all that exist and beyond, they could certainly take longer and faster strides to achieve their happy goals.

The eighth point to be taken into account is for the believers to feel sure that they are superior to all adverse parties and to know for certain that finally the superiority will be theirs. This factor also has a wonderful effect on man to travel his path more easily.

The ninth point for the believer is to be sure that he will finally overcome all

adverse elements that block his path to success; one shouldn't think that his intensive effort will result in defeat! Such an approach will not end up in happiness. One of the most important components for man's happiness is certainly about final victory and this is true for individuals and social groups who believe they will overcome their enemies.

The tenth point is what we called 'fowz and falaah' meaning 'success and salvation', that is, after enduring all hardships, pressures and stumbling blocks, the believers shall reach their final destination.

The eleventh point is that one must employ all opportunities, provisions, reserves and treasures stored for man on the earth and in the sky: God's bounties on earth such as forests, mines and other materials vital for his life, the clouds and rains from the sky for cultivation and above all the God-given human intelligence, wisdom and initiative; he must employ and enjoy all such potentials. There are also factors and elements for man's happiness and success. All these factors are at work when man is alive and tries hard to benefit from them.

And finally the twelfth point is about man's post mortem life. When a man dies and apparently becomes inanimate, the believer knows that this state is like his first step in a new life. If he has spent his life doing good and worshipping God, then this new state is time for his real rest, for receiving rewards and enjoying the unimaginable blessing, boom and favour of God Almighty. Of course materialists do not believe in life after death and so the final results of all their endeavours come to an end when they die. One may raise an impossible question (according to them) and ask them: Suppose the moment you die, will be the beginning of your joy, tranquility and success, how is that?! But let's return to believers: for them the end of earthly life with all its hardships and sufferings is the beginning of a new life, rewards and the joys of God's paradise.

Well, the 12 points we enumerated were the necessary conditions for happiness and salvation; they are necessary for the happiness and beatitude of an individual, a community or a society. And now we are going to listen to the Quran to see that all these good things are promised to firm believers with commitment to faith and proper deeds. The Quran promises many factors and elements bringing about

happiness to the true believers; it says all these are for you: the light of Guidance, safety and security and spiritual tranquility. It also explains how fruitful your efforts shall be; and we could witness the realization of all these promises if we look carefully at history of humanity because God's tradition is always the same.

Now we listen to some verses of the Quran from various Suras. The first is a verse from Sura Jonah (Younus): "those who believe and do good works shall be guided by their own Lord because of their faith; beneath them streams will flow in the Gardens of Bliss"\*. You see, it refers to those who did believe and did good works; I must explain that the word 'saalih' (good, virtuous) indeed refers to actions carried out on the basis of faith, for faith commits one to certain deeds and carrying out such deeds in doing 'saalih' works. As the verse confirms God will guide them as a result of their firm faith, so the fact of being faithful will help them find their ways. Yet some people ask 'how could we be guided to the final destination'? And when you consider the attitude of such doubtful persons, you find out that their faith is not firm or if they do have faith, it is not followed by deeds. Yet if they act upon their faith, they'll receive guidance automatically. When one has faith and acts according to it, the ways and means of reaching the goal will be there and the paths will be open to them.

Taking the first step towards faith, none of the faithful, leaders or followers, may know what their tenth step would be. I sometimes give a smile to explain this: imagine you are in a desert at night and you only have a small torch or lantern that only sheds light about one meter in front of you, but the safe spot you want to reach is a few kilometers away. Now if you're told that you must travel all this distance by this small lantern, you may surprisingly say: but I can only see things in front of me for one meter! Well, the answer to this blind logic is: you take one more step and you see another meter in front of you, if you have faith and a persistent determination, you'll travel your long distance and you'll reach the desired location; isn't this a logical suggestion? You take firm steps and God will guide you because of your true faith.

In many other verses of the Quran, references are found about the question of

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\* Sura 10, Aya 9

a firm Faith. In one verse it is said that whenever a new verse was revealed, the disbelievers, the hypocrites and others with sickness in their hearts, asked: "Each time a Sura is revealed, some of them question: which of you has increased his faith by it?"\* Then the Quran answers them: this verse helps those who are believers and those who are on the right path to increase their faith and make it more steadfast; this means that it is in fact their own sincere faith that helps them receive more guidance. Now let's listen to another verse: "O Humankind, you have now lucid evidence from your own Lord for it is indeed a glorious Light We have revealed to you."\*\* But the point concerning our discussion is the next verse: "Now those who do believe in God and hold fast unto Him, shall be admitted soon to His Mercy and to His graceful Boon and He will guide them to Himself upon a very direct Road."\*\*\* So you see that God promises all that bliss and boom to those who believe, and we hear in this verse, a heart-felt faith is not enough, they must hold fast unto Him, that is, to follow God's ways and the injunctions of the revealed religion, then He will guide them to Himself, guides them to choose the closest and fastest ways to Him. This sort of guidance is for the true believers only because if you have faith but do not act upon it and forget your religious commitments to God, he will not guide you to Himself and you will be deprived of the Light mentioned in this verse which concerns the true believers only.

The next verse we read in this respect is an oft-repeated one, it says: "But those who struggle in Our cause, We'll surely guide them in Our ways, and the doers of any righteous deed, have God with them indeed."\*\*\*\* Again you notice that God says 'in Our ways'. Well, what are God's paths or His ways? The answer is: towards divine goals, all God's aims on earth. What are God's goals in more detail? We can mention justice, safety and security, serving God Almighty, the spiritual growth and perfection of His servants, cultivation of the land, prosperity of the people, happiness in the hearts of men and women and a happy preparation for the next world; We may add to the list of God's goals: absence of suspicion and jealousy, absence of polytheism, removal of disbelief, abolition of violence and

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\* Sura 9, Aya 124.

\*\* Sura 4, Aya 174.

\*\*\* Sura 4, Aya 175.

\*\*\*\* Sura 29, Aya 69.

savagery and the annihilation of rebellion, crimes, etc. So, God addresses those who struggle in His path and says that He will undoubtedly show them Our ways, He won't let them be confused and bewildered. There is a line of poetry by Attaar which summarizes this particular discussion; he says:

Set out for the journey and be stable

The road will tell you how to travel!

Well, God guides those who struggle on His path. This is true in all fields, not only in theology and understanding religion, but also in other investigations, social or international; anyone who has divine incentives and takes some firm steps, God Almighty will guide him towards the final goal for 'God is with those who do righteous deeds'.

What we said so far about 'guidance' was based on some verses from the holy Quran about God's guidance but there are many more verses in the Quran about 'guidance' and if we were to mention them all, we had to talk for 3 to 4 days. I have already said that 'light' is necessary for a happy, human life; this is the 'light' that has been promised to true believers: "God is the Walee (Patron) of the faithful, He leads them out of Darkness in to the Light..."\*.

Now what does the Arabic word 'walee' mean exactly? It has been translated as 'friend', 'helper', 'patron', guardian, etc. But I prefer to say that 'walee' is the one who is always with you because the word 'welaaya' originally means 'connection', 'adherence', and 'union'. So God is always with true believers, and He takes them out of darkness into Light. And what is meant by darkness? Darkness means all those factors and elements which keep humanity in spiritual and mental prison such as ignorance, superstition, arrogance, oppression in human systems and everything that keeps people away from knowledge, from human values and the light of cognition. God helps and guides the believers to free themselves from such chains but never guides the disbelievers, the unfaithful, the doubtful and the polytheists; these people are always anxious and restless and they receive no light and so they don't have a true recognition or understanding. How about 'kuffaar'?

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\* Sura 2, Aya 257.



The Quran says: ‘those who disbelieved’; those are the people who were most ungrateful, who rejected the divine gift to them. When you consider the original meaning of the word ‘kaafir’, you find out that they are not called ‘kuffaar’ because they rejected the religion. No the religion of Islam was a gift from God; it was revealed for their happiness, safety and prosperity; this is what they rejected, these ungrateful, unfortunate, stupid people. Thus the Quran says: “...but the infidels’ patrons are the devils who will drive them out of light into Darkness; they shall be the inmates of the Hell-fire, and lasting dwellers.”\* As you notice, they were rejecters of God’s bounty and bliss, they followed the satans and devils and so God left them in their darkness of hearts and minds and so they will be the companions of the Fire forever.

Well, in a few minutes our dear Quran reciter, Mr. Rezaee will recite the verses we discussed today in his pleasing voice and you’ll then find out that the verses become more pleasant in your ears. Now I only read out the few verses I selected for finishing today’s discussion: “O you believers do remember Allah most often; and celebrate His praise morning and evening; He it is Who sends blessings on you as do His angels that He may bring you out of utter Darkness into Light.”\*\* These are the glorious promises of the Quran to true believers; such promises and good news are abundant in the Quran and if I was to quote them all, it would have taken days. Tomorrow I’ll try to bring this discussion to an end, if God will.

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\* Sura 2, Aya 257.

\*\* Sura 33, Ayas 41-43.

7th Session

Good News (2)

8th Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 24, 1974)

*“Embracers of the Faith whose hearts are set at rest by God’s remembrance, surely by God’s remembrance the heart is set at rest(28) Boundlessly blessed are those who do have faith, and do good deeds; their journey’s end shall be the finest.(29)”*

*(Sura Al-Ra’d, Ayas 28-29)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, in previous sessions we said that God Almighty has, in the Quran, promised many good things to the believers for their happiness and success in this worldly life and in the hereafter. We have already explained dozen of such good news; they are all decisions and categorical promises. Two of those promises were ‘guidance’ and ‘light’ which were already made clear. Two other important factors will be the subject of today’s discussion. Yet I ask you to read the Quran yourselves and find the relevant verses. Those who know Arabic will find them directly and others should try to search for the relevant verses through good translations.

Well, one of these important factors is the final rewards in the next world; it’s one of those rewards. It would be most fruitful if you did try to find out for yourself about those verses of the Quran in which certain rewards for true believers and those who perform good deeds are promised. One of these promises is the fact that believers will have superiority over their enemies. See for yourself, where in the Quran, God promises that you’ll have the upper hand over your adversaries if you have a firm belief and act according to the requirements of your faith. Find such verses and if anyone of you knows one, please say it loud

One among the audience says: “Be not infirm and do not grieve, and you shall gain the upper hand if you believe.”\*

Yes, that’s one but, as I said, there are other verses in which God promises you victory over your adversaries and that He will empower you to have the upper hand. I read two verses: “God has decreed: I surely shall prevail, Myself and My apostles...”\*\*. And the other verse: “And that Our hosts will surely be the

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\* Sura 3, Aya 139.

\*\* Sura 58, Aya 21.

winners.”\* There are plenty more of such verses in the Quran. So please study the Quran carefully; you should not focus on finishing the reading of a whole chapter or a *joz*’ (one 30<sup>th</sup> of the Book) but try to understand the Quran. There is a Tradition from the holy Prophet (PBUH) or from an Imam (AS) that it is not important whether you finish reading a whole Sura;\*\* it is the deliberation in the Ayas and understanding it deeply that matters. So, read the Quran and find out the Ayas in which God has promised good news to the believers, the good news and promises that are the fundamental elements for human success, happiness and salvation. By this approach, I want you to delve into the holy Quran and find the relevant Ayas yourselves.

Even if I tried my best to the last day of the holy month of Ramadan, I could only explain and interpret some 50 to 60 verses, but the Quran contains some 6236 verses and that’s why I recommend that you must make yourselves more familiar and closer to the Quran. And, as I said earlier, those who know Arabic, should try to make their familiarity more firm and those who don’t, should do their best to learn Arabic as well as find good translations of our holy Book, and when you perform this, find out which verses correspond to the good news and promises by God, which I pointed in this session.

Today I shall explain two more points regarding the promises made in the Quran. But I repeat my request that you to read the Quran whenever you could; don’t leave for after Ramadan, start as from this evening, with the purpose of more and more intimation and familiarity with the Quran and employing its teachings in your behaviour and deeds. After all, the Quran is the everlasting source of our learning, knowledge, education and understanding; whatever makes us happy, successful and prosperous could all come out of the Quran. This does not mean that we should not benefit from the correct and documented Traditions of the holy prophet (SA) and the Imams (AS) and the ‘Nahj-al-Balaagha’. Certainly we ought to benefit from them too alongside the Quran. But the Quran is the word of God and most available to us all .we should try to always carry a small copy of the Quran in our pockets.

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\* Sura 37, Aya 173.

\*\* Al-Kaafi - Chapter Fazl-Al-Quran

Well, I have written down three words in the papers handed out to you; they are ‘certainty, tranquility and safety’ which are almost near- synonyms. I shall express my impression of these words first and then I’ll return to the Quranic verses in this respect and tell you what the Quran teaches us about certainty in the heart and tranquility in the mind and soul; I shall make clear what they exactly mean. What sort of repose, peace of mind and calmness of the heart is meant by the Quran? Does peace of mind and calmness of the soul or the spirit mean that our minds and souls should be devoid of all sorts of dynamism, as when we are half-asleep or semi-conscious? No, the peace of mind and calm of heart mentioned in the Quran are meant to heal and remove all human anxieties, restlessness and temptations in the soul.

Let me cite a couple of examples in this regard to make the matter more clear: imagine two students who are about to take part in an important examination. One of them has studied his lessons deeply and has reviewed them several times; he has also raised the questions and problems in the field with his friends and is now quite ready to take the exam with a clear mind. The second student has hurriedly studied some parts of his lessons and because of this he cannot rely on his memory completely. Now, could we claim that these two students will participate in the exam with an equal spiritual strength! No, not at all. The first student, when entering the examination hall, enjoys a calm heart with no stress or anxiety and he tells himself ‘no matter what questions are asked, I could answer them because I know my lessons in and out. The second student, however, is very anxious, restless and unsure. He feels that he is in a small boat afloat on an ocean, constantly being pulled in different directions by the winds, not knowing what the end will be. The same state of mind could be found in two persons standing in front of a judge in a judicial court. The same thing is true in social activities, in social struggles and throughout history; you could detect these two different states of mind or peace of heart.

And another example I may cite is about two soldiers who step in the battle field with different morale. One is confident of his supply of weapons, his commanders being competent military leaders, aware of the enemy’s weak points and the selfless courage of his comrades; he also knows that support groups are also arranged and ready to come to their assistance when necessary and enters the battle

field with such high morale. The second soldier is the one who does not believe in the sufficiency of his weaponry and in the skill and knowledge of his commanders; he sees himself as small and weak in the face of a big, strong enemy; he may feel bare-handed in confrontation with an enemy armed to the teeth. Will these two soldiers be equal in bravery, morality and self-sacrifice?

As I said earlier, these were only examples to make the subject under discussion a little more clear. In fact I want to draw your attention to the essence of trust in oneself and confidence in one's beliefs and peace of mind. This does not mean that, in the case of the confident soldier, he puts his head on his boots and rests or lights a cigarette! No, he is watchful of all the enemy's movements and is ready for combat at any moment but he is not anxious, he is not distressed, the future is clear and bright before him, he is not frightened of anything and he is sure that final triumph will be his.

Before discussing the kind of moral and spiritual firmness as described in the Quran, let me say something about a traveller who aims to reach a certain destination. Many factors and motives may hinder his journey; fear is one of these factors which may stop him from continuing his journey: fear of thieves and high-way robbers, fear of wolves and other beasts, fear of sleeplessness and lack of food or finally fear of not reaching his destination. All these elements may shake his resolve.

Another adverse factor is greed and avarice; greedy about what? Greed for a comfortable way of life; the traveller may say to himself: if I do not set out on this journey and not try to reach this perilous destination; I could be at home in the warm bosom of my children and wife and not be in any danger. This is what may happen to an ordinary person, to a weak-minded man who is not ready to endanger his comfort. Or he may be advised: if you don't choose to walk in the direction of your ideal, such and such a high position will await you. So you see what makes a man hesitate to treat on the path of his ideals. Yes, they are fears and greeds, and if we analyze these two factors in detail, we would come across dozen of factors such as leading an easy life, opportunistic tendencies, profit-seeking, wishing for a sound, healthy end to his affairs and the like.

Now, let's think of a person who has initially overcome all those temptations and blocking obstacles and has finally set out on his journey. Even then, would those discouraging elements leave him alone?

No, they're still there in his mind and soul. The traveller must have a strong resolve while he is on the way. Those negative factors are still at work. They make him think of his love for his children, of his wife and his comfortable life before; there are other incentives such as the attraction of wealth, positions and the fact that he may lose his life in the quest of his ideal. Thus he must possess such a very strong will and absolute dedication to his cause that will not allow those factors to shake his determination.

Now what are the qualifications of such a person? One must be an embodiment of the Quranic verse: "O Soul serene, delighting, come to your Lord again, enchanted and enchanting."<sup>\*</sup> You see, those who may travel to the end of the path of God and reach their ideal, are the ones who are absolutely certain and absolutely tranquil along the path, that is, the attraction of faith, the greatest attraction, and love of God drives them on. This greatest of attractions overshadows all other worldly attractions; then all such attractions would be worthless, empty and even ludicrous. As an example, if you throw a stone up on the Himalayas, this great mountain will bring down the stone through its strong gravity but the gravity of this huge mountain is almost zero compared to the gravitational force of the earth, and of course you may extend the comparison to the gigantic gravity of the Sun.

So you may imagine the gravitational force of your faith in God Almighty, that is, once you truly believe in God and His infinite might, there shall be no other force or factor to rival it or make you abandon His glorious path. All those worldly attractions are truly infinitesimally small vis-à-vis your firm faith. There have been many instances of people with weak beliefs, even in the early days of Islam, who were attracted by a small worldly attraction and did go astray from the path of God. I don't cite any examples regarding such people; you yourselves could read about them in history books.

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\* Sura 89, Ayas 27-28.

I now try to make the meanings of the three words more clear. The first is ‘it-minaan’ meaning certainty, confidence and trust, in short, it is the certainly in our souls and tranquility of our hearts. This does not mean that our souls and hearts should be motionless or senseless and not to advance to higher stages. This state of calm in your soul means that it is not disturbed by transient, worldly factors and not drawn this way and that way by various attractions; it means that love, belongings, whims and temptations could not dominate it and would not govern it. Then because of its firm faith, it could make a fast journey to the final destination of humanity and the purpose of Creation. This is the true sense of ‘certainty’.

The second word is ‘sukoun’ or ‘sakeena’, roughly meaning ‘tranquility’, ‘spirit of repose’, ‘peace and calm’. The Quran says: “But Allah sent down His *sakeena* on His Messenger and upon believers...”<sup>\*</sup> I think this concept is observed in three or four spots in the Quran. Unfortunately I have not written them down in the two pieces of photocopies you have in your hands. If I wrote down more verses, then it would need more pages and we didn’t have enough papers or means to copy them! What great facilities we have at our disposed in this mosque!

Anyway, one of those verses mentioning ‘sakeena’ is the momentous event of the Battle of Hunain<sup>\*\*</sup> when Muslim warriors were victorious in the first stage of the battle, so they became too proud of themselves and thought that no force on earth could defeat them because they outnumbered the enemies. But then the enemies attacked them, in the rather small valley of Hunain where numbers did not matter, from different sides, and they were about to suffer defeat. And here the Quran says: “But Allah sent down His ‘sakeena’ on His Messenger and upon believers...”. This means that after the Muslims came to their senses, and after left behind their arrogance and were alert again, God Almighty helped them to overcome their enemies.

Another instance when ‘sakeena’ is mentioned, is when the infidels and polytheists of Mecca planned to murder the holy Prophet and the Prophet decided to flee Mecca, go to Medina to form the community of Muslims. The Prophet has powerful ideals and an iron determination to fight the pagans, but he must first

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\* Sura 9, Aya 26.

\*\* One of the Prophet’s battles after the conquest of Mecca.



reach Medina safely because if the enemies could find him and murder him on the way, none of Prophet's Islamic ideals would be realized. The Prophet, knowing that the pagans are following him, hides in a small cave and "then God sent down His 'sakeena', peace of mind and tranquility upon him..." at those highly sensitive moments of life and death. As you notice, all this means that if you are a true believer with a firm faith, you shall enjoy God-sent calm to face all dangerous conditions.

The third word I meant to explain, is 'safety and security'. Of course this does not mean 'social safety or security' but the spiritual safety of the individual believer. Social security means that all people in a community live in peace, that they enjoy their equal rights and legitimate wants. But the peace of mind and spiritual calm means that the faithful do not have fears, anxieties in their minds and are most firm in their beliefs.

Now we recite some verses of the Quran regarding the spiritual qualities of the faithful: "those who have embraced the Faith, whose hearts are set at rest by God's remembrance; surely by God's remembrance the heart is set at rest."\* This remembrance of God is the same great source of gravity we have already explained, the greatest attraction that belittles all other worldly attractions in the eyes of the believers. Why has so much emphasis been put on daily prayers? Why is it said that if your 'salaat' (prayers) are not approved by God, all your other endeavours would be fruitless? Why is the pilgrimage to Mecca once in your life, fasting once a year, 'zakaat' and other religious obligations on special occasions, but 'salaat' must be performed *every day* and five times a day, and if more than that, the better? Why is it so? I have already talked about 'salaat' in some of our sessions. Well, the short answer to the afore-mentioned question is: performing prayers is the capsulated remembrance of God, the essence of prayers is the remembrance of God. The Quran itself describes prayers as: "...keep up prayers, for prayers indeed helps you avoid abominations and unlawful, wicked deeds; surely the greatest thing is God's remembrance..."\*\*. As you see prayers do help you avoid wicked things but the remembrance of God is more significant than

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\* Sura 13, Aya 28.

\*\* Sura 29, Aya 45.

that, because one of its values is that hearts are at rest vis-à-vis all temptations, anxieties, worldly attractions and other petty whims; this is the real meaning of God's remembrance.

I repeat: "those who have embraced the Faith and their hearts are at rest with God's remembrance."<sup>\*</sup> I have also used the words 'stability', 'firmness' and 'constancy' in the copies you have in your hands because, as I have added in brackets, those believers will be guided by God himself. The reason for this is that in the previous verse we quoted the Quran saying: "those only who have faith and do not taint their faith with idol-worship, shall attain protection, for they are *already upon the guided terrain*." What guidance? Obviously 'Guidance of God'. You see that remembrance of God has such tremendous effects and that 'certainty, firmness and steadfastness' immensely affect man's success and prosperity. The believer enjoys this great spiritual superiority. Then we have: "...those who do have faith and do good deeds, are happily blessed and have a fair journey's end."<sup>\*\*\*</sup> This means that they are blessed and happy in this world and their state in the next world will be the finest.

At this juncture I have written down some comments concerning Prophet Abraham and his clan's disputing with him. The Quran says: "and his clan disputed with him..."<sup>\*\*\*</sup>. The Quran does not say what they told him but from Abraham's response to them, we may infer what they said. Abraham asks them: "...have you come to argue with me concerning God, while I am guided by God Himself...". This means that 'I have been guided, I am on the right path, I am quite clear about my faith, that is, you could not make me doubt my belief with your godless arguments. According to the Quran, Abraham goes on: "...nay, I have no fear of those mute idols you join with Him, for nothing happens unless Allah be willing...". What Abraham says is: I fear nothing but God Almighty but those things you join with Him, do not frighten me at all. From this response by Abraham, we may infer that the polytheists had said to Abraham: you must fear our idols, they may ruin you, they could put an end to your life and they could, at least, make your

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\* Sura 29, Aya 45.

\*\* Sura 13, Aya 29.

\*\*\* Sura 6, Ayas 80-82.

life miserable. This fact becomes clearer when we read what Abraham said next: “... Indeed everything falls within the knowledge of my Lord, will you not ever take heed?!” He means that everything is within the power and knowledge of my Lord, His knowledge of everything is all-extensive, it covers all; thus are you not moved, can’t you go back to your senses, won’t you use your faculty of wisdom?

Then Abraham goes on: “How could I fear your idols? Is it not you who should fear your joining gods and icons as partners unto God without His sanction?!...”\*. Here we well understand what the whole dispute was about. Abraham says: you should fear greatly. The pagans presumably told Abraham to fear their idols. Shall I fear your lifeless idols or some animate partners you have associated with God Almighty?

Which idols or partners? We may ask. Briefly speaking, we know through history that the infidels and pagans set up all sorts of idols and partners: calves, stones, pieces of wood as well as such persons as Pharaoh and Nimrod. So Abraham says: it’s you fools who should fear God because your deeds lack “...any sanction sent down by Him.” This means that there is no reason or logic behind your wrongful habits. The verse continues: “...so which side is more deserving of safety and security, if you ever comprehend?”\*\*. We see what Abraham means. He in fact is saying: I deserve to be spiritually safe and secure because I believe in God and I do love Him. I have been guided by God, so I have no worries; but you poor people, you have no proof and no rational argument for your wrong, deviated deeds. And in the following verse we read: “Those only who have faith and do not taint their faith with idol-worship (iniquity) shall attain safety and protection for they are already upon the guided path.”\*\*\* Well, so much so concerning ‘safety and security’.

Now, in the notes passed to you I have written that the 4<sup>th</sup> factor is ‘fruitfulness’, which is, the fourth good piece of news given to the believers by God Almighty. This means that when a believer has a clear destination or purpose in mind and is surely hopeful and optimistic about his ultimate goal, and that his endeavors will

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\* Sura 6, Aya 81.

\*\* Sura 6, Aya 81.

\*\*\* Sura 6, Aya 82.

certainly be fruitful, then he or she takes firmer steps on the way to the goal, is never shaken or worried and knows that his or her deeds and struggles will never be wasted. The believer who knows that each of his steps will bring him closer to the goal, will certainly take faster and firmer steps; but if the believer is in doubt about the fruitfulness of his attempts, he won't be as steadfast, firm and patient as necessary. We must then know that a true believer is certain that his endeavours will not be wasted.

There are numerous verses in the Quran which declares that the deeds and endeavours of believers shall not be wasted. I give you some examples: "...surely God does not allow a loss of wages to the doers of good."\* In the Sura the Cave, we read: "the faithful, who did right and good, must be most certain that We would never let go waste the wage of those who raced after good deeds."\*\* Similar verses, as I said, are numerous in the Quran. I took a glimpse at the copy of the Quran available here and I found some 12 verses in some parts of the Sura the Cow.

Further we may look at the verses in the same Sura concerning the change in the direction of '*Qibla*'\*\*\*. Before quoting the relevant verses, I must say a few words about the history of Qibla. Before the '*hijra*' of the holy Prophet from Mecca to Medina, the Muslims prayed in the direction of Ghods (Jerusalem) as did the Jews and the Christians but, after some 16 months of their residence in Medina, God's revelation ordered them to change their Qibla and pray in the direction of Mecca: "...now We assign to you a Qibla that you will best like, you shall turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque\*\*\*\*, no matter where you are..."\*\*\*\*\*. There are some 9 verses in Sura the Cow in this regard which I do not feel necessary to read them now.

Well, one of these verses explains to the Prophet and the believers why this change was brought about. Briefly speaking, it is said that this change was a test of true believers: How far are you ready to abandon what you used to do and to say goodbye to your habits and traditions. Now one may question: How about all

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\* Sura 11, Aya 115.

\*\* Sura 18, Aya 30.

\*\*\* The direction to which Muslims turn in prayer.

\*\*\*\* The mosque wherein the Ka'ba is located in the city of Mecca.

\*\*\*\*\* Sura 2, Aya 144.

those prayers you performed towards Jerusalem? Were they all in vain? No, not at all, they are approved in the sight of God, but the space of time between the two Qiblas was only meant to put you to a divine test.

Now let us read the relevant verses again: "...and the direction of the Qibla, that which you used to turn to, We altered only to distinguish the Messenger's true adherents from those who turn on their heels..."\*. This means distinguishing true believers from those who only look at the past, from those who may easily turn away from the faith, and from some quibblers amongst you. This verse goes on: "...this was indeed a hard, momentous that except for those blessed by Allah's Guidance, for God will never let go this faith of yours to waste; indeed God is Mercifully Most Kind to humankind." This last sentence is a part of our logical argument 'God will never let your faith go to waste', that is, every step you take, every good you perform and every move you make, will advance you towards your goal in the path of spiritual perfection. This verse and many other verses in the Quran give the believers the good news of God's promise that what you do for God's sake is not ineffective; it is indeed fruitful. If this state of mind is realized in believers, then walking forward in godly direction of spiritual perfection will become easier and easier everyday. And now I should only mention that in tomorrow's session we will be discussing the most important question of all, the Unity of God.

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\* Sura 2, Aya 143.

Chapter Two

Monotheism

(Unity of God)

8th Session

Monotheism in Islamic Weltanschauung

9th Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 25, 1974)

*“Allah, there is no other god but He, the Ever-living Bearer of all beings, not a moment of rest or sleep may seize Him; whatever is there in the heavens and on the earth to Him belongs; who dares to intercede before Him, except by His own leave. He knows absolutely all things that seem after or before to humans; they cannot comprehend a thing of His knowledge except that which He please, His throne extend over the heavens, and over the earth, and holding up the same never burdens Him, for He is the Most High, the All-Supreme.”*

*(Sura Al-Baqara, Aya 255)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, in this session and possibly in two or three meetings in coming day, we try to sort out the Quranic verses regarding monotheism and to translate them for you in order that you yourselves are able to understand what monotheism or unity of God means according to the Quran and what commitment and deeds pursue the belief in monotheism in your life.

Surely you have not forgotten what we said in our previous meetings concerning your conscious belief in all religious principles; this means that we must really understand them and have sufficient knowledge about them, that is, we should not follow those principles blindly so that our faith in them will guide our commitments and actions in our lives. Certainly our faith will bring about commitments in our individual behavior, in our social practice and, generally speaking, we may say faith has a great role to play in human life and in human history. We must understand monotheism with full awareness and then try to find out what obligations and commitments this faith puts on the shoulders of the faithful. Is belief in monotheism a mere concept to believe in without any responsibilities and devoid of any commitments? Is it only the knowing of some truth which does not accompany any duties, obligations and commitments? Well, we refer to the Quran itself to find out the answers to these questions.

Therefore, today we will recite some verses regarding monotheism and explain



them from one view-point and tomorrow other verses will be read and explained from a different angle. Of course, I do not claim that, through a two-day discussion of monotheism with the help of Quranic verses in this respect, I will be able to discuss and explain all dimensions of monotheism which in fact is as great as a shoreless ocean; no, certainly others who may have more time than me and are more observant and with a clearer insight could do a better job. I try to explain monotheism in the short time available and within the capacity of such a gathering\*.

Another point I like to mention is that explaining monotheism may seem a hard discussion; it may sound like discussing a heavy, academic topic rather than a sermon by a preacher. But I prefer the former way because I ask myself: why should all lectures and sermons by us be easy, common and usual subjects? Or, because we are in the month of Ramadan and facing a fasting audience, why should we always talk about sweet, emotional or entertaining subjects? In short, I believe that we ought to become familiar with higher and deeper concepts and try to digest them even empty stomachs!

Thus I ask you, sisters and brothers, who are present at this meeting, to think deeply about what you hear whether our discussion seems to you to be difficult or light. You could do some studies about our discussions and talk about them with your friends; let us do away with the so-called difficult topics and try to understand them as much as we could.

The next point is that I do not expect you to agree one-hundred percent with all I say and opine, no, what I say should be some food for thought. Scrutinize what you hear and think about them deeply and carefully through your own mental power and common sense; and follow the meaning of the famous verses in the Quran: "...thus give good news to my devout servants who hearken the words and follow the best in it..."\*\*.

Anyway, we shall analyze monotheism from two view-points; yet there may be other view-points which we shall explain during our discussion. Well, the first question concerns 'monotheism in the *weltanschauung* of Islam'. What is

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\* It should be noted that in these meetings all sort of people: students, shop-keepers and many ordinary religious persons of all ages took part.

\*\* Sura 39, Aya 17-18.

monotheism in the world-view of Islam? The second question that I have written down for you already, is ‘monotheism in the ideology of Islam’; I use the word ‘ideology’ for those who are not familiar with concepts of ‘world-view and weltanschauung’. Monotheism is included both in the world-view of Islam and its life-giving ideology.

In addition, monotheism shows itself in all Islamic injunctions, legal matters and other non-fundamental aspects in our religion; so if you even come across a verdict or injunction in which there is no monotheism or some sort of weak monotheism, you must immediately know that it is not Islamic, for monotheism is like a soul in the corpus of Islamic injunctions and it is like a pure, clean blood that runs through all of the corpus called Islamic; you cannot find a law or injunction in Islam which has no sign or colour of monotheism or the unity of God Almighty.

Well, now we go back to the question of monotheism in the world-view of Islam. What does the Islamic world-view mean? Let me explain: when any of you, as a human being, think about the world and the universe, you may have certain images in your mind, and imagine far-fetched ideas about them; or when you think about the existence of man, the concept of universe and the relation between man and the shore-less space, stars and galaxies and the meta-physical world, you may come to certain conclusions for yourselves, this could be called your own world-view. All schools of thought do have a special world-view.

These kinds of interpreting the world and metaphysical world are called ‘world-views’; it simply means how you look at the whole world and what conclusions you draw from your observation. Possessing a world-view does not, as some ordinary people think, mean ‘far-sighted, well-travelled or most experienced’, no it is not used in such senses.

Briefly speaking, we may define world-view as: the impression or interpretation man has about the world and his surrounding universe; in this definition, you may, instead of man, insert a school of thought, an ideology, a cult or a religion or a social institution; they all have their own weltanschauungs or world-views. So does Islam. And now I try to briefly explain the world-view of Islam as far as the

question of monotheism is concerned. Islam believes that everything in this vast universe and on our own earth, from the smallest creatures and things to the greatest stars and galaxies, animate or inanimate, and humans who possess the power of wisdom, insight and intelligence, they all are the created beings dependent on a supreme power or source. Islam believes that beyond what we see and what we don't see, beyond all our experimental sciences have achieved so far, and beyond all tangible or non-tangible phenomena, there is a reality much higher, more supreme, greater and more noble which has created all and everything by its most powerful hand; and we give a name to it: God or Allah.

Thus we claim that the world of existence has no independence of its own, it has not created itself, and it has not boiled up from inside itself, but that it is the creation of a most powerful source. As our knowledge and scientific discoveries advance, we find out, more than before, that all those millions of galaxies, all those yet unknown worlds and all those small particles within an atom, did not come about by themselves; they are not accidental and they are not purposeless. We look at the existing world through such insight.

What I said so far explains the world-view of Islam on the question of God's unity or monotheism. It centres on Allah who has created all there is and is much higher than anything we imagine. This God possesses all good attributes intrinsically, that is, He is Alive, He is the All-knower, the Omnipotent, He has His own intention and determination; His life does not originate from others and His knowledge has not been acquired.

The reign of all universe or cosmos is in His hand. What weight do the parts and particles of the worlds or the people in them have in comparison with Him? Are His created beings like children who separate from their mothers? No, not at all, all created things and beings are in need of Him every single moment, they need Him every moment to exist and stay alive, they are in need of His Will and Power, they are all His servants and His creatures. He has created everything according to certain, exact disciplines, according to certain exact laws and according to certain orders and plans. Today science is discovering some of these laws but this does not relate to our discussion today. Also, as I said, I am only explaining the

world-view of Islam and, in this discussion; I am not debating the pros and cons of the existence of God. Of course if you're interested in the proofs and reasons for the existence of God, there are many books and researches about it which you could obtain and read. One of these books is edited by a foreign learned man; I think the name is John Clover under the title of 'Proving God's Existence'; it has been translated into Persian by some qualified translators. The book consists of 40 articles written by scientists in different fields; they all try to prove the necessity of God's existence mainly on the basis of the tangible intelligent order and discipline in the cosmos.

Well, let me go back to our Islamic world-view. In this world-view, we believe that the universe has a Creator, a builder and, as some say, it has a great, pure and fine spirit, and that all created beings are under the dominance of this Creator. This means that when a Muslim thinks about the universe from his Islamic view-point, he does not see it as an independent entity but sees it as dependent on a higher power. In our future discussions we shall find out how this world-view affects our individual and social lives.

In this respect I have selected a verse from the Sura the Cow (Aya 255). We recite it, translate it and say a few words about each sentence in this verse: "Allah, there is no other god but he...". We cannot find an exact equivalent for Allah. Who is Allah? Who is God Almighty? Perhaps 'a Deity to be worshipped' is a better translation for 'there is no god but He'. Allah is the God we worship, we revere, we are His humble servants, we entrust our lives into His hand. But there are people whose god is their own whims, passions and carnal desires; those who allow a despot to run their lives are following the Satan; those who follow superstitions and empty traditions are the servants of these deviations, and any worldly factor or force that dominates and unconditionally rule over them, could be considered as their god.

'There is no god but He', does this mean that there are no gods in this world? There are thousands of idols and icons in this world that are worshipped by some people; there were some 360 clayey and wooden idols in the House of Ka'ba before the advent of Islam and there were plenty more of dolls and idols that are

loved and worshipped in this world. There were some rulers and despots who were as gods in the eyes of some people. So when it is said ‘there is no god but He’, it means that they are not God, they are not real or lawful; this means that if you worship anything or anybody but God the One, you are committing sins, you are acting against reality and truth; except Allah, none is worth being an object of your adoration or worships.

Then we read in this verse “...the Ever-Living...”. Yes, all others are dead or in the process of dying, the inanimate things are obviously so but animate and intelligent beings are the same, they were not alive before and they won’t be alive after a while, the lives of these living creatures are always being threatened by many factors such as a small stroke in their hearts; anyway they die after some years. So what sort of living is that? The Ever-Living, the truly and genuinely alive is He, the lives of all created beings are as gifts by Him and blessings from Him, and Him we call God. The next attribute in the verse is ‘al-qaiyum’ meaning the Bearer of all beings, the Self-Subsisting and Supporter of all. He is there for ever, all depend on Him for their lives, if He does not will, none will be left alive in the cosmos.

Then we read: “...not a moment of rest (slumber) may seize Him...”. What is the exact meaning of this sentence? It means: not for the slightest moment will He be negligent, inconsiderate or inattentive in His Supreme Being. All other earthly idols are in sleep of negligence, carelessness and ignorance concerning themselves, the people under their yoke and the world they live in temporarily; all their knowledge and consciousness is false.

In Sura Abraham we read: “Have you not thought of those who repay God’s grace with unappreciation, and drive their people with them into the House of Ruination, known as Gehenna? They will surely reach it and it’s a wretched station!”\* These verses of the Quran were recited by Musa Bin Ja’far to the Khalif Haroun-al-Rasheed; he told Haroun: ‘you seem to be one of those people!’ yes, those who did not appreciate God’s bounties to them and led themselves, their kith and kin and their followers with Hell and what a horrendous place is Hell; and Haroun was sunk in ungratefulness, negligence and ignorance.

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\* Sura 14, Ayas 28-29.

The one who is never neglectful is God Almighty, the true ruler of all the worlds. The Quran says that He never slumbers or rests or sleeps. Why was it necessary to mention such obvious points? Well, in our further discussion of monotheism, we'll find out that every little point in this respect is the negation of the deity of others vis-à-vis God. All such points refer to the defects and shortcomings of all other beings except God. All the points found in the definition of monotheism are those that every Unitarian believer ought to follow in life. We shall say a little more about this in future discussions.

The Quranic verse goes on: "...whatever is there in the heavens, and on the earth to Him belongs; who dares to intercede before Him except by His own permission?...". We know of no other power who could talk and mediate and plead before God except 'intercession', but this is realized only after God's leave and permission. The prophets, the imams, the truest believers and martyrs may intercede by God's permission. So we see that even such distinguished believers cannot be separate powers from God to have powers of their own, no, they are servants who have been blessed by God and may obtain God's permission to intercede.

And then we have "...He has absolute knowledge of everything that seem as *before* or *after* to humans; they cannot comprehend a thing of His knowledge except that which He please ...". This means that God encompasses everything including the lives of humanity and that human knowledge of God is limited unless He otherwise decide.

As you see, through what we recited so far, we have only two classifications in the world: God Almighty and His created beings, there is no third class. From the smallest atoms to intelligent humans, they all are servants of God. In this viewpoint, that is, the servitude to God, there is no difference or privilege between two beings in the world or in the heavens, even our holy Prophet is equal to other men in this respect, they are all encompassed by God. The greatest believers possess no power vis-à-vis God; their greatness lies in the fact that their bodies and souls are absolutely submissive to the Almighty. In our daily prayers, we say 'I witness that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger'. As you see the word

‘servant’ precedes ‘messenger’, that is, our attention is first drawn to his being the servant of God.

Let’s read the rest of the verse: “...His Throne extends over the heavens and over the earth and holding them up never burdens Him...”. And “...for He is the most High, the All-Supreme.” That means that He is superior and more glorious than whatever you may think.

Well, what do we understand from the delicate points in this verse? You and I may comprehend some of them and there could be many other fine points that you and I don’t understand. The sentence ‘there are no gods but He’, may convey many important points to people like, say, Imam Zein-al-Abideen or to other great believers in the Unity of God. Apart from some social and ideological points you may learn from this verse, what else do we comprehend from the whole verse? I believe what we learn is a general insight into the Oneness of God.

Briefly speaking, monotheism means that throughout the sphere of existence there is only one power and that is God; there is one source of life, knowledge and energy and it is God’s and that all phenomena and everything in the cosmos of existence are obedient to God, are dominated by God and serve His sublime purpose including believers and non-believers; they are submissive to Him.

Certainly understanding this world-view and knowing the ideology of Islam bears many consequences in Islam’s practical schemes for the society as a whole. Let me give you a simple example to avoid philosophizing: when we know that all human are equal in the sight of God and in obedience to Him, then it would be quite wrong and cruel to see a slave bowing down in front of an emperor, say the Roman Emperor Valerian, who executed and tortured Christians and made them kneel down in prostration at his feet. Why should it be so? Are the Valerians of the world not bound by the power of God? Or is the slave an inferior person in God’s creation? Here I must add that this some emperor was captured in a war against a Persian king and made to kneel down in front of him! And some historians wrote that he caused the wrath of God to fall upon him for his previous cruel actions.

Now if we lacked this Islamic world-view, the emperors, the wealthy, the

land-owners and the ruling cliques could claim that they were superior, privileged people who enjoyed special rights not granted to others, that they were created to rule and command and others were created to obey them in subjugation and that they were servants of some gods who had given them the power, the wealth or the land, but the slaves and other citizens were servants of a god who was weak and unable to help his followers. This resembles what many Jews claimed that their god, Jehovah, loved the Sons of Israel more than other tribes and nations! Another example is the case of idol-worshippers and polytheists of India who divide people into 4 classes believing that each of these people have a separate god and are created to be in some lower or higher categories!

The pure, monotheistic *weltanschauung* of Islam, however, declares that all and everything existing including the human race come about from one source and one origin and that they are all created by God Almighty, God the One and that all and everything in the sphere of existence are under His domination and power and so, in the Islamic ideology, you have no right to step on others, you have no right to kneel down at the feet of others because such behaviour is against the Truth and against the Unity of God; there is no difference, in God's creation, between the one mounted on a horse and the person walking on his feet.

Now let's read this part of the verse again: "...His Throne extends over heavens and over the earth, and holding them up never burdens Him...who dares intercede before Him except by His own permission?...". Who then has any power before Him? Yes, some reverent believers may intercede but only by His leave. He never allows the oppressors, the corrupt and the disbelievers to intercede. But those eminent believers who fought on His path in the world and underwent pains, tortures and executions such as the prophets, imams, the virtuous and martyrs could receive permission for intercession. Those are the people who fulfilled their godly duties and obligations, tried hard to get nearer the ultimate goal step by step and became spiritually stronger in the process. None was like our holy Prophet in servitude to God during his life-time, and none were like Imam Ali (AS) and Imam Zein-al-Abideen in servitude to God during their lifetimes. And from this verse we do comprehend that whoever wishes to be nearer to Him, must be more persistent in serving and worshipping Him.



The next verses we read in this discussion are from the Sura Mary concerning God having a son: “They also say that Al-Rahmaan has a begotten son! Now you have certainly come up with the worst abomination! Thereat the heavens could have been asunder cloven and Earth to pieces broken and mountains crumbled down, at their report that Al-Rahmaan has got a son! By no means shall it be befitting the Most Beneficent that He should beget a son!”\* This claim, in various ways and forms, have been made by infidels, polytheists, Christians and Jews as well as the polytheists of Arabia, each with different excuses and explanations! Some others claimed that God had daughters only; some others said that God has both sons and daughters and some claimed that He has an infinite number of children!

Well, no matter what the substance of these claims were, what they all have in common is that among all created beings, there are others whose relationship with God is not like all other creatures, and that he or she has a much higher status of being a Lord-begotten person and a crown-prince to God as King.

Some Jews claimed that Ozair, the prophet, was the son of God which meant the Ozair was not included in the category of all created beings; he had a special position as God’s apple of the eye! Christians too claimed the same about Jesus Christ and the polytheists of Arabia claimed that their three idols, Laat, Manaaf and Ozza were daughters of God. The Greeks and Romans who worshipped numerous gods also fall into this category. Such claims were so abominable in the sight of God Almighty that He talked about them in such wrathful terms as “... the heavens could have been asunder cloven... (at the allegation that) God has got a son!”

The tone of the Quran in this respect shows that we are dealing with a most important, vital subject. Well, God Almighty is not sentimental or tender-hearted as men to be annoyed or feel bad about an allegation, a swearing or some accusation against Him. In fact God is informing us that such beliefs greatly harm His divine purpose for the people and their communities. Whatever is negated in the Quran shows that those beliefs result in corruption and vice and are harmful to

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\* Sura 19, Ayas 88-92.

the human societies; we'll talk in more detail about those vices in our coming discussions of monotheism because all such polytheistic beliefs carry the evil notion that, apart from God Almighty, you could be servants of others. The verse further says: "...by no means it shall be befitting the Most Beneficent that He should beget a son! There is none in the heavens and on the earth, but shall be present before Al-Rahmaan as a servant; He has indeed encompassed them, and made the strictest calculation of them."\* This means they all are servants of God and God even knows their exact numbers.

What i explained today was a brief account about monotheism as one of the fundamental principles in the weltanschauung of Islam. Tomorrow i shall, God willing, talk about monotheism as one of the fundamental principles of Islamic ideology. After knowing about these fundaments, I shall answer the question: what does this world-view tell us about our lives, our plans in life and the path we shall tread on, we shall explain what monotheism actually offers us in these respects.

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\* Sura 19, Ayas 93-94.

9th Session

Monotheism In The Ideology of Islam

10th Ramadan (Sep, 26, 1974)

*“And yet some people set up idols to rival God, and give them adoration due unto God, whereas the faithful’s love of God is the greatest adoration; behold, if these transgressors could now see themselves as when they face the Retribution, then they would know that all Might is God’s and that God is stern in Retribution.”*

*(Sura Al-Baqara, Aya 165)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, monotheists say that beyond what we see and observe there lies a Truth for superior and greater than what we observe; if that Truth were not there, none of the existing phenomena would come about. The materialists say: No, we do not believe in anything except what we could observe; we have searched in our laboratories and under our microscopes and we did not find that metaphysical being claimed by you, monotheists. Here we will not engage in the debates and controversies between monotheists and materialists and the pros and cons they offer in their disputes. There are many articles and books in this respect you may refer to. Here we are concerned with explaining these two world-views; we are not concerned with ancient materialists such as Democritus\* who lived many centuries ago.

In this discussion we deal with the materialists of our own time; we believe that these people are disappointed with religious and they are spiritually frustrated. I try to explain this. Many of them believe that today the administration of the world, leading the people, establishing justice and removed of discriminations are not feasible except in a material and materialistic frame and they reject monotheism on this basis. If you study the thoughts and writings of those who during the last fifty or sixty year, were absorbed by different, ‘isms’ with materialistic outlooks, you will find out the same thing we just expressed, that is they do not have a grudge against God! And they do not reject God because they have some rational or philosophical arguments to prove God’s non-existence. No, you can’t find even one person among the materialists in the world, from early days until the present, who claimed he could prove that God did not exist. Those who talked about this subject have always said: it has not been proven to me, I don’t com-

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\* 340-460 B.C.

prehend it, it is beyond my knowledge or have doubts about it! In fact the holy Quran says exactly the same about them: “Except for this our present life, there is nothing, they claim; we live and die, and nought would destroy us but Time. Indeed they have no knowledge of this, unwittingly they only guess.”\*

As you see, it is not the question of having or lacking a rational, materialistic doctrine that makes the materialists deny monotheism; the fact is that they suppose their materialistic world-view has a better potential to administer world affairs and solve world problems. Their supposition is that their school of thought would be effective in removing oppression and despotism and establish justice and equality which, in their belief, religions are unable to realize. And why do they say that religion cannot perform these duties? The answer is that they do not know much about the truth and reality of religion; their knowledge about divine religions is superficial and based on certain superstitions and what is believed by laymen and ignorant reports, so they say ‘This is what religion is about, religions make no differentiation between oppressors and the oppressed, they are like some sort of relieving drugs, narcotics and opium for the people’.

Obviously, when you’re faced with this kind of reasoning, the best response is this: We agree with you, if you’re referring to a religion that cooperates with the oppressors, that does nothing for the oppressed and is of no use for the people’s present or future conditions, then you do have our consent to reject such a religion and never believe it for a second, for that religion is not a divine religion but a false one. The religion sent down by God is not like what they imagine; a divine religion has certain signs and characteristics that make it a divine religion. I shall be telling you more in this respect in our future discussions on prophets and prophethood.

Anyway, the Quran says: “We have already sent Our messengers with clearest Signs, and We have sent the Book, and the Balance down with them that mankind may stand forth in justice...”\*\*. This means that God has sent His prophets to go to the people and convince them with clear, solid arguments and that He has strengthened them with all the necessary, intellectual and practical notions to

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\* Sura 45, Aya 24.

\*\* Sura 57, Aya 25.

judge people with their differences and disputes. God says ‘our prophets’, that is, not only Moses or Jesus or our holy Prophet, but all prophets were assigned the same duties and the same mission. And what is this mission? The purpose is that humankind could lead lives on the basis of equality and justice; this is the divine religion. Thus if you observe that a certain religion moves in the opposite direction of religious philosophy, you must know that it is not a divine religion or, at best, it has been corrupted and gone astray by the passage of time; such cults, creeds or religions are not revealed by God Almighty.

So we may address the materialists of our day: O You who claim to have found out that religions are unable and incompetent to administer human societies, which religion have you studied, did you study anything about Islam? Do you know anything about the ways and the behaviour of the Alavite, Islamic rulers? Was there anything wrong in their administration of people’s affairs? Have you read anything about that kind of Islam that removes discriminations amongst people, that negates class differences at the time when such unequal divisions were rampant in the world, that takes away the unjust wealth and property in the hands of a few and distributes them among the people? The Islam that provides equal opportunities for all strata of the people, that replaces the rule of evil oppressors and leaves it into the hands of those who respect and execute divine laws; the Islam that changes the status of slaves, the oppressed, the ones who commit the worst crimes for money or other vile incentives and turns them into respected, moral individuals. Which religion are the materialists taking about?

We must further know that the kind of training and education taught by our holy Prophet was not individualistic; he didn’t take one person along to talk to him in private and recite some magic spells in his ears in order that he would convert to Islam. Nor did he sit in a corner and only preached people about God and divine matters. No, he did set up a social order, he established an Islamic community as strong as steel in a special form and framework. In the age of ignorance dominating the Arabian Peninsula, he led people and brought them into a virtuous, human and rightful society. So if some materialists claim that Islam opposes progress, justice, safety and security and proper provisions for human needs, they are absolutely unfair and wrong.

Certain learned men who had grown up in the false atmosphere of Christianity in the past and had observed the fabricated intercessions of Jesus Christ by priests who received money and gold for such false intercessions and the selling of land and estates in Paradise and other similar irreligious practices, could justifiably say that this kind of religion was of no use. But these days when the sun of Islam is shining again and there are so many sources, researches and historical accounts about the beliefs and practices of true Islam, none could claim that Islam was unable to lead humanity towards clean, pure and divine goals and to administer the world.

As I said if those who reject religions, are talking about false religions, ungodly religions, religions with pleasing appearances but with evil, innate natures, religions that foster divisions, pessimisms and fratricides, religions that advise the poor: you must be content with your conditions, and tell the rich, if you donate certain amounts of money to churches or to some religious institute, your ill-gained wealth is okay and you could go on enjoying it. If you're talking about such 'religions', then we all agree with you that these religions are godless and false.

We have already read in the Quran: "O You believers, certainly there are many rabbins and priests who dispossess men of their wealth in falsehood, and debar them from the Way of God, those who amass silver and gold and spend not in God's cause..."\*. The Quran says that they not only usurp people's money and property but they also help others to deviate from the Path of God, that is, they are obstacles in the path of spiritual elevation. They were not content with taking other people's property, no, they, according to the Quran, acted as hindrance on the path of God.

Well, what we said so far was, briefly speaking, a general look at belief in monotheism as an outlook, in order to answer such questions as: Is there a God or not? Is there anything beyond this material world? Is there a supreme metaphysical power? I told you that monotheists and materialists answer these questions in their own different ways, and I added that we should not be concerned about these

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\* Sura 9, Aya 34.

disputes and challenges for our present discussions; there are many books in this respect which you could read if you were interested.

However, there are some important points about the Islamic school of thought that is necessary for all to know and I mean to talk about them today, because today is Friday and maybe some of you will not be able to attend tomorrow's session. Well, the crux of the matter is that monotheism should not be considered as a short, simple answer to a scientific, intellectual question but as a phenomenon the knowledge or lack of knowledge of which is vital and decisive. Now I explain this.

Imagine you are travelling in a car with a friend of yours; the lands on the two sides of the road seem to be arid, barren. You say to your friend that these lands are salty and unfertile; nothing could be cultivated in them. But your friend says: on the contrary, these lands are good for planting and cultivating such-and-such products. You continue such a dispute while driving away in your car at the speed of 100 kilometers per hour. Now what's the practical use of this conversation? Neither of you means to stop the car, test the soil and find out whether the lands are fertile or not! And if either of you verbally proves his point of view, there would be no results. You are not going to stop or go back to prove your point; you are continuing your journey with those lands out of sight. These opposing views have no effect on your friendship, in your life and in your future.

Yet another time you're travelling in a car with a friend and you're speeding up to reach your destination sooner. Suddenly your friend says: this road will take us to the north of the country while we meant to travel south! He says: no, I don't think so, and you say: but I'm sure we are going north. In this difference of opinions, if your friend proves that the road will take you to the northern parts of the country, you must stop the car, turn back and even drive faster because you've wasted some time on the wrong road. Anyway, the driver must stop, look at his road-map carefully or ask the people about the right road to the south. The result of this kind of question and answer or conversation is decisive and vital, and the question about the monotheistic and materialistic outlooks is of this nature, so the debate on monotheism or the unity of God is of immense importance.

The way some ordinary people or some irresponsible persons talk about God



without any commitments is very different from the way a responsible person discusses monotheism. The former raises the question of monotheism like this: 'is there a God or not?' Well, if there is, what shall we do, and if there is no God, what are we to do? What effects shall it have in our lives? What changes will it bring about in our social order? If there was a supreme God, what would be the fate of the capitalist system or that of the super-powers? What about a president elected in one of these countries, how does he act if he did believe in God or didn't believe in God? Would it make any difference in his behavior in either case? A belief in God, when this belief has no effect in the conditions of trusts, cartels, different sorts of capitalism and its ensuing discriminations, is of no use. If the leader of a certain country says he believes in God but his belief has no practical realization, then he has just answered an intellectual question and nothing beyond it. A belief in God for an ordinary person, for a leader, for a society or nation is meaningful only when it is followed by practice, by what it results in, by what it brings about for the people and by the kind of life and social system it offers.

We usually think that monotheism is something to be made clear in our minds but in our life it has no effects and no follow-ups, and even if it does have some effects, it affects our personal lives only, not our social life, that is, you will own the same wealth, the same factory or company, the same cars, the same relations of employers and workers and the ownership of lands whether you are a monotheist or a materialist!

Let us have a look at the world and imagine two capitalists, two big businessmen, two factory owners or two of those so-called sultans of industries in some famous, capitalist countries and assume that one is a believer in God and the other is an infidel; now are there any differences in their outlooks towards their capital and wealth and their employers and workers? Perhaps one of them attends church services on Sundays or donates some money to a certain church or a lousy priest to beseech the pardon of God for him and bring Paradise a few kilometers closer to him! But would all this phony behaviour leave any effect on his actual relation with his employees or his greed for wealth or his view-point about the people in general? If the answer is no, then this sort of empty belief in God is no different from polytheism or godlessness.

The kind of monotheism Islam invites to is not like the useless question and answer in the first example of those two persons I cited. The answer to it is far higher than a simple answer to a simple question. What is Islamic monotheism then? Islamic monotheism is a revelation and inspiration on social relations, on forming governments, on people's obligations, on society's goal, on the process to reach these goals and on the responsibilities people have before God, with one another, in their societies and vis-à-vis all other phenomena in the world; this is Islamic monotheism. Islamic monotheism is not limited to just declaring that 'there is one God only', not two or three. No true belief in God means that God encompasses your own existence, your community and the world around you and that none other than God has the right to rule over them.

When we declare the oneness of God, we do announce that whatever you have at your disposal, your wealth and the wealth of all other people are God's and we are all debtors to Him. Well then, who could be a monotheist under such circumstances? If a friend of yours appoints you as a trustee and leaves some amount of money in trust with you, then you will surely wait for his order or his hand-writing to give some money to a certain person, transfer some money or do otherwise. But do you ever consider yourself the owner of that money if you're a virtuous trustee? Certainly not. A Narration from the holy Prophet says: 'All property and wealth is God's and He has made them as trusts with the people'\*. This is a requisite of monotheism.

If you believe in monotheism, you would not agree with class differences or distinctions and discrimination among the people; they would be meaningless in your sight. A society containing upper and lower classes is obviously not monotheistic. Monotheism enjoins: 'You are all descendants of Adam, and Adam was created out of the earth'\*\* (Narration of the holy Prophet). The only thing that makes a man distinguished is his nearness to God and his god-fearing virtues; nothing else, whoever is more watchful of God's injunctions, he has a higher status.

The societies wherein you come across numerous shapes and forms of discrimination, injustice and inequality, are not based on the belief in God the One.

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\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Al-Ishra

\*\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Al-Iman wa Al-Kofr

In such societies you may ask: why is so-and-so enjoying all kinds of amenities while others are deprived of them? The answer you hear is: well, he is a member of the aristocracy, he is a lord! There is no monotheism (Towheed) in societies where people are not equal, because, as I explained in detail yesterday, all people are creatures and servants of God; they all are equal in the Sight of God. In a monotheistic society, none would be excluded from servitude of God under such pretexts as His son, His spouse and the like; in such a society you could not worship anything or anyone beside God Almighty. In fact, servitude to God means freedom from all forms of human servitude.

Here it may be interesting to tell you something in our own history. When the Muslim army entered Persia of that day, an Arab envoy was sent to the court of the powerful Sassanid Empire. An ordinary Arab with worn-out, cheap clothes entered the King's pompous castle bearing a letter to be handed to the King himself. Do you think that he feared the soldiers, the generals and the courtiers present? No, not at all, though any ordinary person with no firm faith would have been shaking with fear at such awe-inspiring atmosphere. He stepped forward towards the King but he did not move to take the letter from him; instead some courtiers approached him to take it from him. He said: no, I should give it only to him. So he went forward, laid one leg on the King's throne and gave him the letter. It is reported that he was asked: Why have you come to our country, and he uttered a few sentence in reply that I think they must be written in gold on large posters and displayed throughout the world for humanity to see what Islam stands for and what true Islamic concept are. He said: "...in order to help people turn away from worshipping men and help them to serve God Almighty..."

Now what is people's servitude and slavery? Let me cite another historic example. One of the kings of the ancient Achaemenid dynasty orders all families to send their young sons to join the army in his military campaign against certain enemies. An old man approached the generals or the King and said: three of my sons have joined your army, please have mercy and allow my fourth son to stay at home, because I and my wife are too old to take care of ourselves; he was let out without promising him anything. The following day the soldiers marched out and they reached the exit gates of the town, the three brothers noticed that their

fourth brother had been quartered and his body parts were hanging at the sides of the gates! A warning to parents of families not to make exception for their youth to obey the orders of the King! Well, this is real slavery of the people. This means that people have no right to express their opinions or their requests. No, they must approve of tyranny and oppression as natural conditions. This is the ugliest and bitterest kind of slavery; this is a most deceitful kind of slavery. Why so? Because it is worse than other open kinds of slavery. Let's make a comparison with those colonialist, greedy Europeans who took innocent Africans into slavery; they did capture these poor, innocent Africans, shaved their heads and sold them in other countries that needed their labour; these inhuman slave-traders did their terrible business openly! But the kind of mental and psychological postures I explained earlier was worse.

Let us go back to our narration of Arab-Muslim envoy. He said: we have come to free people from worshipping you, from worshipping your generals, your governors, and from all your appointees. And then when they are free men, what should they do? Are they to be left in limbo?! No, 'we would lead them to worshipping God the One'. They will be servants of God which means being free, being the master of your own life and treading on the path to spiritual perfection. In a true Islamic society, people are servants of God, not servants of the powerful. Even at the time when the Islamic society had gone a little astray, after the demise of the holy Prophet, the then Khalif addressed people in a mosque and said: 'if I go astray, you must put me right', and a Beduin Arab gets up, pulls out his sword and says: 'with this I'll put you right'! This was an outcome of the Quranic and Prophetic education people had received. An ordinary Muslim spoke to the Khalif in such a brave tone. Was he kicked out of the mosque? Was he arrested as a trouble-maker and thrown into prison? Was he put to death? No, nothing happened to him; he had spoken harshly but logically. This was the sort of freedom Islam had brought about; Islamic freedom meant following divine, humane laws and principles. If the highest authority followed Islamic aspirations, he would be listened to; otherwise people had the right to change him.

Let us now cite the complete utterance of the Arab envoy when he addressed Yazdgerd, the Persian emperor: 'we have come to take people away from wor-

shipping men and into worshipping God the One, from the narrowness of their world into the vastness of this world and the next world'. What is this narrow world? It designates a world where people have no proper outlook or insight, when they look around, they don't see anything but worldly attractions and passing pleasures, nothing but egotism and self-worship, and what really attract them are cheap, momentary, mean profits or joys; this shows the behaviour of the ruling classes under Yazdgerd\*.

Of course people in general were not content with this kind of despotic state but they were afraid of Yazdgerd's officials and henchmen; they feared that they would lose their meagre, humiliated lives if they uttered a word of dissatisfaction and, as the Muslim envoy, said 'their world was small and gloomy' and the horizon of their outlooks, was very limited. On the contrary, a true Muslim has a vast horizon in front of him both in this world and the next. For him everything is a means of reaching a higher goal and his world-outlook is infinite, because God Almighty is infinite. For Muslims everything in the world, worldly life, money and wealth, comfort, loves and affections serve as means to gain God's consent. All such worldly deeds are of value only when they are fulfilled in the Path of God (Fi-sabili-Allah). If their love, their reputation, their property, their position, their lives and children are not there in the path of God and in the way of performing their Islamic obligations, they would be of no value. In Muslims' outlook, there is no end to this world because this world and the next world are closely bound together. But in the sight of those who happen to be servants and slaves of other imperfect humans, the world is small, short-lived and very limited. For Muslims, on the contrary, death is like a window through which you could see grand gardens, great panoramas and numerous worlds and universes; so worldly death is not awful and has no importance for a true believer.

The notes I have given you contain a brief sketch of what I have been talking about. Certainly there are many more dimensions to the question of monotheism which, God willing, I will try to talk about later in a more orderly manner; so far

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\* After repeated defeats at the hands of the Muslim armies, Yazdgerd escaped to other parts of Persia. The strange thing, according to reports, is that he took hundreds of singers, dancers and musicians with him while escaping and trying to gather more fighters! This was the true mentality of such rulers at that time.

I have been explaining some generalities on this subject and, in fact, I have discussed one dimension of monotheism only.

Now let us go back to the verses we quoted from the Quran at the beginning of this meeting. Verse 165 (the Cow) tells us that among people there are those who set up idols along with God Almighty, that is, they worship idols, humans or things instead of God and give the sort of love and adoration worthy of God to these weakling idols. After this, in the middle of the verse, we are told that the believers love and worship God much more strongly and on a much higher level. God is adored and worshipped by believers in ways that are absolutely different from how some men adore false gods, superficial entities, gods of passions and lusts and human gods who rule over them.

Then, all of a sudden, the verse shows us a scene on the Day of Resurrection and tells us that on that Day when all members of the human race, believers, non-believers, infidels, oppressors and sinners, are gathered, all means of divine mercy and divine retribution are also witnessed by all. Of course we could not comprehend the nature of these means and instruments of God; in this world we cannot understand or imagine anything about in that coming world. Generally speaking, we may guess that all necessary means, methods and agencies for either retribution or mercy and compassion are present. And then all the despots, oppressors and evil-doers suddenly notice that they are absolutely powerless and that all power is in the hand of God absolutely.

This scene is rather strange to some people, as in this world each person has a certain power, everyone is able to do something; the upper classes have much more power than the down-trodden but even the lower classes had some kind of power for themselves. Also those people who serve the tyrants feel that they are powerful because they are close to those more powerful oppressors like a fox that has tied up its tail to the tail of a camel!

Now on the Last Day, the Day of Resurrection, in that greatest gathering, whoever looks around or thinks of himself, finds out that he is helpless, and everything and all is in the Hand of God. Yes, as the Quran says: “The Day whereon they all rise up, when naught about them will be hidden from God; and who shall reign

supreme (whose is the Kingdom) on that Day? The Almighty, God the One.”\* And now that powerful oppressor or the ones who helped him in his cruelties, look around and see that there is no sign of those false powers, the castles they lived in and their arrogance and imperial-mindedness; this is most astonishing to them. These are strange scenes; remember the two groups, one group served and worshipped the other group! The latter were the most obedient servants of the former, and now they’re facing each other and challenging each other!

The Quran clearly gives a warning to the despots and oppressors in the world: if they could visualize the Day of Resurrection, the Day when all power is God’s and God is most harsh in retribution, what would they do? No doubt, if they could fathom such scenes, they would stop their oppression and cruelties; if they had the wisdom and insight to think of that Day, they would have changed their behaviour. The verse 165 (the Cow) expresses the same warning: “And then the leaders will declare themselves clear from their followers, and all their ties will break asunder once they witness the Scourge with their own eyes”. The next verse shows the state of mind the followers are in: “And those who had been following them will say ‘if only we could get another chance, we would surely disown them just as they denounced us this Day. And thus God will display their deeds to them as intense regrets, and they will never find a way out of the Fire’.”\*\* As you see, the followers and servants of the evil rulers and other devilish oppressors do wish that they could return to the world again to make up for their past deeds; they are absolutely regretful but there is no way out.

The point I mean to emphasize on is that these people, these followers will receive retribution because they adored and served others instead of God the One, their practice was in fact, anti-monotheism, against the Unity of God Almighty.

I now ask our Quran reciters, either Mr. Rezayee or Mr. Fatemi, to recite the Ayas we have talked about, especially the Ayat-al-Kursi which we have been advised to read over and over again; the Ayas about monotheism should really be ingrained in our minds and souls.

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\* Sura 40, Aya 16.

\*\* Sura 2, Aya 167.

10th Session

Absolute Obedience To And  
Worshipping of God

11th Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 27, 1974)



*“It is there and then that every soul shall see what it has sent ahead. All shall be sent back unto God, their rightful Lord; and their invented falsehood shall leave them in the lurch. (30) Say; who provides for You from skies and earth? And who brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living? Who is ordering Everything? They will say: God. Say: will you not then be god-fearing (31)”*

*(Sura Younos, Ayas 30&31)*

In the Name of God, the beneficent, the Merciful, as I said earlier, the question of monotheism or unity of God is a detailed, comprehensive discussion throughout the Quran. I mean, even the question of ‘prophethood’ with its lengthy narrations about different prophets and their missions does not rival the question of monotheism, the absolute existence of God and especially the rejection of polytheism. The holy Quran’s emphasis on monotheism, in its tone and the number of verses in this respect, is most profound or peerless. We could only talk about a few dimensions of monotheism, not all about it that has been expounded in the Quran.

In my opinion if we do accept that monotheism, apart from being an outlook or insight, is a reflection of reality which does affect our lives and forms our lives and, as I explained in previous meetings, if we do accept that monotheism involves certain commitments and responsibilities, then we must search and find those responsibilities contained in monotheism and list them one by one, sentence by sentence and chapter by chapter as extracted from the Quran, from the Narrations and from among the Islamic sources. And I ask our brothers and sisters who are familiar with the discussion to keep them on in their memories so we could ponder on them more deeply.

Thus if monotheism is a belief that brings about certain obligations, commitments and responsibilities for the believers, we must find out about the nature of these obligations. Is this belief just summed up in accepting the unity of God by our tongues and by our hearts? Could this belief be restricted to some personal practices such as performing daily prayers, citing God’s Name at the beginning or finishing some deeds and the like? Or that this belief in monotheism enjoins

certain obligations beyond personal practices and involves certain more general and more fundamental problems in the society or community as a whole? Does it contain such fundamental, social questions as government, economy, international relations and the relation of individuals with one another? We do believe that the fundamental responsibilities put upon the shoulders of believers are also as important as (or more) important than personal practices and duties.

Before we enter into details and secondary questions let me say briefly that the shape and nature of a monotheistic society is completely different from those of non-monotheistic societies. If a certain law is executed in a monotheistic society and some similar laws are practiced in non-monotheistic society, the latter could also be called monotheistic. No, the shape, the nature and the arrangement of the social components of a society based on monotheism and the unity of God, do fundamentally differ from those of other societies; in one word, the so-called 'social order' is completely different .

In fact the social order, the social system and the social nature of a monotheistic society is not only different from, but in many aspects distinctly antithetical to non-monotheistic societies. If you do consider the present-day social systems and study the Quran and the sources of Narrations, you will surely comprehend the general aspects of monotheism.

But, in a less general investigation, we expound the question of monotheism as a resolution containing several clauses and I try to explain these clauses one by one. Exactly the same way two groups or two countries approve a binding resolution, all monotheists in the world are morally bound to execute the clauses of this resolution on behalf of their God. The very first clause of this monotheistic resolution is that: no men have the right to worship anything or be obedient to anything or anybody except the Almighty God, and of course the discussion of 'worshipping none but God the One' is much more extensive and detailed than we briefly expressed.

Now the Quran asks: "Did I not have a covenant with you, O Adam's sons, not to be serving Satan...?"\* I have already explained that the meaning of the

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\* Sura 36, Aya 60.

word Satan is not monopolized to Iblees, the one disobedient angel, or to some hidden, unseen and untouchable elements. No, Satan has a far more extensive meaning and has a more universal manifestation. In this sense the word means all those evil elements and devilish forces outside our individual bodies and souls. But when we talk about a man's Self, especially about 'nafs-al-ammara', the self-commanding to evil or the spirit of lasciviousness, we mean those forces, incentives and desires that lead men to do evil things from within. Thus man is faced with two evil forces from within and from outside. Satan and satans in this sense, embrace all those elements and forces which lead you to viciousness, corruption and evil practices from outside, like wolves or highway robbers on your way; these are satanic forces outside your existence and outside your selves. We will talk about these two groups of evil forces in our future discussion of prophethood to make clear that our prophets chosen by God did have such enemies and we shall clearly express who those enemies were, to which group and classes they belonged and why they were enemies of the prophets.

Anyway, when it's said 'worship none but God the One', it means not to be obedient to those evil forces, this is monotheism but not *all* of monotheism because there are so many stages and so many minute points about monotheism that cannot be expressed in our brief statements. There is a Narration from our Imams (AS), cited in many creditable sources and in 'Kaafi's Principles' which is rather long, so I don't quote the original Arabic but tell you briefly about it. The Imam says: 'Obedience to a power not inspired by God and obedience to a centre not inspired by God is tantamount to polytheism or even polytheism itself, because if their followers be personally pious, virtuous people, this great ingratitude and misconception will deprive them of God's bliss and mercy and will end them in perdition.'\*

This is a Narration, but what is the wisdom behind it? The wisdom behind this 'hadeeth' is that the worshipping and servitude to others but God is contradictory to what God has created the humanity for; it contradicts the elevation and perfection of humanity; it's antithetical to human freedom and human salvation. If the freedom and independence that monotheism provides is not there, then humanity cannot grow to reach the elevation and perfection that God has ordained for all

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\* Al-Kaafi - Chapter Al-Hojja

people. Without monotheism, men would be like some plants that because of many impediments could not grow properly and bring forth fruits. Obedience to others but God would be like those fruitless trees, the kind of trees that were expected to bear fruits. There are numerous verses about this throughout the Quran.

I selected some Quranic verses in this respect without doing a thorough research; now I try to translate these verses along with some explanations; this is the main purpose of this meeting. I do feel that we have been somehow isolated from comprehending monotheism properly due to certain deviations such as superstitions, empty, wrong beliefs and superficial suppositions and we have already noticed that such weak beliefs could not stand up to the strong waves of materialism rushing against us these days and, as a consequence, we may fall into the trap of irresponsibility concerning true monotheism.

For many decades, some Islamic scholars and philosophers have carried out lengthy but barren and useless discussions about monotheism but their philosophizing has had no effect on the establishment of a monotheistic society. How come their hundred-year old discussions on a single subject have left no impression on the actual life of Muslim societies! The reason for the uselessness of these discourses was that they were divorced from actual realities of Muslim lives; they were dry, abstract discourses that bore no fruits. We look at these philosophical discourses; we find out that they are, as the Arabic proverb goes, ‘just like a stone next to a human being’! But if they had tried to extract monotheism from the Quran, they would have realized that the Quran, through numerous verses, has defined and explained all dimensions and the whole structure of monotheism in full and when we study these Quranic verses carefully, we definitely come to know what a monotheistic life and a monotheist person are.

Now I try to only translate some of these verses on monotheism. The Quran says: “And the Day We will gather them all together, We shall declare to the idolaters ‘keep to your places, you and all your partners!’ And so We’ll have them stand in separate rows...”<sup>\*</sup>. As you notice this verse has a commanding, blaming tone saying that you idolaters and the partners you worshipped instead

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<sup>\*</sup> Sura 10, Aya 28.

of God, must stay in separate groups to face justice. Obviously the partners are the animate ones the idolaters or polytheists served and worshipped because the inanimate partners, that is, the lifeless objects they worshipped such as Ozza and Hubal\* or idols and icons the Greeks worshipped could not stand in separate rows! The command is addressed to those people who behaved as gods on earth and made others serve and worship them; they are ordered to stop where they are in order to face judgment.

The very first reproach and the first objuratory words heard on the judgment Day are ‘stop where you are and stand in a separate group’ because the worshippers and the worshipped are blaming each other for their idolatry and they are about to enter into fights! The Quran says that those rivals and partners you fabricated in place of God Almighty, Arab, Persian, Roman, Indian, Egyptian or Greek, are absolute weaklings and non-entities on the Day of Judgment; they’ll stand still at the very first address of reproach by God. The Quran then says that ‘they are separated from one another into distinct groups’. Before this the worshipped partners address their followers saying ‘you did not worship us in the world, you chose it yourselves.

Elsewhere in the Quran the same theme is dealt with “And still the oppressed hit back and say ‘Nay, it was your intrigues by night and day that made us deny belief in God...’”\*\*. It’s a wonderful scene: those who followed want to pin the blame for their idolatry on their human idols and those idol-rivals of God try to exonerate themselves from those who followed them in the worldly life! The latter declare “...and then their idol-partners shall be saying ‘Behold, it was not us at all that you were serving, God is an All-sufficient Witness, between you and us, that we were utterly heedless of your worshipping.’”\*\*\*. They are in fact claiming that your worshipping us was of no substance to us and that we didn’t even notice it.

Thus, according to the Quran: “It’s there and then that every soul shall see what it has sent ahead! All shall be sent unto God, their rightful Lord; and their

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\* The statues worshipped by the Meccan polytheists

\*\* Sura 34, Aya 33.

\*\*\* Sura 10, Ayas 28 - 32.

invented Falsehoods shall leave them in the lurch!” in other words, all falsehoods they were attached to are gone with the wind, all incentives urging people not to serve God but other false gods are no more there and all those excuses and pretexts which idolaters thought could not help them on that Day vis-à-vis the High Court of God, they all vanish and will be of no use, and at this juncture the Quran declares: “...and their invented falsehoods will leave them in the lurch.” That is, they completely desert them.

Well, I think we must pay particular attention to how the Quran reasons in different verses; sometimes they are not straight-forward reasoning or arguments but they are told in a way that prepares the ground for mental reasoning by people themselves to worship God Almighty only. In the verses we quoted at the beginning of this meeting, the Quran asks: “Say who provides you from the skies and the earth, or who controls the hearing and the seeing...?” Yes, rain and snow come from the sky and plants, trees, animals are found on the earth and life would have been impossible without them. Seeing eyes and learning ears mean the power of hearing and seeing; who has granted them to you? Seeing means insight and the soul that sees and comprehends. Whose power encompasses these and other human talents? Who can deprive you of all these gifts? Now you enjoy all these potentials especially the power to think and understand and, in one word, you have wisdom, so please then use your wisdom and answer the question: who has brought them about?

And then we read: “...who brings forth the living from the dead and bring the dead forth from the living...”. There are several interpretations concerning this part of the Quranic verse and they could all be true ones: a pregnant woman dies but the baby is taken out alive; from a lifeless substance such as sperm, a living creature is born after a while; a barren dry land, though containing numerous materials necessary for life that seems to be dead, is revived by rain and even human beings are originally made and formed by life-giving materials found on the earth. All these prove the existence of the absolute power of God Almighty Who has created all and everything and granted them life.

And finally “...Who is ordaining Everything?” This means who is it that rules

and regulates all affairs? Who gave that force of gravity to the planet earth so that people could live on it? In short, if we only look at millions of stars, the numerous galaxies, seen or unseen, and at the sun and the moon in our own solar system and only think ‘if they were located some kilometers nearer or farther, what would happen to life on earth’, then we surely realize that Hand of God at work in their order and movement.

What more could I say about God’s artful power and the indescribable order He has created? The world’s experimental scientists have written so many books, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, about these divine phenomena that if, a humble lecturer as I, decide to talk about them, it will take months and years! And, in fact, I’m not too inclined to prove the existence of God through the constantly-changing discoveries and findings of scientists. The answer to the question ‘who is it that rules and regulates all affairs’, should be given by our own mental power and intellect, consciously and without any prejudice; this way you come across the true answer and find out the ultimate Truth.

The interesting point is that, not only in our century but even at the time when God’s revelations descended on the holy Prophet, the idolaters and polytheists were faced with the same question ‘who is it that rules and regulates all affairs, who is it that ordains Everything?’ and they, inevitably, had to answer ‘Allah’, the Almighty God! And here is when God tells His Prophet: “...Then ask them ‘why are you not god- fearing?!’” What does this really mean? It means that if you do know about this powerful Creator, this God Who has brought about everything, why on earth do you set rivals and partners with him? When you confess that He has created everything, why do you think that he should not ordain laws and regulations for your proper livelihood and your earthy lives?

Previously I once explained the meaning of the first verse of the Sura Younus in Kiramat Mosque of Mash-had. The verse which says: “Most hallowed is He in whose Hand the kingdom lies, and He is ably in command of all there is! He who created Death and Life that He may put you to a test: which one of you shall be, in doing good, the best...”<sup>\*</sup> Let’s pay attention to the first verse of this Sura ‘the Kingdom is in His Hand and He is in command of all affairs. This word ‘Mulk’

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<sup>\*</sup> Sura 67, Ayas 1-2.

(kingdom) means ruling and governing and possessing all powers; how is this power? It's the power of Creation, and bringing everything into being. Well, when He possesses this power, doesn't He have the power to ordain laws and rules for the administration of human societies? Should He, who has created the order and the laws of nature in His vast cosmos, leave the establishing of laws, civil, judicial or administrative, in the hands of weak, imperfect human beings with limited knowledge and intelligence? Why should He not lay down laws and not appoint His own chosen person to execute them? Why should He not choose prophets and imams to carry out His laws while under His protection and support?

Here we quote a verse from Sura 10 again: "And such is Allah, your true Lord; so what is there after the Truth except going astray? Now whither are you turned away?!"\* Then God tells His prophet: "Ask them 'could any of your idols guide unto the Truth...?'"\*\* God Almighty says to His prophet 'Our prophet will guide them, educate them and help them to realize the Truth'. Could any among your idols, among those whom you set up as partners to God and imagine them as rivals to God, give you guidance towards the Truth. These idols and partners mentioned here are certainly not those icons and idols made out of stone, wood or other material; it is obvious that such *things* may not guide humans! Surely what is meant here are the animate creatures that are worshipped, that is, persons who had some authority and power, whether leaders of worldly religions or others in positions of power such as Pharaohs.

The Quran asks 'could any such idols lead you to Truth'? Perhaps the polytheists and the godless answer this question affirmatively! As this reply could be most ridiculous, the Quran goes further and says 'inform them that it is only God Almighty, the Ever-Living, who could lead you, not these transient authorities you serve. The Truth about the worlds is also with God and those icons and idols, not obedient to God, inevitably lead you astray.

We certainly comprehend now that none but God could lead us to the straight paths and to the Truth. 'Is the One who leads to the Truth worthier to be followed or people who are not able to guide, and themselves have to be guided'? Who

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\* Sura 10, Aya 32.

\*\* Sura 10, Aya 35.



are the latter group? These are the so-called rivals to God that you have set up; even if they were to guide people, it is necessary that they themselves should be guided beforehand! As I mentioned earlier, the latter group are not some cows worshipped in India, they are not those statues of stone and wood set up by the Quraish clan in Arabia; and they are not the icons in the idol-houses in Rome or Athens. No, the Quran is talking about those humans who have usurped the leadership of the people and falsely claim to be working for the happiness of the general public. The Quran says that it is God Who can help you to realize true happiness and lead you to find solutions and the ultimate Truth. The Quran advises us to think deeply about these false gods on earth and to reject those temporary animate gods in history whether in the cloaks of religious leaders or in the guise of temporal powers. And finally I should add that Islam once made a proposal to the people of the Book to negate and reject their obedience to all non-divine powers; this is the relevant verse: “O people of the Scripture, let us come to a common proclamation, as between us and you, that we worship none but Allah and that we never associate any partners with Him and that we raise no mortal from amongst us to be a goldy master...”\*. You may study it further for your own benefit and tomorrow, God willing, I will talk about this important subject a little more.

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\* Sura 3, Aya 64.

11th Session

The Spirit of Monotheism:  
Negation of Worshipping  
anything other than God

12th Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 27, 1974)

*“Should I be seeking, as a source of law, other than Allah, when it’s He Who sent down unto you this Book with all its details? And those given the Book are cognizant that it was sent down from your Lord in truth, never then harbor any doubts.(114) And the word of your Lord is perfect in truthfulness and justice; nothing shall abrogate His words, and He’s the Hearer, the All-Knowing.(115) If you obey most people in this land, they will lead you astray from Allah’s Way, for nothing do they follow but conjecture, and whatever they say is falsehood based on lies.(116)”*

*(Sura Al-An’aam, Ayas 114-116)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, never will we be able to say the last word about monotheism; firstly it is the fundament of our faith, secondly it is the important principle of our individual and social practice and thirdly, the monotheistic nations do not know much about it unfortunately! Although even in the old-fashioned, primary schools, we were taught that God was one, not two or three, yet most monotheists do not know much concerning this most vital question and its various manifestations before they pass away! Thus it is really urgent that we do talk about a question of such immense importance we know so little about.

In fact, in the Quran, we read numerous verses about monotheism and its unique importance in different tones and its various dimensions and if I talked about them for days, I would not do justice to this peerless subject. So, I’ll try my best to give you the most general view of monotheism based on the very verses of the holy Quran and shall wrap up the discussion for now. Let us then pay attention to a new dimension of monotheism which I referred to briefly yesterday. I now read the verses 114 to 116 of Sura Al-An’aam which are quoted in the papers I distributed among you at the start of this session together with their translations.

Let me also read to you the verse 121 in this Sura: “Eat not of that on which the Name of God has not been mentioned; wicked is this indeed, surely the satans always inspire their friends that they should contend with you all, and if you

follow them, you could indeed become one of the polytheists.” Well now, listening to these Quranic verses, I would like to talk about the nature and essence of worshipping and make this point clear in the light of the holy Quran. Let me start by saying that basically there are two kinds of worshipping. The first kind which is most common is worshipping icons, idols and saints whom people imagine to possess some supernatural powers, as Christians worship Jesus Christ and his immaculate, sinless mother Mary; they prostrate before some imaginary statues supposedly representing these two holy personalities, they bow down and weep before these statues; this is one kind of worship. They may do this sincerely and from the bottom of their hearts, and in this respect many believers in Islam also think that loving God from the bottom of their hearts, doing their daily prayers, mentioning God, praising Him and performing other similar religious duties is all there is to proper worshipping of God. But there is another more comprehensive way of worshipping God Almighty according to the verses of the Quran itself if we intend to properly and truly serve God and worship him as rightful monotheists. There have been many monotheists in history who did not prostrate themselves in front of powerful authorities or non-human idols and statues and yet, in their hearts, in their minds and souls and in practice did worship certain carnal desires, tempting incentives and human whims. Well, this state of affairs also means worshipping other elements and not God alone.

What is then the proper way of serving God according to the holy Quran? We may use the word ‘obedience’ in order to explain the issue? If one is totally obedient to another person, to a society, to a state, he is in fact serving and worshipping that person or authority. It is the Quran that tells us ‘worshipping God means obedience to Him alone; worshipping others, whether political authorities, or even internal elements such as one’s self carnal desires or one’s sexual inclinations is not monotheism. One may happen to be worshipping a woman and obedient to her or serving a friend or a powerful person extremely, that is, being obedient to them absolutely. Anyone worshipping such elements and obeying them is far from worshipping God Almighty.

Let me read a narration from Imam Javaad (AS)\* concerning the finest aspects

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\* The ninth Imam of the Shi’ites.

of worshipping God; he says: ‘One who listens to a lecture (and is absorbed by his speech, is in fact serving him but if the lecturer is a man of God, then his listeners are worshipping God Almighty.’\* This shows the difference between a true monotheist lecturer and another who follows Satan and talks on his behalf and against the divine logic and philosophy; so if you are obediently and passively listening to such spokesmen of Satan, you are in fact worshipping Satan not God Almighty.

Thus if you are a true monotheist and a true believer in God the One, your worshipping and obedience should be directed at Him, and nothing else. These other non-godly elements that may be the object of your worshipping are obedient to man-made laws, obedient to certain social orders and obedient to certain ungodly traditions and occasions. By this we do not mean that we should not obey any laws and regulations; no, if their sources are not divine, you should not follow them, but if they have their origins in the Quran and Islam, they could be obeyed because this sort of obedience equals obedience to God.

If you think this way, you will see your human horizon and your understanding of historical events become deeper or more extensive. You will find out that all prophets of God preached the unity of God; I’ll expound this further when we come to the discussion of prophethood based on the Quranic verses. Yes, the mission of all prophets was to turn people of their time into monotheists. What does this monotheism mean? It means they tried to loosen and break up the chains of obedience to man-made idols that had tied up their hands, their necks and their minds. The Quran points this out most clearly: “...the prophet...who released them from their burdens and things imposed on them like shackles...”\*\*. This is the objective of prophets’ missions.

When we consider monotheism from this angle, from this view-point, you’ll find out that monotheism is a principle and a plan for your whole life, for our social order, concerning humanity’s positions under all circumstance and the quality of human life. How significantly different is this monotheism from the empty, dry and spiritless interpretation than one, ‘not two or three’!

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\* Tohaf-Al-Oghool

\*\* Sura 7, Aya 157.

There are numerous verses in the Quran concerning monotheism and I only selected two of them in the paper I distributed among you because otherwise we had to write down dozens of papers! But these verses expound the meaning of monotheism very well and through them we fully comprehend that worshipping anything or anybody but God equals obedience to them, and that flawless monotheism is the spirit of religion and its most fundamental principle; in short pure monotheism means absolute obedience to God Almighty and to His divine plan, to His divine order and to His divine arrangement and administration. You may use these two verses as examples, and look through the Quran to understand monotheism more deeply in their light.

Let me make some recommendations at this juncture: read the Quran frequently, refer to the Quran as often as you need, find proper verses in the Quran for subjects you come across, not only those that I or others quote; the holy Quran is a shoreless ocean and a boundless treasure-house. There is an Arabic poem on this subject:

It's an eternal sea,  
Approaching it from any side, you'll see,  
Its waves bring up good deeds,  
Its shores full of benefic seeds.

Which I translate for you; it says all those who read the Quran and try to comprehend it, whether little or much, they'll benefit from it and the more often you refer to it, they'll be more enlightened and benefit more. Imam Ali (AS) says in the Nahj-al-Balaghah: 'whoever sits down and reads the Quran, will certainly get up with some addition to his knowledge and enlightening, and reduction in his blindness'. The Imam's statement begins with 'whoever', it's an absolute statement, it's meant for all humanity.

Why did I say all this about the Quran? It's because there are so many elements, traps and obstacles for keeping people away from the Quran. There are all sorts

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\* Nahj-Al-Balaghah - Sermon 176

of tricks, deceptions and fallacies to advise people not to read and refer to the Quran. One of the most lethal weapons to spread this ignorance is the oft-repeated claim that ‘no one really understands the Quran except the sinless Imams, only they comprehend it’! About such comments I may repeat what imam Ali (AS) said about the claims of Muslim rebels of Nahrawaan\*: ‘a rightful claim aimed at wrongful purposes’\*\*. Yes, our Imams were of course the best people who understood the Quran, no doubt about that, but those who utter such statements, are hiding their evil, anti- Islamic intentions; they want you to abandon the Quran because, they claim, you’ll never understand it! But does the fact that the Imams understood the Quran excellently mean that you and I never understand a word or a sentence in the Quran? The people who make such claims do not intend to elevate the status of our Imams, no; their evil intention is to keep us away from the Quran. It has been reported that a Muslim did not perform his daily prayers and when he was admonished for his negligence, he said ‘nobody could do it as Imam Ali (AS) performed his prayers!’ this claim that only the Imam understood the Quran, bears the same vicious logic as this person who did not perform prayers. Woe to such claimants who either do not understand anything from the Quran themselves or, as I said, nourish evil anti-Islamic intentions. Such people are the enemies of the Quran and the Muslim *umma* because, through various pretexts, urge the people not to associate with the Quran; woe to them.

But you, my sisters and brothers, must know that nowadays what we really need most is to become more familiar with the Quran, and as quoted from our holy Prophet: ‘whenever your life is overshadowed by black clouds of troubles and disasters, take refuge in the Quran.’\*\*\* We are facing similar circumstances these days when all sorts of deviated doctrines are attacking us, and all kinds of charlatans, deceitful leaders and anti-Islamic elements have surrounded us; do we not see these ‘black clouds’ over our heads? So, isn’t it time to refer to the Quran and to learn lessons from the Quran. When is it the time to seek help from the Quran? Is it when our 12<sup>th</sup> Imam reappears, who is himself ‘the Speaking Quran’?

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\* A rebellious group who left the army of imam Ali (AS) they were called ‘Khawaarij’ (forsakers) because they proclaimed ‘judgment is by God only’.

\*\* Nahj-Al-Balagha - Sermon 40

\*\*\* Al-Kaafi - Chapter Fazl-Al-Quran

No, we ought to refer to the Quran *now* to find ways out of the present-day troubles and seditious conditions, and for this, we have to understand the Quran first.

For today's discussion I have selected two verses relating to the subject we have been dealing with; you may search through the Quran and find many more verses; those who do not Arabic, may find such verses by the aid of Persian translations of the Quran. To those who do not know Arabic, my advice is that they should try to learn Arabic for their direct understanding of the Quran, that is, at least understanding the apparent meaning of the verses.

Well, now we read and translate and explain verses 114-116 of Sura Al-An'aam: "should I be seeking, as a source of law, other than Allah...". As you must know the root of the verb 'Hakama', has the meaning of 'judging' and 'ruling' both which, in the case of God, could have its extensive meaning, because God Almighty is both 'the final judge' and 'the one who is the best ruler, as the Quran says: "...what is created is His, and under His command..."\*. He has created everything and He is in command of it all. So, shall I call upon others but God for judgment? And "...it's He who sent down the Book unto you in all details..."; in details means most clear, without anything non-divine in it, but absolutely clear and understandable. And "...those given the Book are cognizant that it's sent down from your Lord in truth..."; it is undoubtedly sent down by God, so: "...never harbor any doubt...". This means the verses are absolutely clear and perfectly expressed. "...And those given the Book are cognizant that it was sent down by your Lord in truth..." meaning it is truly the word of God and *you* should not have any doubt about it. This 'you' is addressed to the holy Prophet and it means that you should never have any doubt in your heart or mind, you do know that God has granted you this Book, you are absolutely conscious of this fact.

Then we read: "...and the word of your Lord is perfect in truthfulness and justice...". This means that this Book is the ultimate one, it's inviolable, it's absolutely truthful and it contains all the orders and injunctions of God Almighty. It was the will of God that His prophets go among the people in different times and

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\* Sura 7, Aya 54.



educate people gradually and lead them towards spiritual elevation and perfection; and then it was the turn of the last Prophet to let people face an endless horizon in monotheism so that humanity could speed up to reach its final destination to return to God. Then we read: "...nothing will abrogate His Words and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing...". God knows everything you do and everything you have in your hearts and minds, He has created you and knows you completely and so He is the best to make plans for your happy spiritual lives.

Next we read: "If you obey most people on the earth, they will lead you astray from Allah's way...". Notice how the verses of the Quran prepare the minds and souls of the listeners to properly understand the message. In the previous verse, we were told that ruling and judgment belonged to God only; this must have the very first priority in our life, and in the following verse, we are told that God's religion and His injunctions are inviolable and that there could be no infringement of God's laws. Let the disbelievers, infidels, enemies and doubters say what they stupidly like, but for believers, God's injunctions and laws are absolute; that's why we are advised not to follow any men whose ideas are based on conjecture and rooted in falsehoods and lies and if you follow them, they'll certainly lead you astray, and as the Quran reasons: "...nothing do they follow but conjuncture and lies...". They imagine things through guessing and conjecture and want others to follow their thoughts and deeds.

As you know these godless people have fabricated all sorts of theories, doctrines and programs for 'leading human communities to prosperity and happiness' but man-made theories have always proved wrong after a decade or two, because, as the Quran says they only follow their imagination and only plan through guesswork and conjecture. On the contrary, God Almighty leads humanity to the right path on the basis of realities and through knowledge and science in the truest sense of these words.

The Quran says: "It is your Lord Who certainly best knows the people who go astray from His way."\* Yes, He is certainly the best Knower of such people. And the following verse says: "So you shall eat from that on which the Name of Allah

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\* Sura 6, Aya 117.

has been mentioned, if you are believers in His revelations.”\* You may be surprised that following those verses on monotheism, on absolute obedience to God and rejection of following others and the eternal injunctions about religion, which are most important universal themes, then suddenly a seemingly small, minor subject is so emphatically mentioned! It says ‘eat of what on which the Name of God has been mentioned’, and you may think ‘this is a very minor subject’ and you may be quite surprised’, and you may ask ‘what is the relation of this to the afore-mentioned, most important subjects’? Well, I use the word ‘relation’ according to my own comprehension, but it is not a decisive interpretation because the space for understanding the Quranic verses is immensely vast and all people with different intellects may study the matter further and reach other own conclusions.

Now I tell you a few things about this question as I understand it. First of all, in the Sight of God who stands far higher than all His creative world and much higher than any horizons that man could envisage, all themes, subjects and matters are at the same level; for God, issues of general, secondary or minor nature in human eyes do not differ, they are all at the same level in God’s Sight. For the God who created worlds, whatever that brings about human happiness and prosperity is there as one command, as one injunction and one plan; it makes no difference for God whether this command is for one person, many persons or for humanity as a whole.

Secondly, let’s delve into the question of slaughtering animals, why is it that the Name of God should be mentioned when people will eat them after this? Well, we do know that among many nations, polytheistic communities, tribes and clans who were deprived of monotheism, it was customary to name their worshipped idols before any action or at certain occasions. It is reported that Christians did say ‘in the name of Christ’\*\* on such occasions; we also know that even at present the world leaders do like their names to be mentioned at the inception or completion of certain activities, projects and ceremonies. These are what the godless people do and we know that any deed that is not done in the Name of God, is certainly serving others but God. Names mentioned at the inception of any effort, certainly

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\* Sura 6, Aya 118.

\*\* Al-Kaafi - Chapter Al-Zaba’ih

demonstrates its objective; something that is performed in the name of money, is directed at gaining more money only. But what is performed in the Name of God will have a godly direction and serve a godly purpose from its inception.

So, we are told that slaughtered animals should be slaughtered in the Name of God. Well, what is the most urgent human need for his livelihood? It's food, it's feeding and eating to sustain one's livelihood; this must be in the name of God, it must be for the sake of God. Yes, when you fill up your stomach you must fill it up in the name of God: the stomach is not a fundament, it's God who is the first and the ultimate goal, so even if you die of hunger in the path of God, you'll be serving God. That's why we say 'in the Name of God' when we do throw down a morsel in our stomachs.

Thus, do begin everything with 'in the Name of God', even when you are eating and or when copulating, yes, everything you do, must start in the Name of God: entering a house, going out of it, opening up your shop, all other activities in life must begin with the Name of God. This means all directions must lead to God, according to God's commands and His straight ways.

Thus we are advised to slaughter a sheep or a cow in the Name of God; even an elementary and basic need in life as food must accompany the Name of God. In other words, filling up your stomach is not the most important principle but what is of more importance is remembering God under all circumstances; that is why we should always say 'Bismillah' when slaughtering an animal or beginning to eat. You should remember God on all occasions even when copulating. Everything in our life must be performed by remembering God first. In Sura Al-An'aam we also read: "... surely my prayers and my devotions, my life and death are all for God the One, the Lord of all Creation."\* That is what Prophet Abraham said: "The peerless One who has no partners..."\*\*. This means that all our efforts and deeds, our prayers, our worshipping and our life and death are in the Hand of that Administrator Lord who has no partners. This means that my existence and my body and soul are totally under the power and command of God Almighty. Yes those who do not believe in God the One, whatever they do, slaughtering, eating

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\* Sura 6, Aya 162.

\*\* Sura 6, Aya 163

or opening their shops in the morning, are not in the Name of God; they remember other gods, other idols and other objects of worship.

Let us for a moment take this injunction for slaughtering animals as a symbol; of course it is a divine command and should certainly be followed, but let us just suppose that it is a symbol, the symbol for the most basic among human needs, slaughtering a sheep for human consumption. We are ordered to do this in the Name of God. What does this exactly mean? Well, it means that even your most basic, everyday needs should also be removed in the Name of God, that is, if you're having a loaf of bread to overcome your hunger, eat it for the sake of God to have more strength, and it is obvious that the strength gained through God, must be used in the path of God, this is a most logical conclusion.

The Quran says: "And why should you not eat of that upon which the Name of Allah has been mentioned; He has already made all prohibitions plain, except under extreme conditions..."\*. God has plainly listed all you should not eat except in exigencies and apart from what God has prohibited, everything else is lawful (halaal). The Quran then goes on to say: "...many people, led by their low desires, mislead others through ignorance; indeed your Lord is Most-Aware of those who exceed the limits."\*\* True, there are some people whose gods are their carnal desires who lead other people astray through their ignorance and lack of knowledge and insight, but God is Most-Aware of these exceeding oppressors and adversaries.

The Quran then says: "Eschew all sin, open or secret sins; sinners will surely get the recompense for their own earnings!"\*\*\* Yes, there are two kinds of sin, some are very obvious and some have secretive natures; murder is an open, obvious case, killing others is obviously wrong. There are sins that are not so obviously noticed but they are also grave sins: statements not based on knowledge, following people who are ignorant themselves, negligence in remembering God, obedience to persons and things other than God and serving idols and icons and godless people. One may tend to think that such sins are not very harmful because

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\* Sura 6, Aya 119.

\*\* Sura 6, Aya 119.

\*\*\* Sura 6, Aya 120.

they are not openly done! No, the Quran admonishes that both these two groups of sin should not be committed. Those who gain something through committing sins will be punished accordingly.

Now I would like to draw your attention to the verse already quoted: "...surely the satans always inspire their every friend that they should contend with you all and if you follow them, you could indeed become one of the polytheists". The main point of our discussion today is this very part of the verse that the satans and other evil elements always inspire their friends, comrades and their servants to argue with you, to say things against you and try to lead you astray. So, under such conditions, what would be your duty and your approach? If you follow them you also become polytheists and pagans and that's absolutely evil. As you see, obedience to Satan is the absolute opposite of obedience to Al-Rahmaan (the Beneficent God), and following other satans or satanic elements who are their henchmen, mercenaries and operators of Satan will plunge you into polytheism or paganism.

The very last part of our discussion today relates to the picturesque scenes of Paradise and Hell as portrayed in the holy Quran. In fact, our Imams, in their reported narrations, have also drawn up scenes concerning the conditions in Hell so that people could feel them in the depths of their souls. The Quran says: "Then Paradise is closer drawn to the god-fearing, self-restrainers. And Hell shall lay wide open, before the erring strayers, and they'll be asked: where are the idols to whom you used to be the servers instead of God? Could they be helpers to you or even help themselves?"\* They are questioned 'where are those animate or inanimate elements you worshipped, the things or whims you were attached to instead of God?' It's said that they cannot help you and this means that they were human, not lifeless idols made of stones and wood. Then the Quran says that: "... into it (the Hell), they shall be cast, the seducers and the seduced, and all the Satan's host. As they wrangle together therein, they shall thus utter: 'by God! We were in plainest error, in holding you as equals with the Lord of the worlds. Those who misled us were the ones totally steeped in sins; and now no intercessors do we find, nor any caring friend; we would be surely true believers, if we could be

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\* Sura 26, Ayas 90-93.

returned, indeed in this there is a sign, but most of them are not believers.”\*

They shall rightly be thrown into Hell as they were deceived, as they went astray and as they followed corrupt people as well as those who aided Satan, did some service for him and took steps in the direction of fooling and deceiving other people. In short, Hell is the Sinners Club! But even inside Hell, they start arguing and fighting one another; the followers retort ‘it was you who led us astray and kept us in ignorance’ and the leaders answer back ‘no, you yourselves chose to follow us, you followed your carnal desires and your worldly interests’. Finally the ones who followed those godless, corrupt leaders come to themselves and cry out ‘yes, we were wrong, we went astray, we forget about God Almighty, if we had stopped to think for a moment, we would find out that we were absolutely deviated, wrong and ignorant. How stupid we were to make you, corrupt leaders, the partners to God and equal to Him. We should have asked Him for our daily bread, but we asked *you* instead’. And it is at this moment that, according to the Quran, they confess to their corrupt behaviour in their lives on earth: “By God, we were in plainest error in holding you as equals with the Lord of the worlds. Those who misled us were the ones totally steeped in sins...”\*\*. They then find out that none could be an intercessor for them and so they resort to a final, impossible wish: “And now neither intercessor do we find, nor any caring friend. If we could only *return*, we would be true believers!”\*\*\* Yes, if they would only be allowed to return to the earth!

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\* Sura 26, Ayas 94-96.

\*\* Sura 26, Ayas 97-99.

\*\*\* Sura 26, Ayas 100-103.

12th Session

Monotheism &

The Rejection of Social Classes

13th Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 29, 1974)

*“Never has God a son begotten, neither is there with Him another god, else every god would take away whatever he had created, and some of them would have tried to lord it over one another! Glory be unto God the One above their attributions.”*

*(Sura Al-Mo'minoon, Aya 91)*

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, our dear brothers and sisters remember that, as I explained previously, if we recognized monotheism as a belief that necessitates certain deeds and obligations, it inevitably involves some firm commitments on our part. I further said that we ought to understand what these obligations and commitments are. Certainly these commitments are not limited to our individual lives; in fact the greater emphasis is on our social life, our social order and the kind of community we live in. This means that when monotheism enters a society, the very first thing it does is to form and structure that society in accordance with monotheistic concepts. Then after this most important transformation takes place, we could talk about the commitment of every individual, monotheistic believer.

Anyway, we should try to know and comprehend these commitments which I earlier talked about as ‘the Resolution of Monotheism’. This means that monotheism gives us a resolution comprising of a series of agreements or contracts the clauses of which we should fulfill. We ought to recognize these obligations to be able to live, if God will, as monotheists. The very first of these commitments, as I mentioned earlier, is worshipping God and absolute obedience to Him only. The second commitment required of a monotheist, could be discussed, as we have jotted down in papers distributed among you, which goes under the topic ‘Monotheism and the Rejection of Social classes’; here talks about a monotheistic community, a monotheistic world and a monotheist individual.

What do we mean by ‘rejection of social classes’? Well, a monotheistic society is, in a more familiar term, ‘a classless society’. This means that in such a society or community all people must enjoy the same rights and the same privileges; they



all live under one legal, lawful roof and they are all travelling on a straight path and benefiting from the same opportunities.

To understand this point better, if we take an historical look at human societies, we'll clearly find out that throughout history, people have suffered greatly from class differences, not only in backward, tribal communities or places far away from centres of civilization but, as a matter of fact, these class differences and class distinctions were tougher and more unbearable in these so-called civilized countries and centres of civilization; in these societies class differences are witnessed in their ugliest and most horrendous forms. Well, what do these class differences really mean? Briefly it means that people living in a certain community are not equal human beings; many are condemned to work and suffer, serve some other groups and be content with their suffering and deprivations while the privileged groups enjoy the fruits of their labour, enjoy all opportunities and amenities in life and are never be blamed for it.

Probably the best example to illustrate our claim is India. As you know India is supposed to be the cradle of so-called Aerial civilization where the very first civil societies appeared. It is reported that the Aerial race migrated from the North and then a body of them went to India and another group came to Iran; it's further said that those who went to India became civilized much earlier than the group who arrived in Iran.

Anyway, as we said, one of the great centres of civilization is India in which class differences are at the highest levels. There were four distinct social classes which I briefly talk about but there are many books and sources about this which you may study to find out how awfully different are these unfair classifications from what monotheism in Islam offers. In India people fell into four categories: the first and most highly privileged were the Brahmans or the religious, spiritual leaders; the second category was that of the princes and the military. There were some minor classes between these two classes in the history of India. Earlier the military and the princes had the upper hand but in later stages the Brahmans dominated them through their higher scientific knowledge and spiritual leaderships. The princes usually had nothing to do but to increase their wealth, acquire more lands and extend the scope of their princedoms.

The third class consisted of artisans and farmers who performed the greatest tasks to create wealth and to produce agricultural commodities. The rest of the people, all common people, fell into the fourth category; they presumably consisted of small shop-keepers, labourers, farm workers, doers of small odd jobs, and those who had skills to do some hand; works.

We may also speak of a fifth category of people who were called ‘untouchables’; it was said that they did not belong to the Arian race and therefore they were ‘unclean’! What I said is taken from the history of India; the pitiable status of the untouchables continued for centuries until the late leader of India, Gandhi, abrogated the prevailing system. The previous prime-minister of India, Nehru, and his daughter Indira, who is the Indian prime-minister at present,\* both belonged to the class of Brahmans; Nehru, however, did not want to be called Brahman or ‘pandit’ because he was a secular person. Anyway, what I meant to tell you was that these class differences were not only current in ancient times; they do exist today in many places after some 14 centuries since the appearance of the sunshine of Quranic monotheism.

Well, we should pay attention to the question of class or caste differences. According to a European scholar, there were dozens of sub-categories to those four main classes; the members of these classes and sub-classes had no right to talk with one another to sit next to one another, to walk with one another or be friends with one another. You may ask ‘why were people separated from one another in such ruthless ways? Why is the Brahman a different human being than the one who cultivates the land? What does that military person possess, that a shop-keeper lacks? If the upper classes even faced such questions, their reply would be ‘oh, just shut up!’ For they believed that they were so created from the beginning; Brahma, the creator, created Brahmans from his head, the princes and the military chiefs from his hands, the farmers and artisans from his arms and the common people from his legs! And the untouchables were not created by him, so they do not originate from a pure source. How could then the people created from Brahma’s legs be equal to those created from his head?! This was their logic!

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\* These lectures were delivered in 1974.

Is there a chance that, in such class-ridden societies, class differences may be removed or abolished? Who should do away with these class differences? Surely it would not be the privileged classes, who enjoy unjust interests, wealth and power, to come forward and say 'we found out that this system was unjust and so we renounce our natural rights!' This would be a fanciful desire. No, it should be the deprived, the oppressed and the down-trodden who should protest against the unjust system and try to change it by any means. Yet, in such societies, they won't protest and won't do anything to change their conditions. Why do I say this? The reason is that, in such societies, the members of the lower classes do believe that what exists is the natural state of affairs, that they have been created as they are and that their nature so dictates. As it is instilled in their minds that their nature, constitution and temperament have been so created from the beginning, it would be impossible for them to think otherwise, to hope for change and to aspire after rights and privileges that do not fit their nature; they say to themselves 'that's our fate, we can't do anything about it, it has always been like this!' Thus, as we have learned from history, there existed this horrible injustice in many societies and in many countries and there was no remedy for it.

Certainly many well-intentioned reformers have been witnessed who stepped forward to change things. There is a delicate point here and I want you to pay special attention to it. These reformers firstly tried to influence the minds and thoughts of the public in order to alter or radically change their ideology and culture; this view-point has its roots in the special philosophy of religious. By this I mean they tried to tell people that the prevailing philosophy or ideology is absolutely wrong and that it means total injustice and oppression. This is what we correctly learn from history and, in my opinion, it would be erroneous to claim that the social state of affairs and the social systems change first and then certain ideas and philosophies appeared in accordance with the changed circumstances. No, the reverse of this is true and our history in the East, in Iran, in China, in India and in Egypt demonstrate that certain thinkers or reformers were the first in trying to alter the dominant philosophies concerning class differences and to prepare the ground for changing those evil social systems; history shows that change came about the way I described. In the countries in the East that I mentioned, all of

them centres of civilization, the dominant philosophies were based on dividing people into classes by claiming that they have been created differently and that they originate from different creational sources. And therefore they cannot possibly enjoy the same social rights.

Then we witness that the sun of Islam began to shine. Islam declared: there are no gods, gods are non-existent, there is only one God, the Almighty God who has created everything, everything in the worlds is under His reign and He has equally created all human beings. Thus all people come from one source, one origin, one nature and one material substance. There are numerous verses regarding this in the Quran as: “O People, worship your Lord, the One who brought you into being as well as those before you...”<sup>\*</sup>. Now I’ll try to give some explanation about the verses written down in the papers you have in your hands.

Studying these Quranic verses, we clearly see that Islam says: Humanity has one root or origin, humans come into the world with the same potentials and capabilities, they are all worthy of flying into infinite space of perfection, they all enjoy this gift or talent to travel to loftier spiritual and moral stations. Here you should know that a small number of men such as divine prophets or imams are not included in my statement regarding all people. When I say that men could fly to loftier stages of spiritual perfection, I do not mean that they could even become prophets; no, God has bestowed upon them certain special qualities not found in ordinary people. But this could be the topic of another investigative lecture which I hope to talk about on another occasion; certainly the prophets and imams have the same physical roots as other ordinary men and as Imam Ali (AS) says, in a book of poetry attributed to him, all people are the same in this respect as ‘their father is Adam and their mother is Eve’. This is an Islamic lesson that people learned thanks to monotheism; to people it was proved that in the essence of communities there are no class differences. The kind of society envisaged and recommended by Islam is not divided by groups and by classes; no group or class should enjoy rights and privileges that others are deprived of. In an Islamic society it is not claimed that some people have their roots in the earth and others are created, say, by light; no, all humans are made of matter. Therefore, monotheism

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\* Sura 2, Aya 21.

that declares means there is only one God who administers all universes and guides all the people, totally rejects class differences.

And today the class differences are not like what they used to be in India. In the present capitalist system, they never say that the capitalists and workers stem from two different sources of creation. No, these days nobody claims that the owner of a big company or a famous capitalist belongs to a different race but they have legislated certain laws and regulations that in practice bring about class differences; there are numerous privileges and advantages for the wealthy, powerful minority who badly exploit the majority of the people who could hardly manage their livelihood.

I should add that class differences in our world today is far more mischievous, evil, mean and vile than anything in the past. In the old system of class differences, the down-trodden people were openly told that they were of a different origin, but now the capitalist and wealthy classes declare ‘we are all brothers and sisters, we’re all equal and in fact we support you and have your interests in mind!’ But in practice all class differences remain. Even in legal affairs, we see that millionaires, by hiring the most expensive defence-attorneys, may avoid prosecution in the courts of law but the majority of people have no such facilities; in fact they are kept in ignorance about their rights through deceiving publicity media mostly owned by the privileged class.

Islam, however, rejects and condemns all these unfair differences. As I mentioned earlier, when your research through the Quran, you come across many, many instances in this regard; I only selected a few of them and wrote them down in the copies I gave you and I just try to translate and explain the content of these Quranic verses: very briefly the Quran says: the Creator, the Administrator and the One to be served and worshipped is God Almighty: He is the only Creator. One may ask: what difference does it make if, say, there are two gods?! Well, I do not intend to raise a theological discussion but I tell you in single terms that the very first defect or social harm in the two-god philosophy is that it divides humanity into two separate, distinct classes, and that would be the very first step to create class differences. But when we say ‘there is one God’ it means all

people are equal and equally created by one Creator. Now there is another question. When God created humans, did He love some groups or communities more than others? Let's see the Quranic response "And both the Jews and Christians make the claim: we are God's sons and His beloved ones!"\* It rejects this claim absolutely. The Quran also reminds them of crimes they committed against God: "...Ask them 'if that's the case, then why did you murder God's messengers?'"\*\* If you are God's sons and privileged to be so close to Him, why did you murder His prophets? Your claim is ridiculous and in vain. In another verse the Quran warns them again: " Say: O You of the Jewish faith, if you suppose that of all men, God's friends are you alone, and you do speak the truth, then gladly wish for death. But never will they for it long..."\*\*\*. Yes, if you are so dear to God, then leave this worthless, worldly life to sooner join your kith and kin! Jews and longing for death, never! So far we have explained that God is the Creator of all and all people have been created by Him and they all have a material origin. I must put a special emphasis on this term 'material', for humans in respect of their physical forms originate from one source and no one, as a created being, has any privilege over others in matters of human rights. We are not saying that all people have the same sort of bodies or forms. No, some people are thin, some are fat, some are more handsome or more beautiful in our eyes, one may have been born to parents who were talented, educated persons, and some born in a little-educated family.

Yes, there are such differences but none of them could be a source legal privileges or social rights. As an example, a strong, muscular man cannot enjoy more social rights because of his physical build. In Islam, schools are for all students equally, so is education and healthcare. Islam is dedicated to providing jobs for all and good livelihood for all. In an Islamic society one should not be in need of some source of influence, wealth and fame to be able to study, to be educated, to find jobs and to reach higher positions. Islam opens the way for millions of people to race towards their material and spiritual goals. This state of affairs, as stipulated by Islam is in obvious contradiction with non-monotheistic societies where

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\* Sura 5, Aya 18

\*\* Sura 2, Aya 91.

\*\*\* Sura 62, Ayas 6-7.

the path is paved with gold for some minorities but the majorities face numerous obstacles and difficulties on their paths.

An Islamic society should be established as I described. Look at some historical facts: the Ethiopian Balaal is the first person who reaches the high position of saying ‘azaan’ (call to prayers), a Negro, who according to the standards of that Age of Ignorance, belonged to the lowest strata of the society. Salmaan the Persian, again according to the prevailing standards of the time, a non-Arab migrant, a stranger who probably didn’t speak good Arabic; he later becomes the governor of an Islamic province; there are many more examples to prove our point.

Thus we notice that in the creation of humanity nobody is legally entitled to have more rights than others; all privileges, higher positions and advantages depend on the individual’s efforts to elevate himself and reach the higher positions possible. Of course some positions, such as the missions of God’s prophets who were divinely chosen to guide humanity, are excepted from our general discussion. But what we emphasize on is that all the worlds belong to Almighty God and all humans are poorly in need of His administration; we must all bow to His kingdom and in this regard we, as created men, are equal in His Sight.

As we know even a person like Imam Sajjaad (AS)\* the great grandson of the holy Prophet, a grandson of Ali (AS) and Fatima Zahraa (AS) and the son of Imam Husain (AS) also weeps, moans and sheds tears when praying to God to seek His help and guidance, and this shows that all Muslims, not related to family of the holy Prophet, should likewise be obedient to God and shed tears when praying to Him and seeking His help and guidance. And as far as working to provide one’s livelihood is concerned, we again know that Imam Saadiq (AS) laboured like other labourers to gain his livelihood and Imam Ali (AS) even as the Khalif worked hard, he tilled the land, planted trees, and helped with irrigation and the like.

This is the logic of the Quran: If you want to earn money, you should work for it, if you seek knowledge, you must study hard and if you want to be in higher positions you must not spare any effort to reach it. Here again I refer to some among numerous verses in this respect. Let’s read this verse and hope we are not

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\* The 4<sup>th</sup> Imam of the Shi’ites.

included in it: “Do they not meditate on the Quran, or have they locks upon their hearts and minds...”\*. Yes, we ought to meditate on the Quran with open hearts. Now allow me to read some verses regarding the first points in our discussion today; they are verses 84 to 91 the Sura Mo’minoon: “Ask them: ‘whose is the earth and every being that there is there in, if you have known?’” God tells His Prophet to ask the polytheists who had broken up the earth and the sky as the sphere of influence for their separate gods. “They’ll reply: God’s, say why then do you not ponder?” Why do you reply: God’s? Because those polytheists of Mecca did recognize Allah (God) but they believed that their other gods or idols were intercessors for them in the other world!

Then we read: “And say ‘who’s the Lord of the heavens seven and the Lord of the Glorious Throne?’” I will explain the meanings of the ‘seven heavens’ and ‘the Glorious Throne’ at some other time, at present we are dealing with the question of monotheism, so let’s continue reading the rest of the verses. To this second question also “They will say ‘Allah’s’. Say why aren’t you then God-fearing men?” this means: why aren’t you then correcting your ways and your behavior and why aren’t you obeying his orders? We read on: “Ask them: ‘Who is it in whose Power, is the sovereignty of all things? Who gives protection to all beings? And none against Him could ever be protected?’” Let’s ponder over this verse; humans who think they possess certain powers, they may, on the surface, be dominators in some areas. You own your house, you could take out a brick and put it somewhere else, you may change the position of this bar of iron and other similar powers. But who is He who governs over all the atoms of things you presumably move? Who is it in Whose hands lie the growth of all plants and trees, the development of animals, the humans and all their special movements and their inner transformations? Surely, they are all in the Hand of God and under His reign. Yes, He protects everything, He is the refuge for all, but against His will, none is allowed to protect anybody or support or intercede for anyone. So tell them: “Say, why are you so spell-bound...”. God does emphasize on this ‘deception’ on being ‘spell-bound’, why don’t you open your eyes. The Quran is certain if people open their eyes and meditate, they’ll see the truth.

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\* Sura 47, Aya 24.



It is most interesting that the Quran stresses the state of ‘deception’ and ‘being spell-bound’. This is a most delicate point. The Quran is certain that if people open their eyes and see things clearly, its purpose will be attained. We are saying the same thing today that if the whole world opens their eyes, our Quran will reign the world. But the various prevailing forms of ignorance and prejudices and foolish prides together with some evil, influential elements are the main obstacles to reach this divine goal. The Quran goes on “...We have the Truth unto them brought, but they are truth-deniers”. This means that we have cleared everything for them and left the truth at their disposal, but the mental and traditional situation they are in, make them come up with excuses and fabricate lies against God: “Never has God a son begotten, neither is there with Him another god...”. God Almighty is not like an ordinary man to have wives, sons and daughters; he is the one true God, not to be compared at all with what He has created.

Let us pay particular attention to the verse that follows because the most convincing logic is here: “...in that case every god would take away whatever that he had created (to establish a different kingdom!), and some of them would have tried to lord it over one another! So glory be unto God the One, above their attributions.” The Quran is truthfully saying that if there were different gods, each of them would take its creations in a different direction; this is practically what we said earlier about class differences, that is, the absence of unity in creation, the creation of the worlds and humanity in separate forms. Those who believe in a god of light and a god of darkness, human gods superior to other men and upper and lower classes are indeed in the category of anti-monotheism; their creational ideology leaves humanity in broken, differing pieces but, according to monotheism, the whole creation is one solid, linked and related creation. The humans, the plants, the animals, the mountains, the earth and all animate and inanimate beings are joined together and they all come from one ultimate source: Almighty God’s. Thus God is above such ignorant attributions.

Well, today we recited those verses from the Quran and offered you some explanations about them. The next verses we would like to recite are taken from verses 21-22 of the Sura Cow. They begin with: “O You mankind! Worship your Lord,

the One Who brought you into being, as well as those before you, so you can become upright, god-fearing...". The Quran is not addressing the white people or the black people, it does not address certain groups among humanity, neither is it addressing some upper or lower classes, no, the Quran addresses the whole human race. The Quran says that this servitude to God makes you virtuous and god-fearing and, as I mentioned earlier, this kind of virtue makes you immune from committing sins and in a god-fearing society there would be an abundance of virtuous people; it would be the opposite of the present time which suffers from a scarcity of virtues.

Well, the Quran then says: "He is the One who made the earth a cushion for you and made the sky your canopy, and rain He sent down from the heavens to bring forth fruits for your provisions; therefore you should not set up idols to rival God, now that you have the ken." As you see God addresses all men, all humanity: the provisions from the earth and the sky are not for a special group or class, they are for all, the Quran further advises not to set up idols and rivals in place of God the One because if you do this, you have already divided humanity into different, adverse classes.

Let us now cite the oft-heard verse 13 of the Sura Hujuraat: "O Humankind, We have created you from a single man and a single woman, and made you into tribes/nations, for your own mutual recognitions, yet, in the Sight of God, the noblest of you, is he who fears Him most, and God is All-Knowing, the Awarest." Again the Quran addresses the whole mankind and says that you are all born from a man and a woman; the same thing has been mentioned in some poems attributed to Imam Ali (AS): "people have the same roots, their father is Adam and their mother is Eve." All people are equally created and their human differences are there so that they recognize one another but the Quranic statement: "the noblest and dearest of you, in the Sight of God, are the ones who fear God most" is the ultimate and decisive injunction of Islam in rejection of class differences. This means no matter whether you belong to this and that family or group, the only criterion in God's sight is your virtuosity. But being among the virtuous, god-fearing people does not mean that you may enjoy more social rights or receive more money. Of course there are certain positions in an Islamic community that require

the holder to be more virtuous and god-fearing, but even these are not to possess more social rights than others.

Finally I must recite to you the verse 70 of Sura Israa which says: “surely We honoured Adam’s children and blessed them with conveyance on land and sea, and gave them good and pure things for sustenance, and raised them by a special excellence over the greater part of Our creation.” Yes, God says that we honoured humanity, enabled them to journey on land and sea; this also means that humans could travel to distant places and socialize with other men; We provided them with everything good for their livelihood. And who did We let excel over other creatures? The human race, not a special group or class. Now, one of our dear reciters will chant the relevant Quranic verses. O God, for Muhammad’s (PBUH) sake, let the Quran be our intercessor in this and the next world. O God, for your Prophet’s sake, grant us benevolence and blessing through the Quran.

13th Session

Psychological Effects of Monotheism

14th Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 30, 1974)

*“Those who responded to the call of God, and the Apostle, even after having suffered a setback, those of them who do what’s just and right and are god-fearing, shall have a recompense unfailing.(172) Those who on being warned by many men ‘people have against you gathered throng on throng, you better fear them’, only grew more strong in their belief and answered: “God is more than enough for us, oh what a splendid Guardian(173).”*

*(Sura Aali-Imraan, Ayas 172-173)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful we have already talked about certain effects that follow monotheism in the society. There were many other aspects to monotheism such as the effect of monotheism on the financial affairs of the society, a very important question, also a little complicated as far as various verses of the Quran are concerned; it needs a thorough research that cannot be dealt with in a session such as ours. There are of course certain Quranic verses of which the general sense is not hard to understand: “...and give some property to them of that which God has given to you...”<sup>\*</sup> which certainly means that you should, out of your worldly property or wealth, give some to the poor, the needy and others in financial difficulties, but, as I said, an exact, thorough research in this respect is fit for some Quranic, scientific circles.

There are, however, some more necessary discussions relating to the ideological principles of Islam which we should try to deal with by the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Today we will be continuing our discussion of monotheism, but our discussion today is more relevant to what we said at the beginning of these lectures about ‘faith and faithfulness’ and its effects on the believers. We did explain that faith ought to be followed by faithful practice and faithful commitment and that faith should be acquired consciously, not blindly. The commitments that faith lays upon the faithful’s shoulders are among the heaviest and most effective ones in the Islamic, religious ideology. In a nutshell, a believer’s monotheism means commitment to establish a monotheistic world and eradicating all signs, symbols and impressions of polytheism and infidelity.

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<sup>\*</sup> Sura 24, Aya 33.

Those among you who are familiar with the Arabic language know that the root of the word ‘Towheed’ (monotheism) means ‘oneness’ and ‘changing into one’. What does this demand? It demands that a variety of so-called gods are changed into one and that the non-monotheistic societies are transformed into monotheistic ones. All this needs strenuous, zealous efforts; in fact belief in monotheism means doing things and fulfilling commitments, and this brings forth a special, clear insight in any person. We now notice that monotheism involved a unique, strong faith not comparable to other Islamic or non-Islamic religious faiths.

Let us cite some examples. Monotheism requires that the faithful do everything in their power to remove poverty, to regulate wealth in the Islamic society and do away with wars. Well, there may be some schools of thought that teach their followers to try to achieve one of these objectives. But monotheism, in its correct sense not in a superstitious, superficial belief in the Unity of God, divine administration, divine laws and a divine, social system embraces all such commitments (that some schools of thought declare) and many more; that’s why I say that commitment to monotheism is the heaviest, human task.

Thus when we say that faith in monotheism carries with it the heaviest burden and is more decisive and more comprehensive than other religious fundamentals, we should then ask what are the psychological effects of such a belief on the souls, hearts and minds of the faithful? This is really a separate, independent question and we must find out what these effects are. There are two useful sides to this discussion. The first useful point is that we become more familiar with monotheism and we discover that monotheism includes a great spiritual education. Some people, talking about the psychological effects of monotheism, present you with a stupefying interpretation; this is absolutely wrong.

The second use of monotheism is that we come to know ourselves, that is, whether we are truly monotheists or not. How do we find out about this? Let me give you an example. If you are prescribed a medicament but after you eat it, you find out that it had no effect in curing your pain or illness, you will know that the drug was either wrongly prescribed or that it was not original or out of date.

So what sort of psychological effects should monotheism have on your soul and mind? Well, we could talk about these effects for long hours but I try to sum up the discussion in our present meeting because as from tomorrow, I intend to talk about the question of divine prophethood.

So now let's refer to some of these psychological effects: One is that people's outlook on their horizon or insight will broaden; a monotheist does get rid of narrow-sightedness, short-sightedness, egoist world outlook and pessimist tendencies; a monotheist never says 'I was defeated in that field, or that I always face setbacks and everything was detrimental for me'. He knows that his monotheism is not restricted to his life-span, fifty, seventy or a hundred years, and that his longevity is not more than a moment or a second compared with life-span of humanity. In other words, a monotheist's outlook is never restricted to some mean, small, material needs and cheap worldly ambitions. In a monotheistic horizon, apart from those material needs, dozens of greater spiritual, human needs are observed. For a monotheist the future is infinite, he does see an end for his worldly life because in his outlook this world is closely linked to the next world; death is not the blocking wall of this life but it is a corridor to a far vaster world of monotheism.

On the opposite side, in the outlook of non-monotheists, no matter what noble human ideas they had and no matter what good, well-intentioned and great personalities they were, everything comes to an end through death. As you notice, for a materialist, apart from this world, there is nothing else and after his life, he'll be in the region of non-existence, but a monotheist does not believe in non-existence; he will be in a very different kind of existence.

Another psychological effect of monotheism on monotheists is that fear never engulfs them and this is a most important factor in human life. There are many verses in the Quran in this respect and today we do recite a few of them. In one verse the believers are addressed and advised: "Satan it is indeed who prompts you to fear his followers, so you should have no fear of people but only fear Me if you are true believers."\* The Quran is saying that you should burn up the roots

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\* Sura 3, Aya 175.

of fearing other people and only fear God Almighty because god-fearing people fear nobody. The person who believes in the Unity of God and His power as the Creator will annihilate fear in his soul and mind.

If we ponder over this psychological phenomenon and do some research about it, we will conclude that it is fear that deprives man of a virtuous life both in this world and the next. Fear of falling into poverty makes man parsimonious and stops him from helping the poor and the needy. Fear of avoiding hardships makes man to tolerate crimes, scandals and humiliations. Fear of being alive for a few more days, months or even years-nobody is given a guaranteed document that you will live up to a certain future date – and fear of losing such passing, uncertain life causes men to murder other men, to make social life a horribly bitter one and to increase greed which also has its roots in fear.

Take a glimpse at historical facts and reports. What made the right-minded people, the supporters of truthful and rightful ways become a minority. What caused the people who had known the truth, not to follow the truth? Why were they silent when numerous crimes were being committed? When you do some research to find the answers to these questions, you'll find out that the root-cause was fear. When the Islamic community was faced with certain deviations and non-Islamic tendencies, what caused the Muslims not to defend and keep safe the free gift of Islam that God had granted them? The first generation of those who bore all sorts of hardships and tortures and devoted their efforts for the establishment of the Islamic administration were still alive. Why couldn't they live up to their Islamic ideals? The real cause was nothing but fear. Was there anybody in Hijaaz(Arabia) who didn't know Muawia? From among those very close to Ali (AS) and familiar with his instructions, who was it who didn't know the character and nature of Muawia Bin Abi-Sufyaan? Was there anyone who did not know Yazeed Bin Muawia? Was there anyone who didn't know about Abdulmalik Marwaan? Were there any people who did not know the Bani-Umayya dynasty? Did they know nothing about the holy Prophet, the Quran and the Umayya animosity towards Islam? The answer to these questions is an affirmative yes, they all were aware, but they were frightened, fear had made them senseless and thoughtless.



The real cause of their submission, for cooperation with oppressive rulers, for becoming their mercenaries or henchmen and even seeking favours by flattery was fear, the root-cause was the fear in their hearts; this fear was everywhere and was true in the case of ordinary people up to high-ranking officials. Abdullah-Ibn Omar was an outstanding example of spiritual weakness; he lacked self-reliance, was most incompetent and absolutely unconcerned about questions of right and wrong.\*

Abdullah Zubair was also not concerned with questions of right and wrong; and when you ponder on the characters of these two, you may find that ruthless Abdullah was an arch-enemy of Imam Ali (AS) and later swore allegiance to a mass-murderer as Hajjaaj. His pretext for not swearing allegiance to Ali was 'I am not very clear about this matter'! What sickness did he have in his heart and soul? Wasn't it fear? He knows that Ali (AS) would not be unjust, so he didn't fear him. Anyway, years passed, Imam Ali (AS) was martyred, Muawia had ruled for some years whom Abdullah Omar knew well. After that we had three years of Yazeed's shameful rule. And now Abdulmalik Marwaan became the ruler who dispatched the butcher Hjjaaaj to defeat Abdullah Zubair and conquer Mecca for him.

After Hjjaaaj stoned the House of God and later put all the supporters of Zubair to the sword, many groups of Meccans went to the Hajjaaj's tent to swear allegiance to him and Abdullah Omar was one of them. He was expecting welcome and respect for being the son of the second Khalif and his submissive attitude to Muawia. He told the guard: 'please tell Hajjaaj that Abdullah Omar has come to swear allegiance.' Then he walked into the tent and stood there but Hajjaaj, who was reportedly writing something, did not even raise his head. Abdullah said 'I am here to shake your hand and swear allegiance'; Hajjaaj said 'don't you see that my hands are busy, swear your allegiance to my foot'! And he did so. Well, what do we learn from such historical incidents? Well, Abdullah Omar's mean behaviour shows how some faithless people are ready to go through all sorts of humiliations to go on with their miserable lives for a few more months or years, lives in which you find no earthly joy, nor any good deeds for the next

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\* Son of the second Khalif, he always pretended to be a pious man, he was among the few people who did not swear allegiance to Ali (AS) but when Hajjaaj overthrew the Zubair rule in Mecca, he swore allegiance to him in a most humiliating manner; yet after a while, at Hajjaaj's order, he was put to death.

world. To kiss the feet of Hajjaaj in order to live a little longer and consume some more kilos of food! What's the cause of such despicable behavior? Nothing but *fear*.

Here I would like to draw your attention to the importance of prayers and supplications by our own Imams, especially those relating to the holy month of Ramadan; I cannot emphasize enough on their significance which really concern many psychological needs of our souls. One of these supplications to God Almighty by Imam Sajjaad is this: 'O God, lengthen my life as long as it is at your service, your servitude and your obedience...'.<sup>\*</sup> Before I talk further about this supplication, let me again put emphasis on the importance of such prayings. Some people take these prayings very lightly and just recite them thoughtlessly. There are plenty of benefits in them and, in this respect; my addressees are those who absolutely reject such empty supplications to God Almighty. Now let's go back to the Imam's request from God. What he really requests is this: I don't want a long life, say, 120 years, no, I long after that longevity that is spent serving you and obeying you. He goes on to say: 'but if You find that my life has turned into a breeding-field of Satan, then do put an end to my life (take my soul away).' I have already told you about the extensive meaning of the term Satan; it not only means the person of the perverted angel (Iblees) but embraces all evil and vicious forces that lead men astray and throw them down into the abyss of sins, crimes and corrupt actions. In this sense, the Imam says if I am being exploited in the wrong ways, if my life is a means of anti-God elements to exploit, and when I, unknowingly, have become a means of satanic forces to exploit my pride, my ignorance and my life in ways other than Yours, please put an end to my life; I do not want this sort of life; this is a true supplication.

We may imagine the pure life of a person who, like our Imams, prays to God so humbly and asks Him to take his life if it has become a life at the service of God's enemies; such a person declares that death is better than this kind of life.

Abdullah Bin Abbas is another outstanding example; he lived and died most miserably. He abandoned Ali (AS), he did not help Hassan (AS) and left Husain

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\* Sahifa Sajjadiya Dua 20

(AS) alone. Abdullah Omar had witnessed all this but he never learned anything. That's why I believe that people like Abdullah Omar and Abdullah Bin Abbas were not true believers in monotheism. I don't claim that monotheists could never worry, be anxious, distressed or alarmed, no, but they, as a result of their belief in the Unity of God, never fear the enemies of God; they don't dread anything on the path of God and perform their commitments and obligations in the sight of God.

Anyway, the verses I selected to be recited and explained at this meeting are from the Suras Aali-Imraan and Ra'd. But before this, I must inform you of something that I forget to tell you yesterday. This evening the middle of Ramadan, coincides with the birth-anniversary of Imam Hassan Mujtaba (AS), and we are going to have a happy friendly gathering, which may start about 9 p.m. with some short speeches, some poetry reading and, of course, some good recitations of the Quran. I hope most of you will be able to attend it.

And now back to the verses I mentioned. First is the verse 172 of Sura Aali-Imraan; it says: "Those who responded to the call of God and the Messenger, even after having suffered a setback, those of them who do what's just and right and are god-fearing, shall have a recompense unfailing." Well, this verse puts stress on those 'who responded to the call of God and the Messenger'; what does 'responded' mean? It means that they not only accepted the call in their hearts and souls but they followed and supported the Prophet in the most difficult and dangerous situations. They supported him even 'after setbacks and after being wounded'; from among these responders to the call of God, who did such good deeds, many will be rewarded immensely.

As you may know this verse relates to the Battle of Uhud. In that battle, some Muslims were escaping out of fear for their lives and the holy Prophet called them to come back but they didn't; there were others, badly wounded including Ali (AS), who gathered around the Prophet and defended him against the enemy like a steel wall. Certainly we should not limit our understanding of the verse to the Battle of Uhud; certain factors or events were the causes of the revelation of the verses, but we must know at the same time that the meanings of the Quranic

verses go far behind such limitations; we should try and comprehend the basic idea or notion expressed in these Quranic verses.

I think I have at times explained about such fundamental ideas that have been expressed in the context of some stories and historical accounts because we do notice that some general Islamic principle is explicitly given us in such context. Take the account about Prophet Noah as an example. The Prophet, his family and his true followers are boarding the ship and others are caught in the harsh currents of flood and the accompanying typhoon as the signs of the wrath of God. In the midst of this tumultuous condition, Noah's son, who chose not to believe in his father's divine teachings, refuses to board the Noah's Ark.

Well, this seems to be an ordinary story but it's full of interactive points and sublime references. Let's go back to the story again: a very old father who sees his dear son about to be drowned, calls out to him 'Come quickly, do board the ship or you'll be drowned and meet your death', but he replies 'no, I don't follow you and I will not be drowned because I'm going to mount the highest mountains! And while the father and the son are engaged in this conversation, a strong wave takes the boy away and the father never sees his son again.

Now, as far as human emotions are concerned, Noah is naturally saddened by this catastrophic event. Then He turns to his God and says 'O God, you had promised to save all my family, this son was also a member of the family, I wished he'd have been saved too'. Then the call comes from the Creator of all the worlds 'no, he was no more a kinsman but an embodiment of evil doing'\*. This verse presents a general, Islamic principle and tells us that two brothers who have opposite opinions (regarding God) are aliens and two non-related person with Unitarian beliefs may be like brothers. If a father and a son differ radically in monotheism, if one is in the Party of God and the other in the Party of Satan, these two, father and his son, do not belong to one family; in Islam the genealogical, or maternal relationships, that is, blood-relations fall into a secondary category, the primary category belongs to mental, spiritual and ideological relationships; this is a fundamental, Islamic principle.

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\* Sura 11, Aya 46.

I took a glimpse at some Narrations attributed to our Imams and I found out that many of them confirmed the Islamic principle I mentioned. One of them says: a believer could be the brother of another believer as if they were of the same parenthood. This means that you may differ a lot with your own brother as far as your beliefs are concerned but you may be like a brother to another believer in a far corner of the world as if born of the same parents. So when you read the verses of the Quran, you should try to comprehend what basic principle, what truthful idea and what historical fact is being described.

Now let's go back to the verses we read: 'those believers who were warned that large groups of people had gathered against you, they have plotted and united to destroy you, you must fear them'. This warning was given them by some well-wishers and ordinary persons. But what was the reaction of the true believers supporting the holy Prophet? Firstly "...they grew more strong in their belief and answered 'God is more than enough for us, oh, what a splendid Guardian'".\* This is most interesting: instead of being scared, their faith increased! And then declared 'God is quite enough for us to rely on'. The next verse says: "Thus they returned with Allah's grace and blessing, so they did not suffer any harm, they did follow God's pleasure only, and God is the Lord of Grace unbounded." So these believers who were frightened by others, did receive God's blessings and suffered no harm and happily took part in the Battle. The Quran does not say how they were happy because whether they were martyred, wounded or returned to Medina safely, makes no difference for they all received the grace and blessing of God.

The following verse, which I think must be read and remembered, says: "Satan indeed it is that prompts you to fear his followers; so you should have no fear of people, only fear Me, if you are true believers." Yes, it is Satan who tries to frighten the believers; he inspires that the enemies have plotted against you, they have gathered large armed groups against you, the Hypocrites and the infidels of Quranish have united against you, and that they have swords hidden under their cloaks; and finally it is Satan who frightens you all, but if you're not a friend of Satan, you'll never fear him. You see how this verse, deeply and tersely described

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\* Sura 3, Aya 173 - 175.

the psychological state. So, you believers, never fear him but, if you're believers, only fear God Almighty. Then the Quran says: "Do not grieve for those of them who hasten to unbelief; they won't be harming God one whit; thus God intends that they shall have no portion in the Hereafter and a grievous torment shall be their lot." Salute to you all with God's mercy and His blessings.

## Chapter Three

### Prophethood

14th Session

The Philosophy of Prophethood

15th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 1, 1974)



*“It is He who raised among the unlettered A messenger from their own midst, to read to them His Revelations, to purify them and to teach them the Book and Wisdom.”*

*(Sura Al-Jumu’a, Aya 2)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, I have selected a few subjects regarding prophethood and, God willing, I’ll discuss and explain them with the help of some verses from the Quran. Certainly our brothers and sisters know that ‘prophethood’ is one of the principles of all religions but prophethood is a higher principle of religion, for without it, religion would become meaningless. Religion means a school of thought, a plan and a way of life that a messenger of God brings along with him, so the issue of a messenger sent by God is an intrinsic part of religion; in fact the existence and consistency of a religion depend on prophethood.

On the question of prophethood, there are many wide-spread opinions which you could read about in current books and publications. From among these common statements on prophethood, I only select one, to discuss about in a slightly different impression and argument, that is, some new explanation of the verse we recited at the beginning of this session. As you know there are numerous, theological opinions and comments about prophethood; they may be right and correct but they are not what I want to discuss in our lecture today.

Here I am not concerned with some scholastic, theological arguments about prophethood; they are rational arguments but all correct or rational discussions may not necessary for us. We must find out which of those arguments are necessary, and from amongst all necessary arguments, which is more urgent and vital for us.

As I said earlier, there may be many questions relating to the subject of prophethood, but are all of them necessary for us to discuss? As an example, there is the question of whether the Prophet was a lettered person or was be completely illiterate. Well, the verse says: “...nor had you ever penned a single line with your

right hand, else the falsehood- mongers would have surely doubted.”” You may ask ‘did he not read and right on purpose or was he illiterate and *could not* read or write? This could be the subject of a discussion. Another example may be the question of the holy Prophet’s faith or religion from among all existing faiths at that time; this could be the topic of another serious debate. But how *necessary* is it for us to enter into such arguments and come up with different answers? In my opinion, they are they are not at all necessary today.

Of course I am not against any scholarly research about the kind of subjects I mentioned but the most important and highly necessary fact is to comprehend the right meaning and concept of prophethood, its inception, its aim and purpose and the path of life that prophethood has shown us. The unfortunate fact is that our society suffers from a lack of understanding of the aspects of prophethood that I just mentioned. Our Islamic umma does not really know the meaning and purpose of the Prophet’s mission and that is the main cause of the miserable conditions we’re in today. If the umma knew the purpose and objective of the Prophet’s mission, then it would go after the same aims and objectives.

Thus, while we seem to be ignorant of these primary and principal truths of the Prophet’s mission, it will be ludicrous to spend our time on matters of secondary, thirdly importance! There are many books written by scholastic theological and Islamic sources which you could read and study; I have no doubt about the relative value of studying such good, beneficial sources but I still insist that their necessity and urgency are far less than the principal and fundamental questions about prophethood. And so I’ll try my best to shed light on those more necessary aspects in our lectures.

The very first topic I want to talk about is the philosophy of prophethood. Why should we have prophets at all? Why should a person, a human try to guide humanity on behalf of God? Aren’t man’s knowledge and his human intellect sufficient for him? Why are we in need of messages between the Unseen world and our material world? This is a fundamental question and if we don’t know the answer to it, then all those other peripheral questions would be baseless. This is what we

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\* Sura 29, Aya 48.

talk about today and you have a brief version of it in the papers I handed to you, and the Quranic verse we recite today relate to this important question.

I'm not going to lengthen the discussion about the philosophy of prophethood. I describe this in one short statement: the human senses, the human instincts and human intellect cannot be sufficient for human guidance, that's all.

Well, to explain this a little more, we'll have to point out the intrinsic potentials in certain animals; they are guided by their intrinsic senses installed in them. Most animals are guided by their instincts only; bees, ants and termites are good examples. The instinct of bees tells them to sit on certain good-smelling flowers, to suck their juice or syrup and to go back to their wondrous beehives; these small, hexagonal rooms are also built instinctively. They enter these small rooms and go out from them according to certain, fixed arrangements; they have queens and guards who perform their own specific duties. You can't think that the bees held a summit conference representing the leaders of hives throughout the world to decide how to build up their hives. Some proposed that their tiny departments should be cubic, some others suggested that they should be built in hexagonal or octagonal forms and they did some research about these different proposals and finally the majority voted in favour of hexagonal rooms! No, their instincts dictated so, as their Creator had created them.

Now we recite the Quranic verse in this respect: "Behold, your Lord inspired the bees 'set up your hive upon the hills, and in the trees and in the cells, that people will erect,(68) then feed on every fruit you may select, and humbly follow your Lord's ways and byways'."\* This is God's inspiration in case of the bees; it does not mean that bees await Gabriel to descend upon them and tell them what to do! No, God Almighty has granted them special instincts to perform all their actions naturally and by instinct; they can't do otherwise, they can't do anything else, their behavior is static; if one bee happens to bring with it the syrup of a plant that stinks, it will be killed by the bee- guards before entering the hive.

The other outstanding example concerns ants and termite about which Mr. Maurice Metterling (1862-1949), the Belgian author and philosopher carried out

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\* Sura 16, Ayas 68-69.

detailed research and wrote two books about the lives and behaviour of these two insects; they also build their own curious nests and hives in most amazing ways. The most curious fact is that, their hives or nests have been built in the same form and structure since ancient times until today in Mesh-had! If you were to do a comparative study about this, you would found out, as informed scientists tell us, that they do not differ from one another an iota! All this is absolutely due to their God-given instincts.

Well, we do know that humans also use their instincts too but their exploitation of their instincts is far less than animals and short-lived, when you are born, your source of nourishment is the mother's breast, and you, as a newly-born baby start to suck your mother's breast instinctively, nobody had taught the baby to do this. As you grow up, your use of instincts gradually diminishes by your age, and gradually another factor, much more effective and stronger replaces instincts; this most strong phenomenon is human wisdom or human intelligence. Now you are a thinking man, a wise human, an intelligent person. And now it is not your instinct telling you 'go to school early in the morning, open your shop at a certain time, or teach a certain topic at the university'; no, it is your intellect that directs you; the results of what you have learned and an increase in your knowledge let you find your own way in life.

Now the question is: Would this intelligence, this human thinking be sufficient to guide you and lead you to a happy life? I believe that if human intelligence were to answer this question, negative would be the answer; of course this intelligent person answering this question should be fair-minded and not prejudiced in any way. This would be like a court of law that decides it is not competent to rule in a given case. So is a fair-minded, intelligent person who declares 'I am really not competent to give guidance independently. We may cite two reasons for this kind of judgment. One is that human intelligence has limits, it is finite whereas human needs are immeasurably great, in fact infinite. How could human intelligence find out about all human needs, problems or pains? No, it is too weak, too limited to recognize all human physical, spiritual and communal needs in order to find proper cures for them or to pass perfect laws about them.

We find another reason when we study historical and scientific realities. Did the best human brains find any ultimate solutions? Great thinkers and philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle failed to prescribe any recipe for the happiness and salvation of humanity. For years they carried out extensive researches for such a purpose to no avail; only Plato managed to come up with his Eutopia, a place of ideal well-being, an absolutely subjective perception which could not be put into practice for a moment throughout the world. And if we take a glimpse at the changing world since the age of Plato, his opinions in this respect look unacceptable or even ludicrous.

You may notice how various rational or philosophical schools often contradict each other in their philosophical interpretations of the world and the question of existence. That is why we claim that as long as humanity is not linked to or inspired by a sublime source far higher than human intelligence, it could not attain guidance, salvation and happiness and here is when we are badly in need of prophethood; this is the real meaning of prophethood. It is a higher power and much stronger guidance than guidance by instincts or limited, human wisdom. What does this higher guidance do? Does it compete with your senses? Does it neutralize your instincts? Does it stop the working of your intelligence? No, it does none of these. Its mission is to guide your power of intellect and, in the words of Imam Ali, the commander of the faithful (AS), ‘it brings out the intellects buried in the ground’\*; this means that it helps the intellect, buried by bands of Pharaohs, Nimrods, the wealthy and the powerful, to reappear and revive. The prophets’ mission is to dig out these intellectual treasures. Pharaoh does not like people to think and to exploit their God-given intellects; he wants people to live in darkness and ignorance to guarantee his despotic, godless rule. The prophets, on the opposite hand, polish people’s intellects and guide them to use their human intelligence wisely.

Thus we notice that God’s prophets, with their received Revelations, are not fighting people’s intelligence. The person, who thinks that religion and intelligence contradict each other, either does not know God’s religion or suffers from some defect in his intellect! But those with proper intelligence who have also studied the principles of religions properly know that they are not incompatible,

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\* Nahj-Al-Balagha - Sermon 1

and that religion is not against human knowledge or science. Some people who protest: ‘You must just believe in religion, you should not look for reason and logic in this respect and not ask for the philosophy of religion, because these demands lower the high status of religion, are really ignorant. A rightful religion and a perfect intellect do not oppose each other. There are some great thinkers and scientists who well understand the Unity of God, the necessity of prophethood and the philosophies and values found in daily prayers, in fasting and in giving alms.

It is through our knowledge and scientific research today that we have come to know the harms, the hurts, the injuries and awful effects of consuming alcohol on human body and soul, on his nerves and on the general conditions of the public. So why should I hesitate to read this Quranic verse aloud: “...indeed intoxicants, gambling, sacrifices unto stones and the use of dividing arrows are all abominations and Satan’s own handiwork! Thus do refrain from these deeds...”\*. Why can’t we respect what human knowledge has found out? Why can’t we say that alcohol drinking is a satanic act full of all sorts of harms? Only satans are pleased when you commit such things.

You may have heard the narration attributed to Imam Sajaad\*\*: ‘You cannot comprehend God’s religion through your intelligence’\*\*\*. This has often been wrongly interpreted. The Imam’s statement means that you are not able to find out about all religions injunctions. Why can’t we do this? Well, let me give you some simple examples. If we don’t have a Quranic verse about some subjects or no authentic narration about them, how do we, as an example, come to know that the noon prayers consist of four parts (raka’s) if the Quran did not inform us (on the time of prayers): “Keep up the prayers, from when the Sun goes down, moving towards the falling of the night, besides the Reading at the dawn...”\*\*\*\*. If the Quran did not inform us about this, we could not, through our common sense, know when to do our prayers. These are simple examples; what the Imam talked about were the injunctions and teachings of religions. But some ignorant people, while defending religion, enthusiastically cry ‘don’t you philosophize

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\* Sura 5, Aya 90.

\*\* The fourth Imam of the Shi’ites.

\*\*\* Ikamal-Al-Din wa Tamam-Al-Ni’mā

\*\*\*\* Sura 17, Aya 78.

about religion!’ Yet, the question remains: Why shouldn’t we explain the philosophy of religion? Of course I confess that what we explain and interpret may be a very small part of the sublime teachings of religion, no doubt about this. But then other people may have complementary opinion and they all together may lead us to a better understanding of our religion and the Quran. This trend has been witnessed in the history of mankind and because of this continuous trend, our understanding of religion today is far deeper than in the past and humanity is now better placed in comprehending religion than earlier times when no such discussions were carried out.

Thus I respect: religion is not the adversary of wisdom and intelligence, it is not there to kick out human intellect of human life. Religion is with us to help and guide intelligence. Why does it play this important role? Because human wisdom may be polluted by carnal desires, by greed, by evil purposes, by fears and by sexual wants; these factors do harm human intelligence and do not let it judge things correctly and truthfully. Religion removes all such negative, harmful factors and strengthens the spotless brains and human judgment.

The Quran is full of such statements as: “Don’t you think properly, don’t you use your brains, don’t you exploit your power of intelligence”. How many times do we come across such sentences in the Quran: “Indeed there is a Sign for the wise, knowledgeable people?” And we have surely heard the Narration: ‘God has granted two proofs to the people’\*; they are the Prophet and human intelligence.

Well, I think I have said enough about wisdom and intelligence. Let’s then sum up what was already said for: mankind cannot attain happiness, salvation and prayers without the guidance of divine Revelations; religion does not throw instincts and human senses out of human lives but this guidance strengthens and helps human instincts, human senses and human intelligence and purifies them; this is the role of Revelation and the philosophy of prophethood.

The reason for this is that humans are not perfect and that human knowledge and insight are not sufficient means to guide us along the whole path of life. According to famous Persian poet, Hafiz ‘a Hand from the Unseen should be

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\* Al-Kaafi - Chapter Aghl wa Al-Jahl

stretched to guide us’\*. This does not mean that when I am hungry, I should await an invisible Hand to come to help me! Or if I encounter an injustice, say, an innocent person being wronged, I just do nothing and wait for that hand to appear and help the wronged person, or never do my Islamic duties such as ‘enjoining the right and prohibiting wrong’ and wait for that Hand again!

At this juncture we should pay attention to some Quranic verses: “Did you see him who did deny the Judgment Day? He is the one who drives the orphans away, and urges not the feeling of the poor.”\*\* Further we read in the Quran: “They shall reply: We never did a prayer, nor did we ever feed the poor, and we denied the Day of Reckoning.”\*\*\* Here we find out that deniers of religion and non-believers are those who do not try to help and feed the poor and do not encourage others to do so and, from a deeper comprehension of the Quran, they are people who do not try to eradicate hunger and poverty; they don’t make a move in this direction and await the invisible Hand to do it for them! I think, if such a Hand emerges, it will first grab these deniers and punish them for their idleness and carelessness. Anyway, as I mentioned earlier, it will be the Hand of prophethood and prophets that come into the world to guide humanity and to strengthen their wisdom.

There are several other questions regarding prophethood some of which I have noted down on the sheets I handed to you; questions such as: Where is the beginning of the prophet’s missions? From what stage do they begin their mission to reform the affairs of mankind? What is the nature of their mission in the process, and where does their mission end? Does it never come to an end? Did the prophet, John the Baptist’s mission come to end when he was beheaded at the court of the godless despot of the time? I will, God willing, talk about some of these questions in coming days. On the philosophy of prophethood, what I said so far seems to be sufficient and I hope all of you, who seem to be alert and interested listeners, are now quite clear about it. If you have further questions, I’ll be happy to answer them later.

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\* The translation of the whole line:  
Lovers are missing in this town, I ponder:  
Would that a Hand from heaven yonder  
Emerge to do some happy wonder!

\*\* Sura 107, Ayas 1-3.

\*\*\* Sura 74, Ayas 43-44 & 46



Another Quranic verse I intend to explain today is the famous verse which says: “Humanity had been a single *Umma*...”<sup>\*</sup>. Humanity was just a single group, a single community or a single society. What does that mean? Quran interpreters have interpreted this in different ways. Two interpretations are given by Ayatollah Taaleghani<sup>\*\*</sup> in his book “A Glimmer of Light from the Quran”; you could buy the book and read it. I have a third interpretation which I will shortly tell you about. But recently it has become fashionable among some intellectuals to claim that ‘the single umma’ refers to the primitive human Communes where all people worked in cooperation and partnership for the benefit of all the Commune and members benefited from their collective hunting and labour equally; but there is no proof for this hypothesis. Surely we are not going to barrow some concepts from other schools of thought and stick them to our Quran. What we and many interpreters understand from the verses of the Quran is sufficient for us, we are not in need of some concepts from other cultures and schools to decorate our Quran with them!

Well, as I said, there have been two interpretations for the verse “Humanity had been a single umma”, and today I present you with another interpretation as far as I comprehend the verse. I believe that people then were in an equal state regarding their needs and potentials. All humans possessed intelligence, they had the five senses and even a sixth sense, they all became thirsty and hungry and had sexual desires, they were all in need of clothing, housing and the like. All their needs were of the same colour, shape and nature.

We may now cite the case of a well-bred person from an influential, wealthy family and the son of a poor working family who has to work in some squalid conditions. Does this mean that the former possessed higher, intrinsic qualities than the latter? Not at all, this means that his potential and his God-given qualities were not exploited. Let’s cite a very simple example. We have many oil wells in the south of our country and presently the oil we extract is being used for internal consumption and for exports. Yet there may be many oil deposits in other parts of our land that have not yet been spotted and exploited and maybe their oil could

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\* Sura 2, Aya 213.

\*\* The late Ayatollah, a famed interpreter of the Quran.

be a better and richer oil. The same is true about people who did not have the opportunity to develop their talents.

Therefore I say that humanity had naturally been a single umma with equal needs and equal God-given gifts. Then, as I have noted down in the papers I handed to you: “And Allah sent forth prophets to deliver tidings glad and warnings and with them a Scripture based on Truth...”\*. God Almighty chose some from among mankind, possibly with certain high qualities, as His prophets and sent them forth. What were they to do? To give the good news of Paradise, of happiness and salvation, of establishing security, peace and welfare on the earth, of annihilation of poverty, fear, hopelessness and ignorance and the establishment of a godly order and truthful sovereignty throughout the world, and the ultimate good news is that of entering the Paradise of God. Together with these glad tidings, the prophets also give warning of ending up in Hell, of evil kind of living on earth, of domination of poverty and ignorance, of falling into the abyss of corruption and of human talents and instincts going astray; the prophets are true heralds of good news and true givers of warnings.

On the phrase “and a Scripture based on Truth”, I do not say much because I have explained the word ‘Hagh’ (truth) on several previous occasions. Briefly ‘the Truth’ is that which suits the nature of humanity and the nature of existing worlds. Prophets speak of Truth because they guide humanity through their true nature and constitution to develop their God-given gifts, instincts and intellects and help them towards spiritual perfection.

Then in the same verse\*\* we read: “...He sent the Scripture based on Truth in order to judge disputes among the people...”. So the Scripture or the Book is sent down to judge the cases of disputes, quarrels and differences among the people. Naturally there are differences and disagreements among members of any community. What do we understand from this? We understand that the rule of prophets does not make them personal rulers or despots; their rule is by the Book, by the laws and injunctions of the Book and in one word, the rule of law.

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\* Sura 2, Aya 213.

\*\* Sura 2, Aya 213.

The verse goes on to say: "... but disputes arose among the people who were given *it*, after they received clear signs...". Here we notice that most of those who entered into disputes were the same people to whom the Scriptures were given! And what does this demonstrate to us? it proves the question of distortions in divine Scriptures. The prophets bring with them the Scriptures containing divine laws and injunctions and then the same people of the Book began to interpret things differently and distorted the divine Revelations according to their whims, interests and perverted opinions. We can clearly see that these people call themselves the followers of certain religions but they don't really follow the laws and injunctions of those religions and often try to distort them.

And now we read the rest of the verse: "...because they wanted to oppress each other; thus Allah, by His Grace, gave guidance to those who were believers in that Truth which was disputed, for it is God who does guide, whom He please, to the right path". As the verse says they disputed and fought one another through enmities and oppressive tendencies but God did guide those who were true believers.

What I said so far was an explanation of the Quranic verses our dear reciter chanted for you. I meant to talk a little more about the last phrases in that Quranic verse but I feel too tired and ask you to excuse me as I intended to explain those verses of Sura Jumu'a, which I have jotted in the papers I handed to you. Fortunately as I have often commented about this Sura which we always read at Friday evening prayers, I ask our dear reciter to just chant these verses: "in the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, whatever is there in the Skies, and everything on earth declares God's Glory and His Praise, the Sovereign Lord, the Holiest, in Might Exalted, the Most Wise." Thus we now know the philosophy of prophethood and we do understand that if this 'mother of principles' or *prophethood* was not there, then religions, lacking messengers sent by God, would be meaningless.

15th Session

Be'that (Mission) in Prophethood

16th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 2, 1974)

*“Read! In the Name of your Lord Who Created all(1) Created humans from coagulated blood(2) Read: and your Lord is the Most Exalted-(3) He tutored by the pen;(4) what man knew not, He helped him Ken-(5) Yet man is surely insolent,(6) in thinking he is self-sufficient;(7) certainly everything is to your Lord returning(8)”*  
(Sura Al-Alaq, Ayas 1-8)

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, The subject of today’s discussion is this: what qualitative changes or developments do we witness in the person of a divine prophet or messenger and the world around him when the burden of God’s mission or prophethood is put on the shoulders of a prophet? In this lecture, however, I am not going to discuss the internal, spiritual and psychological state of the person of the prophet. And if I refer a point or two in this respect, it is meant to shed more light on a certain dimension of prophethood.

As you know whenever the Quran talks about the coming of a prophet, the word ‘*be that*’, from the Arabic verbal root of ‘*be that*’ is used which means ‘to raise’, as in Sura Al-Nahl, Aya 36: “indeed We raised a messenger in every nation (in every community)...”. We often read in the Quran ‘We raised Moses, We raised Abraham, We raised other prophets’. So we may ask: what is the relation between this raising and prophethood? As you see, the topic in the papers I handed to you is ‘The question of social upraising in prophethood’. This means that in prophethood there is an initial phase of ‘raising up’. As I said earlier this raising up contains some kind of movement and dynamism; it means ‘moving again after a long social period of languor, immobility and sluggishness’. An example to clarify this point is the state of the dead, lying in graveyards for long, long years with all their bodies turned to dust, who will, by the power of God Almighty, rise up on the Day of Resurrection. Here it is also said that they were ‘raised’. Another instance would be the case of a person who lies in bed at home most of the time, who does not participate in any social activity and does not do any work and he is taken here and there by social waves as a piece of straw on a fast current. Now if this individual, due to some factor or incentive, gives up his indifference and idleness and takes an active part in his familial and social functions and, in one

word, if he becomes alert and conscious and conscionable, we could say that he was 'raised' or 'he has been revived'.

The Day of Resurrection, as you know, is also called 'Yaum al-ba'th' which means 'the day of being raised.' That Day the people who have come out of their graves face tumultuous, anxious conditions before their final fate is determined. All the examples I cited were meant to give you some portrayal of divine raising of the prophets to let you gain a novel insight about prophethood. Some people think that prophethood is like: a preacher arriving in a town to tell people something about religion and irreligion, faith and faithlessness; or a learned religious man going to the people and talking to them about some common-place questions, or a speaker at a demonstration who shouts some slogans to arouse the crowd's feelings! Truly some people imagine that God's prophets are like these preachers or speakers; they further assume that prophets are some shy, spiritual gentlemen who talk about spiritual matters whom some good people follow- these are the faithful- and some others do not appreciate their advices- they are then called disbelievers or polytheists-; some of us do imagine that God's prophets are such persons as I described.

But in divine prophethoods there are two developments: Firstly in the person of the prophet; and he is the first who is awakened as a result of an internal, spiritual revolution and after gifts in his soul deposited by God Almighty which were so far hidden in his self are revived and, in one word, when he is drastically changed by receiving God's Revelations, and in Quranic terms, when he becomes 'a muslim' (absolute submitter to God), then his received knowledge, instructions and intrinsic talents find their way to the society like an ever-flowing, benevolent river. In other words, after this spiritual revolution in the soul of the prophet, he causes a greater revolution in his society or community. Thus we could say that in the 'be'that' of the prophets, everything is: change, development, dynamism and revolution.

How is the spiritual state of a prophet before being raised? There are a couple of points in this respect that may even seem contradictory to some people. One is that the prophet, even before 'be'that', must be a person who possesses higher

human comprehension and cognition than ordinary people; his potential for serving God, for dynamic actions and for tolerating the psychological explosion in his soul, must be at the most sublime, human level; all those necessary qualities which may advance humans to attain the height of "...we are of God and unto Him we shall return."\* All this shows that closeness to God and fearing God is far stronger in the soul and character of the prophet than others even before his appointment to prophethood.

Here a question may arise in your mind: Why does he have such a character and spiritual strength? Has God been discriminating in this respect? I have one short answer to this question: To carry out the heaviest responsibility of the prophetic mission, to take the message of God to all people and to change ignorant, faithless societies to monotheism, he needs to be the strongest, the most steadfast and morally the best in human community; God sees everything and He sees and knows all individuals. It so happens that an individual, due to his familial characteristics, circles of friends, environmental circumstances or other factors affecting his mind and soul, possesses a higher spiritual strength; God Almighty sees all this, He chooses that individual and, through His Grace and Blessing, prepares him for carrying out this most difficult of worldly obligations; no ordinary person could fulfill this divine duty. It takes such a prophet to do the job. It cannot be done by Platos, Aristotles or Mahatma Gondhis of the world! To sum up, we may say that the spiritual deposits in the mind and soul of a divine prophet should be richer, deeper and more employable for the mission than other people.

The second point is this: the lives of prophets, before being chosen, were as ordinary people, they were members of their community, had friends and associates like others and did move with the currents of the society. They were not thinking of changing their society. They were not thinking of changing their societies radically; they could be dissidents and not happy with the state of affairs. In fact intelligent people of those eras were certainly not content with the prevalent ignorance of the majority and the horrible, class differences, of existing poverties and the oppression of the despotic rules but before prophethood, their discontent had not the form and nature of a radical, social revolution.

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\* Sura 2, Aya 156.

At this juncture, let's remember Moses (AS). He lives in the royal castle of Pharaoh, benefits from the privileges of being a prince, and once in a bazaar murders an official of the Pharaoh who was cruel to a Jew, of the same race as Moses! And then when returning from Midian after working for Prophet Shu'aib for many years, he receives God's Revelation concerning his prophethood. He then, as a divine prophet, when asked why he murdered a man, replies "I did that when I was misguided"\*. What does 'I was misguided' mean? It means that at that time I was not on the right path, he does not say that killing one of Pharaoh's officials was a great sin, no, his statement means that on that occasion I was not following a direct, divine path, and that I was just like other ordinary people and I was behaving just like many other members of the society, but now after *be'that* whatever I do is directed by a clear pure philosophy and through God's clear Revelations.

On our own holy Prophet (SA) the verses of Sura Al-Dzoha (93) explicitly explain what I have been saying so far. It begins with "By morning light"; I have noted a few lines about this in the papers handed to you. The Quran interpreters have various opinions about this verse; there are also some comments in Narrations reaching us. I looked at them all and found out that the Narrations included comments and explanations, not an outright translation of the verse. This means that the Imams inferred something more from the verse in addition to its apparent meaning.

Anyway, Al-Dzoha is God's swearing by daylight, that is, the morning light before noontime. This kind of oath is profoundly meaningful; perhaps in it there is some reference to the Prophet's mission, a reference to the light of Islam brought about by it to illuminate the world. Then we read: "And by falling night, you are not abandoned by your Lord, nor is He unconcerned (upset) with you."\*\* Reportedly after the inception of Revelations and the ensuing spiritual revolution in the mind and soul of the holy Prophet and his intimate meeting with Arch-Angel Gabriel, He did not receive any Revelations and was badly saddened. How long did this *interval* last? There are various reports about it ranging from 40 days to a couple of years. And after this interval the Sura Al-Dzoha is the very first good

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\* Sura 26, Aya 20.

\*\* Sura 93, Ayas 2-3.



news that the Prophet receives. And then as we read in the verse, God informs him that He has not left him alone and that He was not angry with him at all.

Further in the Sura we read: “and that which for you lies in store, excels all that has gone before, And soon you shall be granted, such plenty by your Lord that you shall be delighted.”\* So God tells His prophet that the future and the end of affairs will be far better for him, and that God will grant him such blessings that he would be the happiest man on earth. Some Quran commentators have said that the blessing that makes the Prophet so happy is the permission to intercede. But we should know that even in this world so much was granted to the holy Prophet of Islam that may not be really measured; these bounties or blessings include: guidance of humanity, defeating bull-headed, bloody enemies, the formation of an ideal society, conquest of other territories and putting the Islamic community on a continuous, progressive path; such blessings may not really be counted.

Then in the same verse we read: “Did He not find you orphaned, and He provided you with shelter”\*\*. God found you an orphan, your father had died before you were born, your mother passed away when you were a baby, your dear grandfather also died in a few years and you were left alone when your uncle, Abutaalib took you under his care, and that it was We who always looked after you. In other words God is telling His prophet that We have always cared for you, and now that you have been assigned to carry out Our heavy mission of prophethood, We shall be watchful of you and We will assist you, so don’t you ever fear anything, and never think that God has abandoned you, no, never.

The next verse in this Sura is most controversial: “Did He not find you *drifting* and He directed you thereafter.”\*\*\* About this verse and the word ‘dzaallan’ meaning drifting, astray, wrong, in error, etc. There are many Narrations, most of them weak ones, and there are various opinions by commentators such as: when a child, the Prophet lost his way in the hills around Mecca and God guided his grandfather to find him; or you were nobody among the inhabitants of Mecca but God guided many people in Mecca to come to you; there are many more of

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\* Sura 93, Ayas 4-5.

\*\* Sura 93, Aya 6.

\*\*\* Sura 93, Aya 7.

such comments and opinions. Here I don't intend to refute them all; if there is an authentic narration, of course, we will not reject it.

However the apparent, outward says something different: you were 'astray' and We guided you to the straight path. Now, does this mean that he was an idol-worshipper, a pervert or a sinner? Absolutely not. So what does the word 'dzaallan' really mean? It means that then, the Straight path of 'be'that' and prophethood had not been granted you and that all those Revelations, teachings, laws and injunctions and clear Islamic concepts had not descended on the heart and mind of the holy Prophet. Could it be otherwise? Certainly he was not 'astray' as some assume.

Let's read on the Sura: "Did He not find you needful and then He made you prosper? Therefore the orphan, do not abandon! And then the needful beggar, do never censure! But the Favour of your own Lord, tell them abroad!"\* Well, what do these verses tell us? As their apparent meanings go, the prophet was an ordinary member of his community, he went on living like others but certainly he was not content with the prevailing circumstances when he saw the influential, young men of Quraish forcibly possessing the slave-women belonging to others and many other forms of cruelty and oppression that the lower members of the society were subjected to. That's why he, at twenty, encouraged some other young men to establish the circle called 'Helf-Al-Fuzul' (roughly meaning 'the Covenant of the Chivalrous') to defend the rights of the down-trodden and poor passengers arriving in Mecca. We do know, however, that Muhammad (SA) never bowed down before the Quraish idols, he never allied with the rich and the powerful and always lived in that community as a free-thinking, chivalrous person in the natural, current course of events (to the audience: please make a pass-way for the ladies to pass through, a space for the arrival of the ladies, if there are enough room in front of the entrance-door, please move there or sit outside, please).

Now let's continue our discussions. We were saying that the Prophet was living in his community as an ordinary person but suddenly he becomes the target of receiving Revelations; this tumultuous, revolutionary change is so severe and so

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\* Sura 93, Ayas 8-11.

soul-shaking that it even affects his nervous system and his physical health. Up on the Nour Hill when he receives his very first Revelation, and he seems to be on fire all of a sudden when God's messenger orders him to read and the Prophet says 'what shall I read' or 'I can't read' according to different commentators and when the verses continue, one may imagine that the mind and soul of the Prophet is aflame, these verses, descending on an honest, thoughtful person, bring about a great, spiritual revolution. Let's now read these revolutionary verses again "In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful: Read! In the Name of your Lord who created all there is.(1) Created humans from coagulated blood.(2) Read, and your Lord is Most exalted.(3) He tutored by the pen.(4) What man knew not, He helped him ken(5)"\*. After this great Revelation the holy Prophet is not the personality he was an hour ago or even a moment ago. It was the beginning of what turned out to become a world revolution; if he had not so wonderfully changed, he would not have been in a position to change the world around him. This is an important lesson for the followers of the holy Prophet of Islam, that is, they should know that as long as they have not undergone a spiritual change, they will not be able to change the world.

If we know nothing about our own existence, if we are not aware of the divine mercy and God's blessing and if we have not gained any spiritual benefits, what then do we have to offer to other people? As we see in the person of the holy Prophet, firstly a revolutionary, spiritual change came about in his soul and then he could manage to educate men to become faithful companions who were ready to give up their lives rather than their faith. Remember the case of Balaal, the Ethiopian slave who was put under most inhuman tortures for hours but even to the last minutes of those tough tortures cried out 'Al-Ahad, Al-Ahad' meaning 'the only One, the only One' at the polytheists of Quraish which in fact meant 'death to you polytheists. It was not a simple, easy job for the holy Prophet to train and form most faithful companions such as Abu-Dhar, Meghdaad or Abdullah Mas'oud\*\*.

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\* Sura 96, Ayas 1-5.

\*\* Some of the famous figures who converted to Islam under the guidance of the holy Prophet and who remained most firm believers to the end. Abu-Dhar was exiled to a remote spot at the time of the third Khalif because he criticized the large financial grants to the Khalif's kith and kin.

Thus we must find out what that first Revelation did to the Prophet that made him the greatest, most influential and faith-inspiring person among the backward-looking Arabs of his time. For this we should have another glimpse at the initial verse of Sura Al-Alaq: “Read in the Name of your Lord who has created all and everything...”. We should really pay attention to the phrase ‘in the Name of You, Lord Who created all there is’. This means that the very first thing a believer should recognize, as our holy Prophet did, is the simple question of Creation; this is really the first thing that attracts the hearts and minds of the faithful: the recognition of the fact that all there is and every manifestation of existence are created by God Almighty.

When this fact is recognized, the Quran takes a step further about the creation of humanity: “Created humans from coagulated blood.”\* Well, you see that humans so created, are in many ways superior to other beings. This is a most important matter that people do not deeply think about, as when you are sitting in a car speeding on a road, you cannot really pay attention to hundreds of trees that appear and disappear in front of your eyes. Here I should here add that this difference between humans and other animals is not recognized by the despots and dictators of the world because in their sight thousands of men are like thousands of ants; they just murder thousands and millions of men and women by dropping a bomb on them.

As I said at first one does not clearly see the great differences between men and other animals, but if you think about this subject deeply and wisely you come to know those factors that make humans far superior to animals. Let’s point to some of these differences: the power of intellect and wisdom, the ability to recognize generalities and universalities, the power to deduct facts from parts and particulars, the power of initiatives and innovations. Such powers are not granted to stones, trees and animals! Only take the gift of innovation. If we had no gift of innovation and taking initiatives, humanity would have stayed at its primitive stage and could not bring about any changes or developments in its life, culture and civilization. I cited the example of bees that have been setting up their hives in the same form and carrying out certain activities since ancient times. Humans

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\* Sura 96, Aya 2.

have the power of determination and intelligence to make different choices; they do not follow their instincts only but using their intellects they could even act contrary to their instincts. Some of these instincts are the need to eat and the desire to satisfy sexual needs. But then you notice that some people go on hunger strikes for a purpose and don't eat until they die or some Indian Ascetics avoid sexual intercourse whole their lives and some such people only have one almond as their daily nutrition. It's only humans who could go against their instincts. What I said so far shows that humans are extraordinary and surprising animates. Recently many scientists with materialistic outlooks who used to think of human as only a different kind of animal, have confessed that humans possess certain powers that have inexplicably astonished them!

Briefly, and as far as we are concerned, humans possess certain excellent qualities, all deposited in the soul and spirit of men and women by God Almighty according to the Quran "...and I breathed into him of My Spirit..."\*.

Let's go back to our discussion of prophethood. The revealed verses we already read, suddenly made the holy Prophet realize something much loftier than a simple creation of the worlds: the creation of mankind, the creation of intelligence and other human gifts from a simple 'coagulated blood'! If humans lacked such God-given faculties, how could then a soulless body with no power of recognition turn into a person such as Einstein, Socrates or a great divine prophet? Could it be so except through the strong creation of the Creator. The Revelations made the Prophet aware of this most important fact. These divine verses equipped the holy Prophet with such iron-willed determination, so much so that fatigue, disappointment and despair had no meaning in his life.

Then we have "He taught by the pen..." and that "Your Lord is most exalted." Here we learn about education, if we had no facility of writing, humanity would not move forward. What makes man to take further, progressive steps is what's written down by his predecessors; otherwise he could not know what his previous generations had gone through and what progress they had made. If there was no 'pen', that is, the ability to write down what man experienced in his own time,

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\* Sura 15, Aya 29 , Sura 38, Aya 72.

then none of the scientific discoveries and novel results of men's research could have been at the disposal of such great thinkers as Aristotle, or Avicenna. If Avicenna did not have the Aristotle's writings, he could not become Avicenna.

So God Almighty turns His prophet into a firm, unshakable faithful person who'll never know fear and fatigue. Then He draws the attention of the Prophet to the greatness and generousness of God and the fact of educating by the pen; could you imagine if we did not possess the faculty to write? Writing was the means that enabled humans to pass their knowledge, experience and achievements to the next generations; this process went on and thus humanity could accumulate its scientific knowledge. If books were not written by Aristotle, it would have been improbable for Avicennas of this world to expand and advance human knowledge and sciences. There are many more examples of scientists, philosophers and researchers in the world who cashed in on the achievements of their predecessors and contributed vastly to the progress of human culture, science and civilization and all this was achieved 'by the pen' and by writing things down.

Then we read in the same Sura (Al-Alaq) that God taught men what they did not know; this represents the numerous bounties and blessings granted to man, so that he should be grateful to God and thank Him for what He has given him and what He has taught him. God granted humans intelligence and wisdom and showed him the right paths to happiness, progress and salvation so that humans could elevate their spiritual power and remove poverty, hunger and deviation from their communities. But despite the advancements we already mentioned, is man really enjoying those God-given bounties?

"No, Not at all", says the next verse: "No, Man is surely insolent(6) in thinking that he is self-sufficient(7)". No, humanity has not yet got to the high level God guided it because many people have been rebellious and unthankful to God thinking they need Him no more! But the next verses say that such people will never succeed in life and they won't have a happy end, because: 'Certainly everything will return to your Lord.'\*\*\* This means the rebellious, godless people will not be salvaged; they'll be returned to God and shall receive suitable retribution. There

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\* Sura 96, Ayas 6-7.

\*\* Sura 96, Aya 8.

are many more truths in these verses and you can imagine what a great revolution they brought about in the mind and soul of our holy Prophet and the same effects were reflected in the community through the person of the Prophet.

I also like to cite some verses of the Sura Al-Najm here for more clarification of what went on in the soul of the Prophet when he received those verses; I try to explain them as understanding them well, also helps our practices and our behaviour. Here I only reiterate the verses 1 to 12 of this Sura and bring our discussion to a conclusion. It says: “In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. By Pleiades fading away.(1) Your fellow-townsmen is not astray, nor was he led awry.(2) Nor does he ever say aught of his imagination;(3) it’s naught but Revelation sent down by inspiration.(4)” God Almighty confirms that His prophet has never been on the wrong path; some commentators believe that this verse refers to the ‘me’raaj’, the holy Prophet’s nightly journey to heavens; they say that the people did not believe what the Prophet said about this heavenly journey and so this Revelation was sent down to confirm that He never talks whimsically and imaginatively but only repeats God’s Revelations. The Sura goes on to declare that: “instruction was unto him given by one, of mighty sway(5)”. I think that in the papers I handed and to you at the start of this meeting, I wrote ‘most powerful’ for the Quranic phrase “Shadeed-Al-Quwa” and according to many commentators the next phrase ‘Dzu Merra’ means ‘most wise’ which most of them say that it is the Arch-Angel Gabriel. Next we read: “...Endued with Wisdom, and he was A perfect vision And he was on the highest point of the horizon...”. Again, according to famous interpreters, he was inspired by Gabriel who was most steadfast in his mission, and he is on the highest horizon possible, and so he (Gabriel) had to come down to the holy Prophet who, through his worshipping of God, through his praying and inspirations, was ready to receive these heavy Revelations. The words ‘danaa’ and ‘tadalla’ in the Quran, mean that Gabriel approached the holy Prophet; he was so near to the Prophet “two bow-lengths away or closer even...”. This means that he was very close to the Prophet, say, less than two meters; these are metaphoric examples, it truly means that the holy spirit of the holy Prophet was so close to God that one cannot imagine a closer relation to God Almighty.

Next we read: “ And he was on the highest point of the horizon-(7) And nearer did he come while in descent -(8) And was then two bow-lengths away or closer even -(9) then He revealed the Revelation unto His servant-(10) The heart could not deny the vision-(11) How could you question then what he has seen?(12)” These are verses 7 to 12 of Sura Al-Najm. Some of these verses I have already explained. Now about ‘coming closer’, the Quranic commentators have expressed two different opinions. One is that the holy Prophet, through his worshipping God, his prayers, his ascetic way of life, his constant thinking and deliberation about God and, of course, God’s special kind attention to him, his soul and spirit got nearer and nearer to God every day until he was spiritually ready to receive Revelations. The second interpretation is that it was Gabriel who descended from heavens and stood so close to the holy Prophet. Both these interpretations may be true, only I personally favour the first interpretation.

Anyway when it is said that Gabriel was about two bow-lengths or, say, two meters away from the Prophet, we are speaking figuratively; the essence of the phrase is that the holy spirit of the Prophet was as close to God as impossible for any other human. Then God tells the people that His Prophet is a most righteous man, that he has truly received God’s Revelation, and that he is not telling a lie; therefore do not argue with him and do not dispute with him about what he has truthfully seen and witnessed. And a last word: after such a revolutionary, spiritual change in the mind and heart of the Prophet, he tries to guide the whole people unto the right path of God; this will be the topic of our next meeting.



16th Session

The Social Uprising of Prophethood

17th Ramadan 1353 (Oct, 3, 1974)

*“And We intended to be Gracious to the folks, oppressed and weakened in the land, and make them leaders of the faith, and give them honour to be the Heirs-(5) And grant them power in the land, and let Pharaoh, Hamaan and their great host, be witnesses of what they dreaded most, to suffer at their hand.(6)”*

*(sura Al-Qasas, Ayas 5-6)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the subject I want to talk about today, inspired by these verses of Sura Al-Qasas and some verses from Sura Al-Saff, is the same as I have jotted down in the papers handed to you, namely ‘The Social Uprising of Prophethood’.

My discussion today is to clarify what this uprising is about. In our previous meeting I gave an account about ‘be’that’, the inception of the prophetic mission and the revolution that takes place in the heart and soul of the Prophet. I did say that this devoted servant of God was chosen by Him with regard to his high spiritual qualities to carry out the back-breaking mission of prophethood and the responsibilities and commitments that accompany it. I also told you that after receiving Revelations, this man was no more the person he was the day before or even an hour before.

Many so-called foreign orientalisTs and Islam researchers claim that our holy Prophet had, before the announcement of prophethood, studied extensively, acquired all knowledge there was at the time and thought and deliberated for long years about the mission and the revolution he began. These people are either evil-wishers towards Islam or are absolutely in error.

No, he did not come to call to Islam and its ensuing revolution through his own thoughts or insight. No, the true fact is that, as I mentioned, he was *another person* completely. This is true in the case of all divine prophets. Take the case of Moses: He is traveling with his wife and children and then, at a most sensitive moment in the middle of nowhere, he suddenly receives divine Revelation and changes spiritually into a new Moses with his mind and soul undergoing a revolution embracing absolutely new motivations and objectives. Thus those orien-

talists are absolutely wrong and the reason for their misjudgments is that they do not believe in any divine mission or any communications from the unseen worlds.

Now, as I mentioned earlier, that immense spiritual revolution engulfs the whole existence of the Prophet, and then he tries to create the same revolutionary change outside of himself, that is, in the community around him. Today, God willing, I talk about what I called ‘the social uprising of prophethood, but tomorrow and possibly the day after, I will draw your attention to another important aspect of the prophetic missions concerning the aims and objectives of divine prophethoods. This later discussion will answer the question of the aims and purposes of this prophetic social uprising or revolution. There are of course certain other facts relating to the present discussion which, if God will, I will explain in the days to come.

Now, on the question of prophetic uprising or revolution, we should know that nowadays terms such as ‘revolution’ are interlinked with violence and bloodshed whereas this word, as recorded in various dictionaries, means ‘a radical, fundamental, deep change’ of the current state of affairs; it is not necessarily accompanied with violence and bloodshed. During such radical changes there may be some clashes, and violence but the original term does not contain such consequences.

I could give a very simple example to illustrate the true meaning of the word. Let’s think of this mosque we are sitting in; if it were to change into a housing-complex where, some apartments each with a few room had to be set up, its basic structure would have to change; it had to be transformed. This radical, structural transformation could come about without bloodshed, but if there were forces resisting this big change, we could witness some violence.

Now, let’s think of a community of humans, say, some fifty thousand, five hundred thousand or five million people; they are living together in a society according to certain routine practices, a general order where all people walked the same paths of life together; in short, people dependent on one another.

Well, now we claim that such a community of many thousands may fall into two categories or two ways of living. One category or formation of the society

is that a minority of the wealthy, the powerful and the so-called nobles dominate and rule the community; they choose what the majority should do, they lay down their own laws and regulations and if there should be any criticism of the dominant rulers, the critics or dissidents would be severely punished or put to death. But if some troubles arose or some catastrophes appeared, it was the ordinary people who became the victims; in one word, class differences and class injustices were rampant.

Thus if you notice that in a certain society there are such class differences, you should know that it is an unjust, ungodly community. Some theoreticians today try to make class differences sound very complicated and speak about class-warfare, etc. but a class society is like what I simply described. Therefore, if you see that the strata of the people in a given community are not equal in enjoying their rights, if there are privileged minorities who benefit from all kinds of facilities and opportunities in relation to others and if some ruling cliques force the people to be at their service as slaves, you are surely facing a class society. In such societies the government is in the hands of the small, powerful minority and all laws and regulation are simply passed to serve it only.

Now, we could surmise a second type of society. In this society of many millions, none is superior to others, there are no upper or lower classes, not only that but no individual has the right to suppress others, all sorts of injustice are removed and they all, millions of them, are submissive to an omnipotent, omniscient Being, yes, it is God Almighty. So, as we see, we have two types of society or two social structures: one in which the majority of the people are slaves and prisoners of some powerful minority, and another type or social formation in which people are not chained by the dominant system; they are free men, so to speak. In the first type of society, economy works in favour of the upper, dominant class, the government is theirs, benefits, bonuses and privileges belong to them or to their closest partners and associates. In the second type of society, the classless society, the economy is for the public as a whole, the government is by all and for all, the right and laws are passed for the good of the whole society or nation; in short, good or bad is shared by all and the state of affairs is like a paradise on earth.

I could go on talking about these two systems for hours, but in such a mosque, where people from all walks of life take part, I try to explain things in the simplest statements possible, so that all participants may gain something from our discussions. Briefly, we have two systems of social association: one in which you witness class differences, oppression and suppression, bullying the ordinary people and ruling over them by force. And another, in which you find human values, justice, freedom and lack of exploitation. And I do stress on the word *freedom*. The reason for this is that today some schools of thought and some states claiming to follow such ideologies claim that they have established such classless societies in which nobody is the servant or slave of other people and all people are benefiting from the welfare that is publicly and equally distributed. So you see that both systems we talked about did exist in the history of mankind.

The first kind of discriminatory societies were those set up by the Caesars, oppressive kings and despots. The second types of societies were those that the great prophets of God were establishing. Here you may ask: Did the prophets bring about such communities? The answer is: Yes, they did. There are references to these communities in the Quran; Prophet Solomon, King Saul and Prophet Moses and his coming to the Holy Land. Where did Moses want to take the Sons of Israel to? He intended to take them to take land to set up such a divine-inspired society, a sublime social order. I shall talk about these second types of societies in detail later. Briefly speaking we have had those two social systems in the history of the world. The bad kind, the one rejected by human wisdom and condemned by all humanitarian thinkers were set up by powerful, political rulers who were also anti-religion elements, and the good, kind system was established by the spiritual, God-inspired prophets and the leaders of the faithful. This second point is self-explanatory: Why do prophets rise up in different communities? Obviously they come to change the evil social system into benevolent, egalitarian ones; this is the spiritual core of our discussion today.

The picture of God's prophets in the mind of ordinary people is often not very clear. These people imagine that prophets appear in certain communities, like a great learned man endowed with vast knowledge, who find a place to reside so that people would go to them as individuals or in groups to benefit from their

profound knowledge! Such simple-minded people suppose that our prophets, say Abraham Khaleel-al-Allah (the true friend of God) or Moses Kaleem-al-Allah (the one who speaks with God) used to go to a certain community, reside in a small or big house and dedicate a few hours of their time for the faithful, or that the infidels would go to meet them and they would enjoin them to do good, forbid them of doing evil; they would also advise them to fear God and argue that God truly exists; they pass their lives in this manner and then pass away!

No, the prophets do not behave so at all. When a prophet is raised by God Almighty and receives Revelations, he is no more the person he was an hour before, as I already explained. He is now the leader of a social uprising, he is now a radically restless personality and his whole mind and soul is aflame to carry out God's injunctions. He takes a look at the society he lives in and sees that its whole social structure is out of order and that this structure is built on bases against human nature. He comes to the conclusion that this social system must be destroyed to be built again on benevolent, egalitarian and God-inspired bases. To him this society or community saturated with class divisions, injustice, discrimination, chaos and inhuman practices must be changed and turned into a monotheistic society.

Well, which is the monotheistic, classless society? In our previous lectures, on monotheism, I briefly mentioned that belief in monotheism means the negation and rejection of classes because it is under the rule, governance and sovereignty of God; in other word, everything: laws, regulations, traditions and culture are subject to God's inspirations. Monotheism means that all people are servants of God and they are not servants or slaves of other men; they are freemen in the true sense of the word. When a prophet enters the community, his intention is to change and transform that class-divided community and to establish a monotheistic, classless society free from all sorts of oppression and injustice under the ultimate rule of God.

I could name some non-religious leaders in the world who tried to change their societies through bloodless revolutions, but in this discussion I do not want to step out of our religious framework. Of course during any radical change or revolution, there could be some clashes between groups of people, but the point

I stress on was that the prophetic, revolutionary movement did not necessarily involve violence and bloodshed. On the other hand, millions of people died in the course of meaningless wars as the First World War that started after an Austrian arch-duke was assassinated.

Let's look at the case of Prophet Moses again. He goes to the Pharaoh and warns him: you should not be such a cruel despot, you ought not to oppress the Israelites so harshly and you must not divide the citizens of your country into various, discriminatory classes. Well, the Pharaoh did not listen to him and ridiculed him; otherwise Moses could have managed to set up a classless, mono-theistic and just society. But why is it that we do witness violence and bloodshed after God's prophets attempt to carry out their divine missions? Well, the Quran says: "Many big groups of men of God fought by the side of their prophets..."\*. Yes many faithful people helped the prophets of God and fought alongside them. The other point that confirms this fact is the legalization of *Jihad* in Islam. The real cause of such clashes and fighting campaigns is that the privileged, dominant class feels that these prophetic missions are directed at removing their unjust, comfortable lives. If the leader of these privileged groups could, like many figures in history who underwent some spiritual change, understand the truth about these prophetic missions, no fighting, no violence and no bloodshed would have been necessary, but most of them were not ready to give up their privileges, profits and the easy, comfortable lives which they enjoyed at the expense of the exploitation of lower classes.

So we see that prophets try to execute a radical transformation. As an example, our own holy Prophet, in Arabia of the time, objected to a small, aristocratic group who owned all the wealth and property there was while other people, such as slaves, the weaklings and the down-trodden were being harshly exploited and tortured? The holy Prophet declared that all people were equal and the small minority led by influential men such as Abu-Jahl, Abu-Lahab and Waleed-bin-Mughaira.\*\* According to a Narration, the holy Prophet said that 'men were equal as the teeth

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\* Sura 3, Aya 146.

\*\* The powerful members of the dominant, wealthy group who, like Abu-Sufyaan, opposed the Prophet and even once tried to assassinate him.

in a comb’’ and that ‘you all are descendant of Adam and Adam is of clay’\*\*. How beautifully the egalitarian status of all humans is expressed by the holy Prophet.

That’s why the Prophet rejects the wealthy and the powerful of Mecca who lived in big houses, who were well-fed, all trading belonged to them only and others had to be their servants, slaves, camel-drivers; and the administration of Meccan affairs was also in the hands of these wealthy few. Under such miserable circumstances the Prophet declares that these so-called lords of Mecca were not superior to their servants in creation and in God’s sight.

Thus our holy Prophet made such a new declaration about his own community and in fact the mission of all prophets of God was to transform their unjust, oppressive and unbalanced societies into pleasant, harmonious and just societies; they all struggled to achieve such objectives; there was no prophet who only preached and only talked about some small, unimportant aspects of life.

Among God’s prophet we have those, literally called ‘ the arch-prophets’ who were the pivots or axes of divine revolutions and from among other prophets, some followed those revolutions, some tried to complete them , some tried to correct the deviations that came about later and to create new revolutionary waves on the fundamentals set up by former prophets just like what Imam Ali (AS), Imam Husain (AS), the other Imams, the *ulama* of the Islamic Umma practiced, and, of course, what will be done by our 12<sup>th</sup> Imam (AS) when he reappears.

At this juncture I would like to raise questions which you may say no one has ever asked. But let’s first cite some of such questions: Why shouldn’t the Age of Ignorance be allowed to run its natural course? Why was the establishment of a just system necessary? Why should prophets go through those tortuous, troublesome and dangerous conditions, or, as the idiom has it ‘go through fire and water’ to change the wrong system into a right system? What right do they have to interfere with the traditional routine of affairs? Hasn’t it been said that ‘the right belongs to the one who wins or dominate others’? Let whoever becomes powerful enjoy his power or wealth and the weakling, hell with them! They should not

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\* Tohaf-Al-Oghool

\*\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Al-Iman wa Al-Kofr



have been poor and weak and miserable! Should a prophet of God go through fire and water to change their conditions?! You may say that nobody asks such questions but I tell you that in the mind and heart of some people who haven't comprehended the true nature and mission of prophethood, such doubts and dubiousness do exist. These questions, however, have not ever been answered. I try to explain such implied doubts.

Well, the short answer is that prophets do not go through risks and changes uselessly or purposelessly or in vain, but they do see that what goes on in the community is against the human nature and the universal order of things.

The words 'right' and 'wrong' are frequently used in different verses of the Quran which often symbolize the confrontation between two antagonistic groups or classes. The point I meant to explain here regarding the prophetic mission is this: humans are created with very particular characteristics and attributes; they have particular needs and enjoy special opportunities. Do not forget this point, while I add: the world and the universe in which humans live have also been created with special conditions, with certain qualities that constantly move towards certain direction. This immense cosmos of ours of which some parts seem so far from one another at the first glance: the Sun millions of kilometers away, the stars in the sky and, on the earth, its plants, animals, stones, etc. seem to have no relations with other parts. This is the apparent, short-sighted view of things. But all these parts, in the sight of those believing in God the Creator are an inseparable entity or indivisible unity. All there is in the cosmos are parts of one entity and all those parts and particles are moving in a coordinated process.

In a human body, the eye has a certain function, so does the stomach, so does the brain and so does the nervous system. The sum-total of all these members has a common purpose: the person staying alive, being able to move, the continuation of his efforts and his thinking power. The sum-total of all the components forming the cosmos is also as a unified unit. Other than humans all parts and particles of the universe need to be thought about more deeply. The other day I said: do not expect such sophisticated discussion to be like drinking a glass of water! You should truly muse over these things. Always remember that humans have intellect and they are

free to make choices; it is men who could grudgingly oppose the state of affairs and even proceed in the opposite direction of Creation. All other created beings have no such choice. The caravans of the universe are moving in a certain direction and it's only human beings who could do otherwise. If other elements happen to go astray, it's because of the will and the intention of some humans. Think of the material 'uranium'. If it is split, it could be used to remedy dozens of illnesses but, instead of this fruitful exploitation, atom bombs are made to mass-murder millions of human beings. Uranium, per se, never chooses to carry out such mass crimes. Take the chemical case of the LSD which could have been employed to cure many ills, but now it has become the drug to stupefy young men and make them unaware of what goes on around them; the fault does not lie with that poor plant but the way evil humans exploit it; it's man's fault again.

I want to ask you to pay particular attention to what I'm going to add to our discussion: all created beings in the universe, the non-humans, lack intelligence as far as we know; all non-human components in the universe do not enjoy the power of decision-making and free will to make choices or options. All other non-human elements are, willy-nilly, moving in the direction already set for them. But man possesses free will and therefore he could grudgingly move against this universal current or not to follow this universal caravan; and it is man who even forces non-human beings or animals to go astray! As I said uranium is found in nature and man has succeeded in splitting the atoms of this element which then could be used to cure various diseases, but man uses this to make atom bombs to mass-murder thousands or millions of people! Another example is the chemical stuff LSD which again could be used to heal certain illnesses but man turns into a tough narcotic drug that makes many young people addicted to it and ruins their lives. Well, whose fault is it, the plant's or the element's? No, the fault or sin lies in human intelligent gone wrong.

So you see, in this universal caravan we portrayed, the Sun is moving in its set direction, so do all the stars and galaxies, all created beings, small or big, and the components of this immeasurable cosmos are going their own predestined ways. It's only this being called human who could choose to be evil and satanic; this active, intelligent being called man, could choose to go in different direction, left

and right, straight or away, and even force the poor, dumb animals to follow him! Uranium, LSD, Morphine and many other elements have been put to lethal ends; this is the particularly great quality of human beings!

Now, exactly because man has this great potential and free will, the necessity of some laws to direct him becomes obvious; laws to show him the true direction of this universal movement and tell him that if you choose to transgress, then you have stepped out of the truthfully orchestrated harmony of the universe. What is the title of this law so necessary for humanity? We may call it 'the law of the Truth'. Why is it truthful? Because it conforms to the nature and truth of the universe and does conform with the nature of man, as a part of this immense, universal order; it does him good because it does conform with his own nature.

Now we come to the question of 'wrong and false'. What is false or wrong? False is the law, the way of life and the direction that is against the nature of man and the whole universal order. False is that which the satanic powers and oppressors bring about to deviate from truthful paths for their own benefits. The prophets of God always offer the right, truthful path to humanity and fight for the removal of falsehood.

The society ruled by Pharaoh is divided into various classes of people; he favours the upper class and grants them all sorts of privileges while all other classes are oppressed and exploited. This social order with its unjust laws and regulations is a typical case of falsehood. The prophets come to the scene to overthrow such false administrations; they do their best to replace such false systems with rightful ones. Thus the answer to our previous question 'why does the holy Prophet of Islam go through fire and water and risks his life on this path' is quite clear: he intends to replace falsehood with truth. That is why the prophets are always restlessly and untiringly striving on the path of God and they never, for a moment, forget their objective of replacing 'false' with 'truth'.

Let's now sum up what was said in our discussion today. The prophets strive to change the dominant system of 'Ignorance'; probably the best description for those societies- with their class division, oppression, exploitation, inhuman prac-

tices and other negative qualities- is ‘systems of ignorance’, which stand against human nature. The prophets want to replace these systems by a divine, social order based on monotheism; they want the society to be a godly society managed by divine laws, and their struggle against despotic and oppressive rules is based on the slogan of monotheism. I shall, if God will, speak about the nature and characteristics of those classes who opposed the prophetic missions. Well, the verses I selected for today’s recitation- with my explanations- are taken from the Sura Al-Qasas because they explicitly express the conditions prevailing in the Egyptian community under Pharaoh and the aims and objectives of Prophet Moses who intended to change them radically; these verses also give us the good news that the oppressed of the earth will ultimately be victorious.

Now please look at the papers I distributed among you which also contain my short explanations about the verses; and those who have copies of the Quran with them, please look at the verses we shall read. Well, the Sura begins: “In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, and then the first verse is T.S.M. (Taa, Seen, Meem); Quranic commentators have interpreted these in different ways, they are, however, not very important in our discussion. The next verses are more important: “These are the verses of the Book, in clarity supreme; We will relate to you with truth, parts of the history related to Moses and Pharaoh, with the view of doing good to men of faith.”\* The style of the Quran is to inform us about some dimension of an historical event with a special, instructive purpose, and here the part selected is the one that clarifies the victory of truth against falsehood.

The Quran goes on to say that we narrate their story, not as legends of the past, but as truth for the faithful, for it’s really beneficial for those who have believed in you. And when they came to know about the history of Moses, they were in a position to choose their own path and their own faith.

The Quran then informs us about the factual reason for the struggle of Prophet Moses against Pharaoh, his arrogance and his evil deeds: “Now Pharaoh turned into a grand and haughty tyrant in the land, he made his folk into many a caste:

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\* Sura 28, Ayas 1-3.

one group of them he viciously oppressed, putting their sons to death but sparing daughters; he was indeed one of the most corrupting, evil-doers.”\* He divided the nation into upper and lower classes and chose himself as the most important in the upper, privileged class and as a god for all people. He committed another heinous crime by oppressing and weakening the lower classes, deprived them of any opportunity to growth, progress and happiness and left such opportunities only at the disposal of courtiers and his nearest and dearest! Even today in the so-called ‘third world’ countries most opportunities for education and other social advantages are at the disposal of small minorities, and some of those from lower classes who happen to be educated, are at the service of the exploiting ruling groups. Anyway, one of Pharaoh’s satanic deeds was that he had the youth among the lower classes murdered and so he stopped an increase in the population of the weaker classes. He knew that it would be the young generation who could rise against his oppressive rule. There are certain reports that he received some prophecies warning that one day a young man by the name of Moses would put an end to his rule. Even if such reports do not seem to be authentic, we may guess that he, as a shrewd, intelligent despot, knew that it was the young generation who could oppose him.

The Quran then tells us that Pharaoh did not kill their women; he probably had a dual purpose: either to lead these women to corruption and prostitution or, as the Israelite daughters did not use to marry non-Jews, to make them marry others and this way to integrate them in the Egyptian society. In this respect, I think, when I was explaining some verses in the Sura Al-Baqara, I mentioned that the Israelites lived among the Egyptian nation but resisted against the dominant ideology of Pharaoh, kept their customs and traditions, and held on to their noble, godly ideas.

Then we read in the Quran that he was truly a corrupt, evil-doer; he brought about corruption in the society, corrupted the nature of humanity and corrupted the world of his time. He also stopped man’s progress to spiritual elevation.

Next the Quranic verse talks about the good news of God’s promise to the

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\* Sura 28, Aya 4.

oppressed: “And We intended to be Gracious to the people who were oppressed and weakened in the land, and make them leaders of the faith and grant them the honour to be the Heirs.”\* This means that God’s tradition and His creational will have a certain direction, that is, honouring the oppressed and making the Heirs to benefit from God’s bounties on the earth. This does not only apply to the Sons of Israel but includes all oppressed people throughout human history, past, present and future.

And the next verse in the same Sura says: “And grant them power in the land and let Pharaoh, Haamaan and their great host be witnesses of what their dreaded most to suffer at their land.”\*\* God Almighty says that We shall honour the oppressed and ultimately let them rule the earth in justice and truth and let them defeat people such as Pharaoh, Haamaan and others like them. Pharaoh, of course, is the topmost figure of the ruling clique and Haamaan seems to belong to the upper class that enjoys all sorts of amenities and privileges but he and all his class are servants of Pharaoh and I think that the word *mala’* in the Quran refer to this class; I’ll talk about this wealthy, powerful class who enjoy all sorts of comforts at a later occasion.

Finally, as mentioned in the Quran, Pharaoh and all his warriors are destroyed by the same people whom they always dreaded. We should also know that the oppressed and the exploited always form the majority in all communities and these are the people to whom the good news of victory is given.

The next verse in the same Sura concerns the birth of Moses and his miraculous life which shows the omnipotence of God. Today I did not touch upon the subject of how the oppressed shall defeat the oppressors because the main concern of our discussion was to show that God’s prophets come to do away with the ignorant, despotic, ungodly system and replace them by a just, monotheistic order.

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\* Sura 28, Aya 5.

\*\* Sura 28, Aya 6.

17th Session

The Goals of Prophethood

18th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 4, 1974)

*“We have already sent Our messengers with clearest signs, and We have sent the Scriptures and the Balance down with them, that mankind might be observing justice; and We have sent iron, laden with warlike violence, as well as benefits for men, that God may see who gives assistance to Him and His apostles when, not in public observance; and God is certainly the Powerful, the Almighty.”*

*(Sura Al-Hadeed, Aya 25)*

In the Name of God, The Beneficent, the merciful, in our previous discussion on prophethood, we summed up the question and opined that the prophet, after his inner, spiritual revolution, causes a universal revolution in the societies he lives in. Today we try to find out what the purpose is in these radical transformations. This is not only a useful, but a necessary, recognition. What does the prophet follow and what is his ideal destination?

We may cite a variety of goals for prophethood but the main and fundamental goal of all divine prophets could be summarized in a few words: the prophets do their best to help humanity reach its destined goal of spiritual elevation and perfection. Man, as an animate creature, possessing all sorts of intrinsic talents, powers and energies has the potential to become a higher, superior and nobler being during his life-time.

In fact humans from the moment of their birth, are in the constant process of evolving into stronger and more intelligent beings. As far as the human body is concerned, its growth and gradual development could easily be observed. A newborn baby lacks many features you find in the grown-ups: he has no teeth, his hands are weak, his jaws are feeble, he cannot run on his feet, his stomach could not digest anything but mother's milk and his brain and nervous system may not administer his own life.

Now, after a while, this weakling of a baby turns into a stronger creature: his hands become firmer, the feeble jaw-bones become hard, the tiny legs become strong and let him take big strides, the nervous system grows into a perfect system and that smallish brain will later be the source of solving some of the most



complicated problems and of achieving many a great, scientific break-through. All these talents and gifts are not given him by any external factor; they were all deposited in his body and soul which under certain conditions developed and emerged. The baby possessed the faculty of speech already which later enabled him to speak and to communicate with others; in the same manner, he did possess the gifts of thinking, understanding and becoming a scholar or scientist. Thus we notice that humans are always growing and developing towards perfection. All he lacked are now available to him: he could not think wisely but later he employs his wisdom for various purposes and he did not have any experience but later he gained a lot of experience.

As I said it is obvious to see the corporal changes in a child and in a grown-up man; everyone could confirm these changes. The same sort of change is true in the case of human virtues, human spiritual gains and intellectual progress. A great mine of talents and spiritual powers are deposited in a human-being but if this mine is not dug out, those talents do not come to the surface. A good example in this respect is the process of producing mosaics of which the original stuff looks like an ugly, dark brick but after the long process of rubbing and polishing, it will turn into a real, decorative picture of small, beautiful pieces of stone, glass artistically put-together. The same process is true and valid in the case of man, that is, we could compare the intrinsic talents of man to those beautiful, shining pieces of mosaic that would emerge after a long period of polishing them. Man has the potential and capacity to reach incredible, spiritual heights if he does not indulge in sinful behavior and carnal desires; as Sa'di\* says:

You see the lofty flight of birds

Up in the sky,

You'll witness flight of man

To heavens high,

If to your carnal whims you could

Only say: Fie!

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\* Famed Persian poet.

This is exactly what many mystics have expressed, in prose or poetry, that a spiritually refined person could even reach a status far above God's angels. The real purpose of the prophets is to help humanity to journey towards such lofty goals and save them from the evils of arrogance, violence, oppression, injustice and the pursuit of carnal desires.

Those people, whose deeds are worse than those of wolves, rabid dogs and other wild animals, cannot claim to be humans. The person who enjoys blood shedding and to whom the taking of other people's lives is an entertaining game and the person, who never cares about the troubles, pains and hardships of others, are not humans, no matter how they look, how they dress and how they pretend or how much wealth, power and knowledge they have; all such people may not be called humans.

As I said before, the prophets come to purify man's soul; you do not witness any sign of evil and wild behaviour in a prophetic environment. Around prophets of God you only find purity, humane behaviour and illumination. Of course some miracles have also been witnessed in the work of God's prophets, but their most important mission was to purify humans and produce most elevated virtues and values in their souls. This is indeed the greatest miracle by them.

When we take a glimpse at some of the later companions of the holy Prophet, we see that those people, before meeting with the Prophet and receiving his illuminating, revolutionary teachings, were people with the potentials of committing crime or embracing vice, but these same people later turn into the greatest and most virtuous creatures.

Well, who was Abu-Dhar? He was a rough nomad who knew nothing about human or spiritual values; there are many thousands of such ignorant people in the world whom nobody cares about. There have been many well-intentioned reformers in history who did not begin their activities together with such people; they often worked with intellectuals and educated groups of their own ranks.

Yet, the holy Prophet turned people like Abu-Dhar and dozens like him into men who did not lack any human, spiritual virtues through his divine mission and

the power of God's Revelations. This is our Prophet's real miracle; he changes Abu-Dhar into a personality who gives up his own egoism and self-love on the path of Islam and finally becomes a victim of his firm belief in Islam but never abandons his devotion to Islam and to the Prophet's teachings.

This point about self-love is most important because we, ordinary people, want everything for ourselves or what belongs to us: our children, our shops, our business, etc. all of which return to love of one's self. But Abu-Dhar sacrifices all that belongs to him in the path of God, and for the goal and purpose taught him by the Prophet; this is the true goal of prophethood: breeding new, virtuous people.

Next we shall discuss the subject of establishing a proper social system. But before this, I must draw your attention to a significant question. Let's say that we have achieved the goal of setting up a comfortable, free system or social order including justice, equality and without class divisions, well what next? What are the people supposed to do in such a society? Should they only be eating, drinking, satisfying their sexual desires and living in ease and comfort? What is the ultimate goal of humanity? The people in the world should struggle, make sacrifices and even give up their lives to make the world a nicer place to live in; we could again ask the question 'what next'?

To illustrate the matter more clearly, let me cite a simple example: we try to build a mosque in this part of our town and we spend the needed capital and labour for its completion and provide all necessary items together with a lot of publicity about this big project. What is the purpose of finishing this project? Well, it is for people to gather there to pray, to listen to spiritual lectures and carry out some other social functions. Now if there is no basic concept beforehand- as people gathering and doing prayers- what did we set up this mosque for? The same is true about creating a world of justice, comfort and progress; we may ask the question again: what should come next after this achievement? The materialist schools of thought and their theoreticians have no answer to such a question; they are absolutely empty-handed in this respect.

The materialist schools claim: we should do away with poverty in the world;

we should create a prosperous world, put a stop to ignorance, and bring about that ideal, human society, where there is no oppression, no class divisions, no exploitation and no discrimination. Okay, imagine that you did create such a society – of course it has never witnessed anywhere- now what should humanity do afterwards? Eating, drinking, comfortable living and sleeping, is that all? The purpose of humanity's struggles should be limited to such cheap goals? This is where the materialist schools of thought have to fall on their knees!

The materialist schools opine: the world should be developed, cultured and modernized, poverty must be eradicated, nobody should remain illiterate or ignorant, a highly advanced, human society must be established in which there is no injustice, no oppression, no class distinction, no discrimination and no exploitation of man by man. Of course no such society has been established up to now. But, let us imagine that such a society envisaged by these materialist thinkers is established, what would be their answer to the question: Now what are humans to do in this great society? They have no answer to this question. What is the goal of humanity in such a society? Again there is no answer. Humans in this ideal society do eat, drink, sleep, intercourse and spend a life of ease and comfort. Is this the goal that materialists believe humanity should struggle and fight for? All materialist schools of thought stop here; there is an absolute silence!

Well, now the divine schools of thought say: the goal goes farther than this; the sublime purpose is the purification of sons of Adam to become worthy of being a proper creature of God. The divine schools say that the spiritual advance of humans is boundless and that it is infinite as the power of God. When a man is truly on the path of spiritual progress, there is no imaginable end to it. This is the idea, the ideology and the ideal of divine religions and that of all monotheists throughout the world; there is always progress, there is always elevation, there is no end to it “we are of God and to Him we return”<sup>\*</sup> and the prophets of God come to fulfill this holy duty.

So you see what the mission of the prophets is. They come to save humanity from evil, from degradation and humiliation, from ignorant practices, from ab-

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<sup>\*</sup> Sura 2, Aya 156.

sence of morality and to flourish their hidden, God-given gifts and talents and to create spiritually perfect humans.

In this respect there are certain verses in the Quran which are most noticeable: “God has certainly blessed the believers by raising an Apostle from their midst to read His revelations to them, to purify them and teach them the Scriptures and the Wisdom...”<sup>\*</sup> This is what prophets are sent for to purify humans, to help them be pious, virtuous and true moralists. That’s why our holy Prophet says: ‘I have come to perfect moral virtues.’<sup>\*\*</sup>

Well, this was the first purpose, but there is a second, more important objective. Why do we say more important? Because if the first purpose is looked at narrow-mindedly, some people may say: if it is the question of purification and moral self-elevation, we know what to do: we abandon the society, go to a secluded, safe place, to a monastery or to a mosque, forget about everything going on in the community and try to elevate our souls by prayers and remembering God and this way we shall salvage our souls, and if somebody comes to us, well, we’ll whisper some good words to him and try to save him too!

This kind of approach to the question of human, spiritual elevation could in fact become an excuse for laziness, inaction, neglecting other moral obligations, self-worship and the like. If religion is so reduced, many people and many leaders would welcome it! It doesn’t take much to behave like this, to gather some followers to read love- songs for them, to drug them into oblivion and to purify them!

A question arises here: Did the prophets of God behave like this? Did they approach some individuals, took them to some cozy place and tried to teach them something? Did the prophets of God just sat down in a house of dervishes, like some hermits or mystics, and waited for people to come to them and learn something from them and to turn them into some spiritual followers? Did the prophets of God, like some philosophers of the past, open a school, put up a sign-board at its entrance, and then invited people to go there and learn something from them? No, divine prophets do not act or behave like that; they do not go about convert-

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\* Sura 3, Aya 164.

\*\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Al-Iman wa Al-Kofr

ing single individuals to their creed. We should not suppose that God's prophets such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus and our holy Prophet would, like Socrates and Plato, sit down somewhere, say, in a school, for people to go to them to benefit from their knowledge. No, they act differently. Nor was it so with our Imams. It is said that Imam Ja'far-al-Saadeq had thousands of students and many people think this was all that the Imam did. No, it wasn't so, and I will later, when talking about the subject of 'imamat' try to explain what they did indeed.

The divine prophets struggle to turn people into proper human-beings according to correct, divine patterns; how could they achieve this? God's prophets have a perfect answer to this question: by creating the proper environment and the social order for this grand purpose and this could only be achieved in the context of a divine system; if you were to do this by going to individual people and changing them one by one, you would surely fail to change whole communities.

Let me cite you an example. You know about date-palms that are best grown in southern Iran and some Arab countries neighbouring us; people in these parts grow and cultivate the most excellent, tasty dates. Why is this? Because in those areas proper conditions exist for date-palms growth: certain degree of atmosphere, certain degree of moisture in the air, certain kind of soil and many other necessary conditions. But you cannot grow such date-palms in our Mash-had. Of course you may plant one in your garden, do your best to care for it: get proper fertilizers, watering it properly and provide other necessary conditions and when, after a while, you see a few dates up on your tree, could you boast and say: we in Mash-had also have date-palms too! No, you need the environment and prevailing conditions in the areas I mentioned to grow date-palms in abundance.

To use a modern expression, the principal mission of prophets is 'mass production'. They try to change a whole society, to create a new community or system in which suitable conditions and the environment are prepared to create new faithful men in very large groups. Certainly this duty is far more difficult than converting a few individuals to follow you; the mission of the prophets was aimed at millions of people throughout the world. I insist on this fundamental dimension of prophets' duties and I believe that the followers of prophethood should not pass

over it inattentively. I want you to contemplate over this issue, to study the history of God's prophets and refer to authentic narrations in this respect. Some people do not want to comprehend this basic point that God's prophets did their best to create the necessary, suitable environment, not to go after a few individuals to convert them to their religion. This question of 'mass production' of new believers in monotheism is also stressed upon in many verses of the Quran as in Sura Al-Nasr: "When victory is come with God's Help and Sanction, and you see men embracing God's religion *in many a legion*, then praise your Lord, and seek His pardon, since He is certainly Most prone unto Remission."\*

I should also tell you that our holy Prophet, at the inception of his mission among the mostly ignorant, backward people in Mecca, certainly had to convert a few influential people to form a firm foundation for his general, fundamental mission of converting the bigger community to God's religion; he needed to first attract some individuals as Abu-Dhar, Abdullah Mas'oud and others and he did prepare dozens of such people for the later execution of his vast, divine mission of creating a civil, Islamic and monotheistic society; this is not in contradiction with the general fundamental scheme. And in this process he did encounter intolerable hardships, enmities and adverse plots; and those, young or old, who joined the Prophet, had to face all sorts of pains, tortures and boycotts.

After all these initial preparation, the principal part of the Prophet's mission begins in Medina: the establishment of a divine, Islamic community with the holy Prophet at the helm to carry out God-given laws of Islam, and it is at this juncture that, as we just read in Sura Al-Nasr, 'people in large groups and legions embraced the religion of God', and this is the very core of our discussion on prophethood. So now I sum up the whole discussion in a few sentences. God's prophets follow two objectives: firstly to purify humanity, to remove evils from their communities and to adorn them virtues and divine values; the second objective is the establishment of a monotheistic society governed by divine laws and injunctions. This has been the ultimate goal of all prophets, and if some people think that this was not their ideal, they should study history, read the Quran and refer to authentic narrations.

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\* Sura 110, Ayas 1-3.

What I wrote down in the notes given to you, are only two verses from the Sura Al-Hadeed and there are many more verses in this respect in the great Book of God. Let's now read these verses together, and I try to give you some brief explanations about them. "We have already sent Our messengers with clearest signs...". This means that Our prophets come to you with absolutely clear reasons and arguments, and that the reasoning and logic of God's prophets are quite transparent and easy to understand; there is nothing there that ordinary wise men will not comprehend. Then we read "... and we sent the Book (the Scriptures)...". What does 'the Book' mean here? It stands for all the injunctions, instructions, knowledge and truth that form the main principles of religion and it may be translated into 'a comprehensive ideology' in contemporary usage. The Quran then adds: "...and the Balance...". This does not mean that each prophet had 'a pair of scales', big or small! No, the Balance is what makes it possible for the prophet to establish social balance in the society. If the Prophet was supposed to be at the head of the Islamic community as its principal administrator, then he would be in need of this power of maintaining social balance. This also shows that the Prophet was there to form and administer a new society; otherwise he would not need this Balance. What does this Balance include? It includes the divine, judicial organs, the executive bodies or what we call the judicial and executive branches today.

In this respect I came across some Narrations by famed commentators; one of them has opined that the Balance also included the Imams. This is a good interpretation of the term Balance, because it is the Imam who could tell right from wrong and establish social balance in the society as the just ruler of the community. He supervises all affairs and protects the people from all sorts of imbalance. This Balance, says God, we also sent with Our Prophet.

Now we come to the reason of sending the Prophet and the Balance? Why did God do this? The same verse of Sura Al-Hadeed answers this question: "...that mankind may observe justice...". This demonstrates the final purpose of sending the Prophet to lead humanity to set up an environment of equality and justice in an Islamic society, for it is only in a just system that mankind could enjoy the opportunity to move towards spiritual elevation.



Now, following this important point, the verse goes on to say: "...and We have sent down *iron*, laden with warlike violence as well as benefits for men...". What does the mentioning of iron represent? As Quranic commentators and some narrations inform us, iron is a comprehensive word for all tools and weapons made of iron such as swords, daggers, spears, axes and like. Now, why does the Prophet need this? Well, just before this phrase, the Quran talks about setting up a just community of equal members. Is the establishment of this society of justice like drinking a glass of water? No, surely the oppressors, the despots, the wolves, the demons, the plunderers and the devils ruling the previous, inhuman system would fight you. The Prophet, his companions and followers would certainly face such evil adversaries. What should they do? Be submissive and surrender? No, *the iron* is also necessary. The verse contains: "...so that God sees who gives assistance to Him and His messengers...". Certainly God already knows but it should be proven in practice for men themselves whether they helped the holy Prophet or they fought him. The next word in the verse is 'belghaib' which is usually translated as 'Unseen'; this means that the faithful do believe in God and His messenger, although they have not seen God by their own eyes. This verse 25 of Sura Al-Hadeed ends with: "...and God is certainly the Powerful Almighty." These sentences at the end of many Quranic verses are most meaningful; they are not inserted just for the sake of rhyme and rhythm! The final sentence in this verse saying that God is the Most Exalted in Might tells us that prophets of God have no fear struggling in the path of God because they have absolute faith in the Almighty.

Now let us read the two verses 156 and 157 of Sura Al-A'raaf noted down in the papers I gave you; they are about the faithful talking to their God; let's see what they say: "And do for us ordain what is good in this world and in the coming world, indeed we turn to You alone...". The faithful say 'now that we have been guided to You and Your divine cause, we are asking for Your blessings and bounties in both worlds', and God answers their supplication and says: "...My retribution shall fall upon the ones I will, but My mercy encompasses all, I will specially ordain it for those who refrain from sins, who give in charity and alms and are believers in Our Revelations." Of course, God's will is not like human

will; the will of God is based on certain criteria that He has already ordained ; and according to these divine criteria, He does inflict some degree of retribution on evil-doers.

The Quran further describes these believers: “The followers of Apostle, the *ummi* Prophet, who is mentioned in their own Torah and the Evangel, he who enjoins on them what’s just and does forbid them to do evil, who makes lawful all wholesome things, and does prohibit all that’s foul...”. In the notes I gave you, I have not translated the word *ummi* because there are differences of opinion as to the meaning of this term: unlettered, resident of Mecca, etc. Well, apart from this etymological differences, God says that he is a prophet who ‘ enjoins on them what is right, and does forbid them to do evil, who makes all wholesome things lawful and does prohibit all that’s foul’.

In fact in a true Islamic society all things that are good, useful and pleasant for humanity and for human body, soul, heart and intellect are available including sciences, literacy, virtues and material needs; people do benefit from all fruitful bounties of God. On the contrary, all bad, evil and harmful things will not be available or shall be declared unlawful. The Quranic verse goes on to say: “...he released them from their burdens and things imposed on them like shackles; and those who have believed in him, and honoured him and gave him aid, and followed the Light send with him, these people shall certainly succeed (attain solvation).” So one of the characteristics of the Prophet, while executing his divine mission, is that he removes burdens: the burden of ignorance, the burden of wrong and evil traditions and customs, the burden of evil, inhuman orders, as dictatorship, despotism, oppression and exploitation; yes, he takes all these chains and shackles off the shoulders of humanity. The people in Mecca were also suffering under such physical and spiritual burdens as I mentioned. The Prophet releases them from these burdens by setting up a new human, monotheistic system. And finally the verse tells us that those who helped the Prophet, honoured him and followed the Light of the Quran will be the most successful in the Sight of God.

18th Session

The Early Chants of Invitation

19th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 5, 1974)

*“Indeed in every people We raised a messenger who did say:  
‘Worship God and eschew Evil’; among these people some were  
guided by God, and there were some whose fate, it was to deviate!  
Now you may travel through the land, and see what was the end of  
the rejection band.”*

*(Sura Al-Nahl, Aya 36)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, our discussion today, following the previous lectures, is to define the clear mission of the prophets to see, what they were doing, what was the purpose of their mission, how they continue their divine duties and how they guarantee the success of this missions.

I have fully explained these issues in our previous meeting but if they are not clear to some of you, it means that probably I have not succeeded in making them more clear. Today’s discussion, however, centres around the social aspect of what the divine prophets do or the establishment of a monotheistic community, social order, administration, and the annihilation of the backward, ignorant and polytheistic order and in one word, bringing about a great, social uprising.

Now the outstanding question is this: where is the starting point in their missions. This is a most important question because in almost all projects, plans and programs devised by human groups, political parties, governments and private entrepreneurs, you notice the basic question of the starting points. If this is correctly and properly thought of, then one may hope for its being successful, but if the starting point is badly chosen, the devised plan or project may face all sorts of impeding problems.

Well as far as the divine prophets are concerned, we should find out about the starting points of their immensely important missions. The discovery of this is also greatly instructive for all of us, and if we find out that we all have followed the same or a similar way, it will be a great useful lesson for us as their followers. As I wrote down in the papers I gave you, their starting-points, most briefly said, were the clear expression of the fundamentals and the spirit of their school of thought; they were not shy with expressing the essence of their religion at

the very beginning of their divine missions. They would never preoccupy the people's minds and souls with some confusing or secondary slogans to deceive people for a while as many politicians or demagogues do.

The prophets never behaved like that. They did, from the very beginning, express their ultimate goal honestly and truthfully, and that goal, in one word, was *monotheism*.

Again, as I said in details in previous meetings, monotheism is everything in their school of thought because cognition of God Almighty is the factor that spiritually elevates mankind, so it is the ultimate objective of all prophets. Monotheism is also the plan of the prophets for creating a divine atmosphere and establishing a just, classless society without any forms of exploitation and oppression; this would be the environment for the spiritual and material progress and creation of truly, elevated humans. Monotheism means a society or community in which only God rules and no others could ever call people to obey them, even the prophets are not raised to call people to themselves as their masters.

At this point, let's refer to a conversation between God and Jesus Christ as reported in the Quran: God addresses Jesus "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to the people: Worship me and my mother as deities along with Allah?" and Jesus so answers: "...Glory to You, I would never say what I had no right to say; had I said so, you would have surely known, You do know what is in my mind..."\*. Thus Jesus refutes what is attributed to him and says that he has never given such awful instruction. There is another verse in the holy Quran saying that no prophet has the right to order people 'to be my servants': "No man to whom God gives the Scriptures, Judgment and the Prophetic office, would ever say to people: be worshippers of me instead of God!"\*\* This clearly shows that prophets not only do not call people to be their servants but that they don't have such a right at all. So when those divine prophets who receive God's revelations could not rule over people without God's permission, then nobody else should be allowed to govern the world which is under the domination of the Almighty; the prophets may only call people to obey God's laws and injunctions. All politicians, all political pow-

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\* Sura 5, Aya 116.

\*\* Sura 3, Aya 79.

ers and all oppressors and despots who have imposed their wishes and decisions on humanity in world history, were usurpers and their actions have been contrary to the principle of monotheism because monotheism defies such oppressive behaviours. This is an obvious matter in the Quran and if some people do not recognize this, it simply means that they have not studied the Quran properly.

As I previously mentioned in our discussion of monotheism, the divine prophets, when they begin their missions, the very first thing they declare is: there are no gods but God Almighty. And as soon as they declare this, all people, and their later friends and thin foes immediately recognize what the mission is about. This is a most sensitive point and I ask you to pay particular attention to it. Our holy Prophet, after receiving Revelations at the Herra Cave and declaring his prophetic mission, was immediately faced with incredible animosities of certain groups. Of course their enmities appeared in different forms but those who did understand the goal of his mission, immediately began to oppose him. On the other hand, those who belonged to the exploited groups or those who had a higher intelligence immediately recognized the meaning of his message. Both opposing groups found out what the holy Prophet was going to do about the world they lived in. yet in our age and under present conditions, there are people who do not understand this most important part of the Prophet's mission; something that most of the uneducated, common people quickly understood at the time of the holy Prophet.

But under the present conditions, I must stand here for hours and try to make it clear, through all sorts of reasons and arguments, that the spirit of monotheism rejects all sources of power and domination except that of God Almighty. All the wealthy, powerful and influential leaders of the dominant Quraish Clan got the message; this man who says: God is above all and there are no other gods, he is not inviting people to a certain religious creed, no, he is inviting the masses to a big, social change. The opposition of these Quraish gentlemen (!) was not rooted in their love and respect for their idols of wood and stone at all, no, they were not so faithful to these false items of worship. In fact we have not witnessed in the history of mankind such truthful, faithful persons among the upper classes who were truly devoted to their man-made gods or their so-called religion; historical

experience shows that they were hypocritical liars. What they really cared about was the superior, unjust, social positions in the society that monotheism would abolish. The faith among the dominant, wealthy, influential groups was not so strong to motivate them to oppose the holy Prophet because he had belittled their idols. Certainly they had some traditional attachment and ignorant prejudice regarding these idols, but their social status and privileges were far above such considerations.

They clearly saw that a monotheistic system will put an end to their lordships; they clearly understood that the establishment of a monotheistic community meant the absolute governance of God and obedience to the Almighty only. They could clearly envisage that such a monotheist system meant the equality of all people in the sight of God, a society in which there should not exist any form of discrimination, oppression and class or clan differences, they opposed the Prophet because they understood what the Prophet was meant to create. They were just like Pharaoh, Nimrud and the Israelite chiefs facing Jesus Christ in former times; these figures and classes firmly opposed all divine prophets as soon as they declared that there was only one God to whom mankind and the whole universe belonged. As soon as they heard this sublime slogan from the mouths of divine prophets, they lost no time to oppose them, to trouble them and even murder them.

So, we do see how divine prophets begin their mission: their first announcement is about the Unity of God which is also their last word, that is, their very last word is their very first word, not like some political parties and politicians in our world today who preoccupy the minds and souls of the people by their empty, useless, constantly-changing mottoes, slogans and so-called programs; after a while the public would find out that all those slogans were only as means for them to gain power and acquire wealth and other benefits, and not for the good and the welfare of the common people.

With divine prophets, however, the case is absolutely different; they truthfully inform the people, right from the beginning of their missions, what their final objective is.

Well, you may ask: what's the use of such method or behavior? Why can't they adopt a gradual approach, keep people guessing for some time as to their goal, tell them entertaining stories and pretend that, in the long run, they aim at improving the quality of their lives. What's wrong with this approach? Well, the short answer to these questions is that the initial phase of the mission of God's prophets is to raise the consciousness and insight of the masses; a blind, unconscious kind of religious faith is of no use. God's religion wants people to know where they are going and what they are after, right from the beginning. Arab Bedouins and desert nomads came to meet the Prophet and after some dialogue with him converted to Islam. They came to know, from the very first hour, what they were expected to do and what they should be after; they were not now following the Prophet blindly. All those later efforts, struggles and sacrifices they carried on, were based on this new light and insight granted to them by the holy Prophet. History of human movements and revolutions bear witness that some believers and combatants, when not aware of their goal and purpose, gave up their strivings at the first phases of the struggle, and this is quite natural.

Imagine you happen to be walking in a street and you see a group of people running, you may follow them and run after them, but after a while, you may say to yourself: why am I running and why should I be out of breath running after this group. Imagine the runners were engaged in some sporting game, or running to reach the train station, etc. This means they know what their goal or destination is, so they are tirelessly running, and even if exhausted, they exert some extra effort to reach their goals at any cost. But you, when aimlessly following others, you'll ask yourself: what the hell am I doing? And even if you don't happen to think so, there will be others who reproach you and say: whither are you going? For what purpose? Are you after your beloved?! Well, at this point, many people go cold and stop, but if you are clear about your goal, you'll never atop despite intolerable hardships.

You must read the story of young men such Ammar and Yaaser in the early days of the advent of Islam and the accounts about their devoted parents who did not give up Islam under severest tortures at the hands of the chiefs of Meccan polytheists. There is a most interesting book by, I think, Taha Husain, the Egyp-



tian scholar, which is brilliantly translated into Persian; I'm trying to remember its title (someone in the audience,: it's called ' The Truthful Promise); yes, that's the title. The author artfully and brilliantly describes the deep, unshakable faith of these people, especially the parents who died under torture but stuck to their monotheism.

Now we clearly see why God's prophets say the last word at the very inception of their missions; they simply declare their final end and do not hide anything from the people, because they want the people to embrace their religious consciously and with transparent awareness. This is exactly the opposite of what goes on in our world today as far as religions are concerned: in the existing religions today, awareness, knowledge and cognition seem to be equal to crimes; it is also very interesting that today some religious persons or some secular, anti-religious elements have a common worldview: they believe that belief in religion means a lack of understanding; and religion in their opinions means 'closing your eyes and ears, no deep thinking or contemplation, no, in their opinions religion is the blind following of what the chiefs, rabbis and others declare, no reasoning, no logic and no thinking. You just have to have a blind faith and follow the religious leaders. We all have heard that on minor questions of religions we have to follow the opinions of the religious specialists, and therefore, we tend to think that we have to follow them blindly even regarding the fundamental questions of religion! This understanding absolutely contradicts the belief in truthfulness of any religion.

Belief in a religion should essentially be associated with consciousness, knowledge, insight, discernment and intelligence. In our own religion of Islam, we don't say to people: you accept it for the present, then go and do some research to know its truthfulness! No, not at all, if you do believe in this religion blindly, you should know that the religion has not welcomed you at all. Islam sets a great value on cognition and intelligent discernment and it sets even a greater value on discerning people, because our religion wants all people to consciously have God in mind from the beginning; that's why the divine prophets declare their first and last objective right from the inception of their missions.

In our discussion today we are trying to reach some conclusions. One is the question, that I've already explained, that our religion looks at consciousness or intelligent cognition as a fundamental principle and does not recognize those lacking this necessary condition as true Muslims.

The second point is that all followers of the prophets, not only the religious scholars, are the heirs and inheritors of divine prophets. Anyone who takes some steps in the direction of monotheism and believes in it as a God-approved *resolution*, be he a follower of Abraham, Moses, Jesus or other divine prophets, is their inheritor. Now we all, as followers of God's prophets, how do we want to start our religious missions? Are there any better, more decisive and more fruitful ways or methods to follow than those practiced by the prophets?

Nowadays, when we start talking about religion why don't we raise the issue of monotheism or the Unity of God? This is a vital question. Why don't we follow the divine prophets? Our aim is to turn all people into true believers or invite mankind to Islam, why do we choose ways and methods contrary or different from those of the prophets? We should not do this. We want to bring about this prophetic, social, monotheistic uprising throughout the world. Certainly this is not an easy task but, in the least, we could inform people in the world that the ultimate, divine purpose of all God's prophets was to bring about such a monotheistic revolution.

Why is it that many of our religious preachers and activists start their work with some issues of secondary importance or very minor questions? Sometimes we are told: why don't you say these things to those propagators of Islam throughout the country? My answer to this objection is: how could I contact these numerous figures and try to convince them?!

Of course, I am a firm believer in good, religious preaching and publicity and most people at our meeting know me through our previous lectures in the mosques; I also do believe in our grand, Shi'ite religious leaders and scholars and I think if we didn't have them, our circumstances would have been worse than they are! It is useful when some researchers, young or old, author certain articles on Islam but these people are usually amateurs; we do, however, need profes-

sional specialists in religious areas who are found among our respected, Shi'ite scholars, spiritual leaders and our theological schools.

Among the Shi'ite clergy, there are many who preach as true followers of the holy Prophet and his way of publicity for Islam, but there are others whose starting-points are not similar to the work and method of divine prophets; in their eyes some questions of really lesser values are more important than the clear description of monotheism and the most fundamental teaching of Islam. They are quite happy to discuss the behaviour of *Nakeer* and *Munkar*\* whether they stand on your right or left side or whether they sit down in front of you and what is their nature and character! These are issues that have no relevance to or no effect on Muslim people in their adherence to Islam; they have nothing to do with practicing Islam and carrying out our Islamic obligations, but some clerics believe that knowing about such trivial matters is among the necessities of religion, but they are not ready to think about monotheism and its pursuant effects for the establishment of a special, social system. What I am saying is that monotheism should be the first and foremost principle we talk about.

Even if we cannot exactly follow what the divine prophets did, we could at least declare and express that such was their methods and behaviours, such were their goals and ultimate purpose. But we notice that some religious orators prefer to talk in length about very trivial matters as whether the holy Prophet had a shadow or not or whether he could see things behind him when walking. If there are such narrations about the holy Prophet, they certainly mean that he was most intelligent, smart and that who could immediately find out what was going on around him, not having eyes on the back of his head! You may have noticed that some people are so careless, thoughtless or inattentive that if you walk behind them for some time and make fun of them by certain grimaces, they won't notice it at all. And there are others who are most attentive and immediately notice what's going on around them. Many writers and commentators have confirmed that the holy Prophet was the wisest and the most intelligence person at his time; some of the books written by these eminent authors go back a thousand years. As I said some religious orators are willing to talk for hours about trivial matters I mentioned,

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\* The two angels who question the dead in the first evening of their burial.

but don't tell you about the cause and goal of the Prophet. Questions as: what was the Prophet's idea about the social situation, about ruling the community and its administration, and about the ways he enlightened people? Whether he was after training and enlightening some individuals or he meant to enlighten the whole community? These questions are never raised or answered by those orators at all.

The Islamic world today does not approve of any delay in fulfilling one's Islamic obligations and commitments; those unimportant questions should be set aside for the day we have nothing else to do. Today our Islamic world is in a diseased state and we ought to try our best to save it. And the last word in this respect is: if some people do not like our religious advice, let them not be displeased with us, because, as we have been taught, 'the best people are those who do not loathe hearing advices'.

Well, I think I have explained enough about monotheism as the starting- point of the missions of God's prophets. One of the Quranic verses, which I wrote down in the papers given to you, is the verse 36 of Sura Al-Nahl: "Indeed in every people We raised a messenger...". What was the purpose of this 'raising'? What was the message of each prophet? "...to worship God and eschew Evil (evil tyrants)...". This means that the very first thing the prophets advised the people was to worship the Almighty and to abstain from *taaghoot* (evil forces and evil tyrants). *Taaghoot* is God's rival or God's enemy on earth that rejects all God's laws and injunctions. Who is *taaghoot* exactly? Sometimes it is your own self as in the famous Narration: 'your worst enemy is your own selfish ego'; yes, it could be your whimsical, carnal desires. Arrogance and evil ambitions could be other forms of *taaghoot*. It also takes other forms in the external world, that is, evil, godless forces that dominate and oppress humanity.

We then read in the same verse: "... among these people some were guided by God, and there were some on whom Deviation became inevitable...". Then the Quranic verse invites all people to: "...travel through the land, and see what was the end of the rejection band." This means: study the past, see what happened to those who rejected the guidance of God's prophets, find out about civilizations

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\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Al-Iman wa Al-Kofr

gone with the wind, the ruined cities and countries, Babylonia, Assyria, Chaldea and others. Remember the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, nothing left of them but some names and some artifacts. Our Quran narrates the fates of such evil administrations.

All those who do not listen to advices of God's prophets are condemned to perish. This is not a question of miracles. Certainly in ancient times there were miraculous events because the evil forces had to be done away with by some storms, earthquakes and the like to serve as examples for others. But, this is a true universal injunction to the end of the world. Any umma not choosing to walk on the path of divine prophets will face decadence and perdition. This does not mean that all members of that umma will face destruction and death, no, it means that their domination and their kind of oppressive rule will be abolished; and the remaining people will be integrated in other nations. Could we today point at the national-geographic areas wherein nations or ummas of Babylon, Assyria and Chaldea were living. Where are they now? Let's repeat the Quranic verse: "... what was the end of the rejection band...?"

At this point we should refer to some verses in the Sura Al-A'raaf. In Sura Al-Nahl, we were informed about the general fact: "Indeed we raised messengers in every nation...". But in Sura A'raaf, the Quran cites many prophets who brought the same message to mankind: "Noah We sent to his own people, and he said: 'O My people, worship God, you have no God but Him; indeed I fear for you of the torture of a Day of Dread.'"<sup>\*</sup> As you see, the first thing he says is about God the One and that there is nothing and nobody to be served or worshipped instead of Him and that he is really concerned for the fate of his people on the Day of Resurrection. Well, as you know, they don't believe him and later face the Noah's Flood. And then the Sura cites the example of the Aad people saying: "And unto Aad, We sent their brother, Hood; he said: 'My people, worship God, indeed there is no God but He...'.<sup>\*\*</sup> As far as we know the Aad are an ancient people residing in Arabia, possibly pre-historic; it's not yet discovered when their age was, most probably sometime after Noah. We have another piece of information about them

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\* Sura 7, Aya 59.

\*\* Sura 7, Aya 65.

in the Sura Shu'ara, Aya 149 which says: "...they happily (artistically) hewed out their houses in the mountains." Building houses in the mountains could have occurred in the late Stone Age period, according to some scientists. Anyway, all this shows that they were very ancient people and that a prophet was raised among them by the name of Hood and he warned this people to worship God the One because there are no other gods at all.

There is a most significant point in this account which really nullifies the theory of those people, who claim that monotheism, and religion in general, came about as a gradual result of the natural conditions of humanity and their ignorance; and that their ignorant circumstances changed and gradually led them to monotheism. But we see that divine prophets of very ancient times also brought the same message: "O My people, do worship God the One, there are no other gods...". Yet some sociologists claim, without offering any proofs, that religion came about because they were backward and ignorant, that all ancient tribes were first polytheists and that monotheism was a very later development. As I said they offer no shred of evidence about what they claim.

Let me cite an example to make the matter clearer: imagine some expert trying to describe this Imam Hassan Mosque in which I am talking to you; he writes 'this mosque has beautifully-painted walls, the floor is covered with marble stones and with chandeliers hanging down from the ceiling; he has never been in this mosque but writes about it on the basis of guess-work. Then once he happens to pass by this mosque and notices that the mosque has no ceiling and no walls (laughter of the audience!) When their approach to sociological questions is based on conjecture, their ultimate findings become ludicrous and laughable. They talk and write on the interpretation of history, but omit a big part of it including the history of religions. Monotheistic concepts have existed since seven or eight thousand years ago or even more. But they pompously claim that first there was polytheism and other godless creeds and monotheism appeared in very later times.

Anyway, let's go back to the verse we were explaining. The next verse say: "...do you not fear God?...". Hood the prophet tried to make them understand what unity of God meant. But the pagan chiefs among his people said: "...we see that

you are foolishly in error, and we do think that you're a liar"\*.

This is the kind of accusations that pagans and disbelievers have always thrown at the divine prophets or anybody who spoke the truth; they also called him 'stupid'! Hood said to them: "...My people, I am not in error foolishly, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds, and I'm your most sincere adviser. Why on earth do you wonder that an admonition should come unto you from your Lord, through a man from your midst, and that he be warning you?...". He tells people that he is their real, well-wisher, that he wants their progress and happiness and that an ordinary person from among them has come to lead and guide them towards the path of God Almighty. Then he cites for them an historical event: "...remember that He made you heirs of Noah's people, and He gave you a stature far greater than any nation, therefore remember Allah's every favour that you may prosper." So he attracts their attention to the bounties and blessings God has granted them and that if they remember these precious gifts of God to them, they will be more prosperous and receive salvation.

And now let's pay special attention to what the pagan chiefs say in response to his kind, godly words: "Oh, have you come to make us worship Allah alone, and give up all the gods our fathers used to worship...". As you clearly see the enemies of divine prophets immediately sense what it means to worship God alone! They at once know that if they believe in him, they should do away with all those animate and inanimate false gods they serve! So they give him an ultimatum: "...well then, let that which you threaten us with, fall on us if you are a truthful man."

The divine prophet now has to give them his last warning: "You have indeed incurred the curse and the wrath of God already; You dispute with me about some names that you and your fathers and forefathers coined, for which no sanction came from Allah...". He tells them: You have fabricated some things with your own hands, then you and your brainless fathers put some ridiculous names on them and you worship them; and on behalf of them, you dispute with me and reject the monotheism I offer you. And then he gives them his very last word: "...thus you just wait and I too, will wait along with you." And you all know the final event of God's wrath engulfing them all.

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\* Sura 7, Aya 66. The next verses discussed are verses 67-71.

19th Session

The Hostile Groups

20th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 6, 1974)



*“Likewise We have assigned to every prophet some enemy: satans among men and jinn inspiring one another with most varnished but vain discourses aimed at man’s deception; yet if your lord had so wished, they would not do this, therefore leave them in the loneliness of their own fabrication.(112) And let the hearts of those who have no faith in the next world incline to what they say, let them delight in them and let them earn from them what ill they may(113).”*

*(Sura Al-An’aam, Ayas 112-113)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, so far I explained that prophethood was a social uprising and I clarified that one of the fundamental principles of this uprising was the rejection of social classes, that is, the rejection of society being divided into two main groups: the oppressed, the deprived, the poor and the slaves on one hand, and the rich, the powerful and the oppressors on the other. Such divisions should not exist in a society projected and directed by divine prophets.

As we know about Islam and other divine religions, no one should be deprived from his legitimate right because he or she happens to be poor or weak; such a situation is not included in an Islamic system or any other system based on monotheistic beliefs. There is a narration from our holy Prophet which says: ‘a society in which the poor or the weak shiver and stammer when asking for their rights, is not a society sanctioned by God’\*; this means that the poor and the weak should not be shy, blushing or frightened when asking for their rights in an Islamic society. Let me make the matter clearer by giving you a simple example: inside a family or household, would a child who is hungry blush or stammer when asking the mother for food? Islam teaches us that we are all like children and brothers and sisters in a bigger unit called the Islamic community; in Islam any member of the society enjoys the same rights as the Islamic ruler such as Imam Ali (AS) when he was at the head of the Islamic community.

The most important authorities in an Islamic society cannot behave as bullies towards the common people. You may have heard the story about one of

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\* Tohaf-Al-Oghool

the Khalifs ruling the Islamic state after the holy Prophet. We do believe that there were certain deviations from the true path of Islam after the demise of our Prophet, but still the society was Islamic and the Khalifs, more or less, acted on the bases of Islamic injunctions. Anyway, it is reported that the son of Amr-bin-Aas, the governor of Egypt, gets angry at an Arab nomad and whips him badly, a hundred lashes or so. This Arab victim, who believed in the justice of Islam, travels the very long distance from Egypt to the city of Medina in Arabia to complain to the Khalif of the time. The Khalif sends a message to the governor and orders him and his son to come to Medina. When in the presence of the Khalif, the governor's son denied the allegation and said that, according to Islamic laws, he must present four witnesses to prove his case. The Khalif said: How could he find four witnesses when you beat him and there was nobody around, but the fact that he has travelled for weeks and months to come here seeking justice is witness enough for me, if you had not unfairly whipped him, he'd never have the incentive and the hurt feeling to make this long, tiring journey. Reportedly the son confessed to his wrong-doing and the Khalif had him whipped severely. The interesting thing is that he ordered the father, Amr-bin-Aas the governor, to be whipped too. Amr cried out: I didn't do anything; it was my son who did it. The Khalif said: your son did it because his father was a powerful governor, if it weren't for your authority, he wouldn't dare whip an innocent nomad.

Well, I narrated this historic event to tell you what justice means in an Islamic society. This is in fact what I intend to raise in today's discussion, and you may have already guessed what I want to elaborate on. Islam and other divine religions put great emphasis on justice in the society; they are after the establishment of a society in which there is no bullying, no oppression and no exploitation; a society wherein there are deprived masses with a minority always after amassing wealth is not sanctioned by Islam. We have a narration by Imam Ali (AS) which says: 'whenever I saw an accumulation of wealth, there were great poverty and deprivation on its side'\*. Yes, if you see a multi-millionaire such as John Rockefeller in the USA, you should know that there are tens of millions of Americans who live

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\* Imam Ali Sout Al-Idala Al-Insaania

under poverty lines who have been brutally exploited by such billionaires; there is a direct relation between the former's wealth and the latter's poverty.

Briefly the ideal, Islamic society, according to the logic of monotheistic religions, is a society in which you find no oppressors, no despots, no privileged groups, no exploitation and no illegitimate amassing of wealth. It's obvious that when a divine prophet declares such goals, the rich and the powerful and the privileged, will immediately begin to oppose him. Let's also say that in a true Islamic society there should be no illiteracy, no ignorance, and no superstitions and all people are free to think and find their own ways for spiritual and material progress. In a true Islamic society you would see no laziness, carelessness, human divisions, or blind obedience.

The principal features of the human society that our holy Prophet tried to establish on the basis of Revelations are: abundance of science and consciousness, domination of fairness and justice, rejection of social classes, removal of exploitation, annihilation of all forms of oppression; but all believers defend truth, truthfulness and human rights. Now we could clearly see that when a divine prophet declares such goals and objectives, surely there will be hostile groups to fight him; this is the main issue I want to discuss today and answer the question: who are these hostile groups and what are their specific features?

The group consists of those who enjoy power through class differences and class distinctions; they obviously hate a classless society based on monotheism. They exploit people and enjoy their slavery or their cheap labour. The second group opposing the prophets is the rich and those after amassing wealth by all means especially through usury. They gain unlawful profits through various institutions such as banks, credit institutes and personal lendings at unlawful usury rates. Whether you have a shop, or a small farm or a small business, you could all find out how much you have to give to them through simple calculations. It is a matter of course that when a prophet or even a reformer comes along and declares usury unlawful, they would immediately join the ranks of the Prophet's enemies.

The third group consists of despotic rulers, sultans, kings and the like who, hearing the divine call 'there are no gods, there is only one God (namely Allah)',

feel threatened, because this means that there should not be any dictators, despots, Pharaohs, Nimrods or Muawias.

The fourth group of prophets' enemies – probably the most hostile of all groups – consists of the so-called religious leaders of the existing establishment such as monks, rabbis and their servants who enjoy wealth and status through their religious hierarchies. These so-called religious leaders are preoccupied with people's intellects and influence their minds and souls and always try to keep them as ignorant as possible and therefore always oppose a true monotheistic religion that helps elevate the people's awareness and knowledge. Jesus Christ was in fact struggling against these religious elements; they were the elements who wanted him killed, not the Emperor's vassal in ancient Judea; they didn't want the message of Jesus spread in their backward, superstitious realm. Such persons were among the severest enemies of Islam in its initial stage. Figures such as Ka'ab-al-Ahbaar and Abdullah Salam, the Jewish, learned men who had presumably converted to Islam! The Islamic teachings of our holy Prophet all based on Revelations opened eyes, removed ignorance and superstitions and increased ordinary people's knowledge and awareness; these teachings would put an end to their religious lordships and their privileges. So these established, religious groups were among the first elements who felt that their privileges and profits were being threatened. They, together with their allied political partners, truly felt threatened.

There is a letter by Imam Sajjaad addressed to Muhammad-Ibn-Shahaab Zohri; the picture that the Imam portrays of Zohri's character could still be a great lesson for us in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; it exactly describes what we witness today concerning the cooperation of oppressors and some religious scholars in suppressing the rights of the masses and their talents. Today we clearly witness what the Imam understood many centuries ago. I talked about the content of this letter in detail some time ago. You could read this letter in the book *Tuhaf-al-Uqoul* which has been translated into Persian. Here I only read a couple of sentences from this admonishing letter addressed to Muhammad-bin Shahaab Zohri. The Imam (AS) writes: 'The least point you hid from the people and the lightest burden you carry on your shoulders is the fact that you befriended the oppressor and did go astray

the moment you approached him and accepted his invitation”\*; this shows the obvious case of religious scholars helping the corrupt, oppressive rulers which the Imam warns about.

So we see that one of the groups fearing the appearance of divine prophets consists of these leaders of superstitious and false religions. These groups have always stood up against divine prophets throughout the history of mankind. There are many examples of such animosities against God’s prophets: The case of Prophet Abraham is one; the so-called religious leaders of the temple of idols found out that someone had cut down their idols and they made their king, Nimrod, to throw Abraham into piles of fire. In the case of Moses, the religious magicians comforted the Pharaoh and assured him that they would overcome Moses through their strong sorcery and magic. The same sort of religious leaders were the toughest enemies of Jesus Christ and did everything in their power not to allow the message of Jesus to spread far and wide. If you read the New Testament, you’ll find, despite many distortions in them, the same reports about Jewish rabbis and Jewish leaders opposing Jesus as far as they could. In Islam too, there are many reports about the pagans, the Jews and Arab polytheists constantly troubled the holy Prophet; one instance of this kind was the so-called *imprecation* with the Christians of Najraan in which the holy Prophet and his nearest kith and kin and the Christian leader were supposed to pray to invoke evil on the party that did not speak the truth.

At this juncture, we must note that in all societies, when a new ideology emerges, many people, young or old, try to find out about it and many agree with it and follow it; this is very natural, it is the nature of man and they approve of the new way of thinking if it seems more rational to them than the existing superstitions and foolish traditional beliefs, and so all thinking people are attracted to it.

But it was this class of traditional, religious leaders, rabbis and monks and the like who did not allow the people to follow divine prophets, despite the fact that the messages by God’s prophets were quite clear and easy to understand: they never

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\* Tohaf-Al-Oghool

philosophized and they never used pompous, complicated phraseology. Their divine messages were straight-forward, simple, truthful and eloquent. Therefore all people should have easily received their divine messages as absolute, godly truths. Yet what was the reason for all those prejudices, animosities and relentless oppositions? The answer is in the existence of the class of perverted, religious leaders; they encouraged people to defend their traditional, superstitions creeds. This group or class always felt more frightened and threatened vis-à-vis the divine prophets; they knew well that if the kind of society the prophets suggested was established – a society of awareness, a society of progress, a society in which intellects were strengthened and a society in which people were teachers, students and seekers of knowledge and spiritually- then there would no room for such false, religious leaders, the arrogant and the powerful dignitaries and those who decidedly kept people in ignorance; that's why they always opposed and fought the prophets of God Almighty. So far I have cited four groups who opposed the divine prophets: the upper classes, the oppressors or despotic rulers, the wealthy who had amassed great wealth at the expense of the masses and the perverted, privileged, religious leaders.

I described the groups that opposed the prophet through an intellectual analysis but I have not yet quoted any Quranic verses in this respect; in fact the Quran has special terms for each of the groups mentioned. The term for the powerful group consisting of chiefs, estate owners, and men in high positions is *mala'* as in the Quranic verse 66 of Sura A'raaf: "The pagan chiefs among his people said...". *Mala'* are the ones in high positions who catch people's eyes by their pomposity, stately display and ostentatious parade of false dignity and importance. The members of this class are the enemies of divine prophets. An example of such people is Haamaan at the court of Pharaoh: "And Pharaoh said 'O Haamaan! Build me a lofty tower and raise for me the means to reach the heavens!...'". As you see, he is the chief servant, the head-butler and the chief sycophant of Pharaoh and, through his high status, he is the overlord of all other officials and other important dignitaries. In fact Haamaan is a weak, unfortunate, contemptuous and lonely person but because of his absolute servitude to Pharaoh, he is the overlord of all others. And as Sa'di, the famed, Persian poet, says:

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\* Sura 40, Aya 36.

O king, the smallest bird that you let fly,

At once becomes an eagle in the sky!

In the perverted, corrupt administration of Muawia, the *mala'* included people such as Mughaira-Bin-Shu'ba and Ziad-Bin-Abih who were followers of the Islamic Khalif, but joined the court of Muawia after the martyrdom of Imam Ali (AS). Such people kept Muawia in power as his closest friends, advisers and henchmen and enjoyed great, material benefits through their high positions.

The term in the Quran for the second group is *Mutrafeen* which stands for the wealthy, aristocratic class. The verse I have written down in the paper given to you- which was recited at the beginning of this meeting-says the same thing, that is, the *Mutrafeen* group was the very first group who stood up and opposed God's prophets in each community.

The other opposing elements are: "...certainly there are *many rabbis and priests* who dispossess men of their wealth, in falsehood, and debar them from the Way of God..."\*, about whom I have already told you in detail.

The Quran terms the last groups as *taaghoot* which is a general term for all oppressors, unjust leaders and other faithless rulers. As I said yesterday *taaghoot* also stands for any rebellious power in relation to God's laws and injunctions. Certainly such powers could also be one's own rebellious carnal desires as we've read in some Narrations, but as the Quran has always spoken of *taaghoot* as those in higher positions of power in any society, we put more stress on this aspect of the term; let us now read some of these Quranic verses: "Those who believe, fight in the Way of God, but disbelievers fight for *taaghoot* (an evil, faithless power); thus fight against the friends of Satan..."\*\*. As we see *taaghoot* confronts God. In another verse we read: "God is the Patron of the faithful, He leads them out of Darkness into Light, but the infidels' patrons are *taaghoots*, who'll drive them out of Light into Darkness plight..."\*\*\*. I think that the Quran employs the term

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\* Sura 9, Aya 34.

\*\* Sura 4, Aya 76.

\*\*\* Sura 2, Aya 257.

taaghoot some eight times and all their interpretations signify that they are the oppressive, despotic rulers dominating many communities.

Anyway, these were the 4 main groups who always opposed the divine prophets, not only at the time of our holy Prophet, but since ancient times when Abraham or Moses declared their prophethood throughout history. Whenever there was a call for distinguishing right from wrong and just from unjust according to divine Scriptures, these groups, one after another or in unison, opposed and fought the prophets of God; this has been the general principle.

Now, as we haven't got much time left, let's read some of the Quranic verses concerning our topic of discussion today: "Likewise We have assigned to every prophet, some enemy: satans amongst men and jinn..."\*. This word 'likewise' means that you, Our prophet, as you see those satanic enemies fighting against you, be sure that there were also such enemies against every other prophet. I have already described what Satan and satans mean and this Aya also confirms what I told you that satans are all those evil-doing elements outside of our bodies and souls. One of these was Iblees or the Satan who, through arrogance, did not bow down to Adam. This Satan happens to be the most notorious one among all other kinds of satans of men or jinn because all other evil acts that other satans commit is put down to his account! The general public, at these occasions of facing evil usually curse this one Satan whereas some of those satans could be the master of Iblees in their evil temptings of mankind!

The verse goes on to say: "...satans and jinn inspiring one another with most varnished but vain discourses aimed at man's deception...". It says that the enemies of God's prophets help each other; sometimes it is the oppressors who help the perverted, religious leaders and sometimes the latter teach and advise the former and sometimes the wealthy class teach and guide the other groups how to combat the divine prophets. In short, all the main four groups we mentioned help one another against the teachings and messages of God's prophets. And how are their discourses? They are ornamented, beautiful on the surface and mischievously sound nice to hear!

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\* Sura 6, Aya 112.



Pharaoh say: “Let me put Moses to the sword!”\* Why should Moses be slain? He goes on: “...because I fear that he may change and ruin *your religion*...” How beautifully, sympathetically and self-justifying his discourse is; in his utter arrogance he pretends to care for the people and their religion. Then we read in the same verse: “...yet if your Lord had so wished, they would not do this, therefore leave them in the loneliness of their own fabrication...”. This means that if it was the will of God, he could destroy all those warring parties who opposed the divine prophets but it is not God’s tradition or God’s law to act like this; God has given humanity free will, choice and option, so some groups carry out their enmities against divine prophets and this way the faithful and the unfaithful are recognized. As God never does anything contrary to His declared intentions, He advises the holy prophet: ‘leave them in their fabrications’, that is, never be saddened by their accusations, insults and deceitful oppositions, don’t ever feel weak but be steadfast and firm in propagating God’s message.

Next we read in the following Quranic verse: “And let the hearts of those, who have no faith in the next world, incline to what they say, let them delight in them, and let them earn from them what ill they may.”\*\* Here we notice that the nice-sounding but shallow, superficial words of the anti-prophetic elements will only influence the hearts and minds of those people who do not believe in the next world, but those who have some faith in the coming world, will not be easily deceived by the superficial piety of their traditional, religious leaders. To sum up, what these verses tell us is that all divine prophets have enemies, open or hidden, who help one another in the fight against God’s prophets.

To conclude our discussion I read some verses from the Sura Al-Mo’min, Ayas 23 to 25: “We did, of old, send Moses with Our Signs, and clear authorization, to Pharaoh Haamaan and Korah...”. What were those Signs? They were his clear logic and reasoning, his divine stick, his incredible hand and other miraculous acts. To whom did God send him? If we read these verses with full attention and deliberate on them, we’ll find the answer. The deepest social and political issues are so clearly explained in the Quran, if we do ponder on them. Who are the en-

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\* Sura 40, Aya 26.

\*\* Sura 6, Aya 113.

emies of Moses in that society? To Pharaoh whose highest position in that community is quite clear, who else? To Haamaan, the head of the privileged *mala'*, as Pharaoh's grand-vizier and at the top of the dominant aristocracy. Who else? To Korah (Qaaron); he has no official position, so why is he mentioned after these two? He is a most wealthy man who has amassed incredible riches. Yes, God sends Moses to fight these three because the three are just like one in opposing the prophet of God. What's Korah's crime? Well, he has exploited the common people, he has imprisoned the community's riches which could be put to use for the public and doesn't give a damn to the destiny of the weak, the poor and the deprived, so you must also fight him.

As you see, these three important persons belong to three different, social classes but, strange to say, their response to Moses and his divine call is unanimous! What is their unified response? Let's read on the verses: "...they all cried 'a sorcerer who is also a liar'! And when he conveyed the Truth to them from Us, they ordered 'slay the sons of those who do believe as he, but let their women live'..."! Thus they all feel threatened and decide to kill his young followers who could fight against them along with Moses. But, they allow their women and daughters to live on. There are a few interpretations about this: some believe they wanted them for prostitution and some say that they wanted to wed them to create a mixed race; in both cases they meant to turn them into humiliated slave-women either as exploited labourers or sex-labourers.

But then the verse says: "...yet the stratagem of those who disbelieve has always failed (gone astray)." They planned and plotted against Moses but the disbelievers' schemes never bore fruit for they forgot the power of God Almighty. It's like you throwing an arrow to hit a target but a sudden gust deviates its straight travel. Such is the traditions of God for taking the arrows aside. In these verses, as you noticed, three categories of divine prophets were mentioned which I talked about earlier.

Finally in some other Suras the term *mutrafeen*, that is, the class of Korahs, the wealthy, the aristocrats, the land-owners and the like, is mentioned again. Let's read these few verses: "And never have We sent a Warner to any town whose rich

and mighty men did not declare ‘in fact we’ll never believe your apostolic mission!’”<sup>\*</sup> They always say ‘we are the more abundant in wealth and sons; for us there is no torment’!”<sup>\*\*</sup> Again you notice who the vanguards of opposing and fighting the prophets of God are; they say to them: we’ll never believe you, we are more powerful than you in every respect and thus we will never be tortured in the next world! You see how low and shallow is the intellect level of such disbelievers!

And the very last verse we read in this session is the verse 34 of Sura Al-Tauba (Repentance) concerning the religious leaders, rabbis, priests and the like. It says: “O you believers, there are certainly many rabbis and priests who dispossess men of their wealth, in falsehood, and debar them from the Way of God, those who amass silver and gold, and spend not in God’s cause, shall be given a torment full of woes, do give them the good news!”. They not only exploit the people unlawfully but they are real obstacles for ordinary people to know their true God; so give them the good news of their horrendous conditions in the next world. Briefly speaking, we now know the four, main enemies of the prophets of God.

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<sup>\*</sup> Sura 34, Aya 34.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Sura 34, Aya 35.

20th Session

The End-Result of Prophethood (1)

21st Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 7, 1974)

*“...Say: Allah has created everything and He's the One, the Overpowering.(16) He sends down water from the sky, and fills channels and rivers-beds to overflowing, so that the torrents bear the swelling foams along with them, much like the scums that surface, when metals have been molten in the furnace for making armaments and various vessels; by such similitude God makes the truth distinct from falsehood: as to the foam it will be quickly gone, and that which is of use to man shall be remaining on the earth; such are some parables by God set forth.(17) For those who do respond to the call of their Lord, there shall be fine reward, but the rejecters of His call, had they at their disposal all the wealth on earth, and as much more, they would surely give it up for their ransom! Their reckoning is evil and Hell is certainly their Home, a resting-place most awesome!(18)”*  
(Sura Ra'd, Ayas 16-18)

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, those who have copies of the Quran with or the copies we distributed, please look at them attentively while I read some verses from Sura Ra'd (the above quoted verses are read).

For our discussion today I'd like to draw your attention to some verses from Sura Al-Saaffaat. Let me read them to you:

“Surely Our Word already has gone forth to our servants, the messenger that they shall certainly be succoured, and that our hosts will surely be the winners. Thus disregard them for a while and just behold them, for they will also have to behold! Do they indeed intend to urge Us to speed up our scourge? Dreadful will be the morning of the men who were forewarned already when It shall descend upon their courtyard! Thus let them be and disregard them for a while; and just behold them, for they will also have to behold! Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Grandeur and Power, far above their imputation.” (Sura Al-Saaffaat, Ayas 171-180)

I have already described the sublime, progressive goal of the divine prophets which are most advanced even in comparison with what we have in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; those goals of classless societies and abolition of all forms of ignorance,

poverty, oppression, exploitation and social, class discriminations. Their history includes constant struggle, never being fatigued, never resting but relentless *Jihad* in the Path of God. And towards the end of their corporeal lives, according to historical reports, some were beheaded, some were slain in different ways and some died under intolerable conditions; they never gathered any riches, even in smallest amounts, they never owned any big houses or castles as the world-worshipping rulers. All this we have already known so far about the lives and struggles of the prophets of God.

Yet there is a big, important question concerning the prophets that have not been, fully and fairly, dealt with: what was the end-product of the struggles of the prophets? Weren't they all defeated in their missions, especially those martyred while trying their best? Don't you notice that, despite their godly efforts, the history of the world today as well as in previous centuries has been that of oppression, exploitation, class differences, paganism and disbelief? Can't we rightly claim that the divine prophets did fail?

Such questions are usually welcomed by simple-minded people and certainly by those who do not believe in divine prophethood. We don't, however, believe so. We believe that the dynasty of prophethood starting with Adam, Noah and Abraham and others, who were the choicest of God's Creation, were not defeated at all but, among all those people who in the history of mankind struggled and fought for certain sublime, human and divine goals, they have been the most successful. I further believe that the end-product of the revelations and struggles of divine prophets came to their desired results and it will be so in the future as well. I shall try to explain and prove this.

There are two separate issues in this respect. One is whether each individual prophet was successful at his own time and his life-time or not. The second issue is the question: Did the whole caravan of divine prophets, from Adam to Khaatam\*, advanced their divine mission or failed to do this; these are two separate but interrelated questions, and I hope to deal with them in one or two meetings, if God will. I am sure you all want to comprehend the matter completely because

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\* The holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH).

knowing about these two issues is most useful. As I have often said there are many things which add to your knowledge but they are not really useful or beneficial. There is nothing wrong if you all happen to know about the quality of the small pieces of stone remaining on the Moon as a result of the eruption of volcanoes. But are they useful in your actual lives? We could talk about, research and put in writing many useless topics and finally find out that we have amassed a great heap of knowledge which has not made us come closer even one step towards the formation of a rightful, legitimate, Islamic society or, on a higher, spiritual level, to God's Paradise and His welcome. The accumulation of this kind of knowledge has only one petty result: we may boast about our vast knowledge and believe that there is no more to learn; it is certainly useful in this respect!

Now, what I discuss today is something that brings about awareness, consciousness and commitment. Let me explain this by answering the question: what have these divine prophets really done for humanity? The short answer is: before the prophets, this creature called man could not tell right from wrong and his instincts did help him less than they do in animals; they tried to elevate this backward, ignorant and superstitious creature to a higher, sublime level than God's angles. If humanity were to act and behave on the basis of their teachings, the best, the most excellent and the most beautiful manifestations of creation would be found in its life.

Let me give you a simple example, I should cite the example of a six-year old pupil who doesn't even know the alphabet. A teacher teaches him for one year, then he goes to the second teacher, and so by the teaching of many teachers, one after another, he climbs the ladder of knowledge, say, up to the 12<sup>th</sup> year; let's imagine that before this, a teacher who taught him in the third year passed away or another of his former teachers was killed, did these incidents stop his progress? Of course not, all these teachers did their best to educate the former small pupil for some 12 years or more to make him where he is today: at a much higher stage of insight, knowledge and awareness, so were the struggles of divine prophets for the refinement, spiritual elevation and social consciousness of humanity.

We clearly see them that neither those teachers nor the divine prophets were un-

successful. All prophets of God, Adam, Noah, Lot, Hood, Saalih, Shu'aib, Abraham, Ishmael, Moses and Jesus and hundreds of others did their best to raise, enhance and elevate mankind, to increase their knowledge and insight and to prepare them for a wonderful after-life, and they succeeded in their missions, although many died or were killed and couldn't witness the results of their struggle. Despite this the whole humanity is still marching towards their lofty, godly goals.

Today the world is more eager to hear the rightful message of Islam than a thousand years ago and humanity is readier to approve of a divine administration. At the time when our 12<sup>th</sup> Imam (May God speed up his reappearance) went hidden from view, humanity was not yet ready to welcome the greatest, reformist revolutionary on earth. This *occult Imam* will start his grand mission when mankind is quite prepared to hear and welcome the rightful message of Islam, be it tomorrow, ten years from now or after then thousand years; this we do not know.

The experience of our Imam also showed that, despite everything the divine prophets had done, the society under the taaghoot regimes of Bani-Umayya and Bani-Abbas and their corrupt, perverted domination over the people were deep and widespread and the prevailing conditions did not allow the Imams to rise against the oppressors and that's why the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam went hidden from view.

In the forthcoming discussions on *Imamat* I shall explain to you how those Imams followed the path of the divine prophets and continued their efforts. None of these efforts has been in vain because we do witness that humanity has, step by step, come nearer to progress, gradual perfection and spiritual elevation and this was the sublime objective of all God's prophets. This has been the Almighty's will to guide humanity to its lofty goal of human perfection. Some schools of thought speak of *historical determinism*, well, if there is any historical determinism, God's determinism is the only true one.

The divine prophets always spoke the truth; unlike most political leaders and politicians who are always trying to deceive people, who always pretend to be most powerful, and who always indirectly claim that without them, the people cannot get anything done. Examples for what I said are abundant, if you follow world news. This kind of behaviour, however, is not new in the history of mankind. Whenever



I read about historical events in the Islamic world, I am most surprised how clever some of the leaders were. One good example in this respect is Mansour, the Abbasid ruler. Among those who opposed his unjust, un-Islamic rule were two famous brothers, Muhammad-Bin-Abdullah and Ebrahim-Bin-Abdullah. Their father was Abdullah-Bin-Hassan-Mathnaa who was also called ‘the pure Alavite’, because his father was the son of Imam Hassan (AS) and his mother was Fatima, a daughter of Imam Husain (AS). Briefly speaking the two brothers were in hiding and trying to gather support to fight the ruler. Mansour did everything in his power to find them but he failed. Then he thought of a new stratagem: he spread the rumour among the ordinary people that he owned ‘a ball’ which allowed him to see everything- the same sort of story about an ancient king in Persia who possessed such a device and could see what was going on in the world! The rumours said that the ruler was looking in it, house by house, and if the brothers were found in somebody’s house, all its residents would be put to the sword! This way of deceiving and frightening the people meant that nobody could rival his power.

As we see, the oppressors of the world do wish that the people are convinced that the prophets of God and other reforming truth-seekers of the world have always been doomed to fail. They loved people to think and believe that the nature of this world does not allow the progress of the prophets’ missions and that no movement against oppressive, despotic rulers will ever be successful. Well, here we should think: are such claims factual? Do we too have to believe that God’s prophets have always faced failure and defeat? Do we have to forget the holy Quran? No, because the logic of the Quran absolutely contradicts such defeatist opinions. No, we refer to the Quran, we learn from the Quran and find out what it says about prophethood, about the struggles of divine prophets and the effects and the results of these divine missions.

The holy Quran, in the verses I read earlier, explains the matter by some similitudes that there are rights and wrongs, and that the truth, the right and the godly remain and falsehood will disappear: “...the foam will be gone and that which is useful to man shall remain on the earth...”. As you see the foam in this similitude is falsehood and the water is the truth that remains.

What the Quran teaches us which is confirmed by historical facts that the struggles of divine prophets have always taken humanity many steps forward; they not only carried out their missions but the possibility was there that they would embrace success in their own periods. What the oppressors in the world tried to instill in the minds and souls of the people about constant failure of God's prophets is not true. No, on the contrary, each one of the prophets and their followers did have the opportunity to win their causes. But success in this respect depends on two conditions, and here you should remember what I have often said about the free will of mankind this human will or choice plays a big role in making the future history of humanity. If the two conditions which I'll be describing to you were there, all prophetic missions could have been successful in their own time, and so will all the movements and struggles based on Quranic, Islamic school of thought in the future, and there will be no need for any miracles or a helping Hand from the unseen world.

Now, what are those two conditions? The first is *faith*, a faith based consciousness and a belief in commitments followed by action and struggle. The second condition is Quranic *patience* which means resistance, steadfastness and not discontinuing the struggle at sensitive, perilous moments. Whenever it seems to you that a prophet has apparently failed in confrontation with the prevailing taaghoot of the time, you will immediately notice that his followers and the people close to him lacked proper faith or sufficient patience, and whenever you see a prophet who succeeds in carrying out his mission, you find out that his followers did possess a firm faith and an unshakable patience.

Well, are there any clues to what we said in the holy Quran? Yes, there are many a verse confirming this. The verses I recite to you today are some of such verses that explain the intellectual infra-structure of the Quranic thought. The verse 139 of Sura Aali-Imraan says: "Be not infirm and do not grieve, and you shall gain the upper hand, if you believe." This is not a Narration the authenticity of which may be doubted and it is not a similitude that may be interpreted differently, no, it is an absolute injunction in the holy Quran, clear and easy to understand: O You Muslim, do not feel weak and never be frustrated or saddened, no, because you will overcome all obstacles, you will be successful and your Quranic school of

thought will ultimately dominate the whole world; and what is the condition for such success or salvation? The Quran answers this question clearly: if you are truly faithful, if you are true believers.

Some people may say that Imam Ja'far Saadiq did everything he could against the taaghoot of his time but did not succeed in changing the oppressive ruler and was finally killed by this ruler, why was it so? The answer is that many of his followers, friends and relatives and many who claimed to be Shi'ites were people just like you and me! And the Imam (AS) was not able to do anything against the God-given traditions of history. This also shows that he was not supposed to defeat the taaghoot through some miracles; Imam Musa-Bin-Ja'far was also murdered by the oppressive rulers. All this happened because their friends and followers lacked the necessary faith, patient resistance and required commitments to help the Imam to carry out his mission. Today too, if we happen to be like those friends and followers, the result would be the defeat of Islam and the Quran and the humiliation of Muslims. But if we try to be like the Muslims around our holy Prophet whose patience, steadfastness and their firm faith in the cause of Islam were the envy of God's angles as manifested by the Muslim who were fasting in the scorching heat of Arabia (Hijaaz) dug defensive trenches and ditches and fought the enemy. The Quran advises us: "Believers, fortify yourselves with patience and prayers..."\*. You'll overcome your enemies by the weapon of patience and you'll reach your goals through patience; that helping Hand to aid you is human patience. In fact, we often misinterpret the term Al-Sabr (patience): we often think that being patient means that we just sit at home and wait to see what will happen. Well, you don't have to wait and see what happens: I could foretell what happens: if you don't make a move, if you don't try hard and if you don't struggle, the result will be humiliation, disaster and meanness, the loss of your religion and the losing of both your worlds. And here we have the Quranic warning: "... he will be a forfeiter of both this world and the Hereafter; that is the manifest perdition."\*\*. Yet, if you are steadfast and firm, you'll save both your world and the next.

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\* Sura 2, Aya 153.

\*\* Sura 22, Aya 11.

This is the assured destiny of events as the Quran tells us. The verses I quote here are taken from the Sura Al- A'raaf and I'm specially concerned with Ayas 126 and 127 of this Sura where Pharaoh does not agree with the call of Moses. Then Pharaoh's sorcerers step forward to defeat Moses; they fail and do admit to the prophetic mission of Moses. Pharaoh is more wrathful and threatens his sorcerers and cries I shall kill you all. Then the well-positioned mala' and courtiers around him say: "And then the chief of Pharaoh's nation enquired 'will you leave Moses and his folk at liberty to spread corruption throughout the land, and to forsake you and your gods'?...'"\*. You see, they all want Moses and his followers to be severely restrained because they would spread corruption and disrupt their oppressive rule and do away with gods of your fathers!

Thus Pharaoh comes up with a new evil plan to crush Moses and his godly mission; so he firmly says: "...let's slaughter every young man of them and spare their daughters; we have domination over them."\*\* This means that Pharaoh would not allow Moses to do what he likes by murdering all the young men that follow him but keep the daughters and wives alive. This is a new plan, as you notice. After all Pharaoh did to beat Moses, especially after his sorcerers knelt down before the godly power of Moses, he now decides to kill all male followers of Moses to disarm him complexly by resorting to violence and murder. The plan is really satanic, for he decides to keep daughters and women alive for purposes such as prostitution, slaving and destroying the purity of the tribes of Moses. Well, this is a devilish plot. Here is when the faithful may be shaken, here is when only the most patient believers may opt to resist the Pharaoh, and here is when the faithful should be spiritually strengthened not to be defeated and completely annihilated.

Here, I remember a statement by one of the greatest figures in our Islamic history whose name escapes my mind at this moment. Anyway he used to say to his friends and followers: when you see that the battle is hard to win, do fight on, when you see you are about to be defeated, do fight on, when you reach a point of thinking of absolute failure, do fight on and then you'll realize that you will be

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\* Sura 7, Aya 127.

\*\* Sura 7, Aya 127.

victorious. This is a grand, logical advice. When a group, a party or a nation is struggling and fighting for his victory and salvation it does have high hopes for its success. But when people in these groups find out the opponents are too strong, their hopeful determinations weaken and if they reach the conclusion that their struggles would bear no fruits, then surely they'll be overcome. But if, even under such tough, dangerous circumstances, they resolutely and hopefully continue their struggle, they'll ultimately overcome their opponents.

Prophet Moses has such a brave plan; he mobilizes the Israelites because he clearly sees that Pharaoh is intent on murdering their men and he presents his plan to his followers. According to the holy Quran Moses advised his people: "let's implore God for assistance and show fortitude; surely the earth is God's and He will give it to whom He chooses from the multitude of His own creatures (servants), and the happy end belong to those who have restrained."\* He asks his people to only beseech God's help, to be patient and steadfast, to resist to the last minute and never despair. Why does he say so? Because the earth is vast and it belongs to God Almighty and He grants it to the most virtuous of His servants. He also says: you are God's servants and you shall overcome the godless servants of Pharaoh.

This is what the Quran says and historical facts also tell us the same. Abraham, who was once thrown into heaps of flaming fire, is the one who later on goes to Mecca, to the house of God, and declares monotheism which lasts for many centuries after him. Moses who is the confronting Pharaoh and his mighty army, is later allowed to enter the Holy Land: "O People mine, enter the holy land, which Allah has for you assigned..."\*\*. God tells them to go there and establish a divine, monotheistic order. Jesus Christ who, in his short span of life on earth, does not appear to succeed in his divine mission, will be the founder of the greatest religion of the time in a couple of centuries after his ascension or worldly demise, that is, the most powerful empire of the time, the Roman Empire, has to convert to Christianity and its most arrogant emperor seemingly embraces Christianity before his death. And our holy Prophet, after some 13 years of toler-

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\* Sura 7, Aya 128.

\*\* Sura 5, Aya 21.

ating pressures, tortures and persecutions in Mecca, migrates to Medina, forms a government there, establishes a new society, defeats all his enemies and leads the Muslim community towards the goal of spiritual, monotheistic elevation. How does he achieve such lofty goals? He accomplishes all these through a firm faith and steadfast patience. The Quran says: “You! If you do show fortitude while fearing God...your Lord will back you...”\*. Yes, faith and patience tightly knit with relentless struggle will end up in victories; this is a God-ordained universal tradition. It was so yesterday, it is so today and it will be so tomorrow. And today all those people who love to witness that the Quran, Islam, monotheism, prophethood and Islamic teachings do reign the world, those whose heart-desire is to see God as the supreme ruler and judge of the whole world should strengthen two qualities in themselves: *faith and steadfast patience*.

We raised two questions in this respect at the beginning of our discussion today. The first question was whether the divine prophets succeeded in their missions. The answer, as I explained, is that the prophets did succeed as a whole, for they meant to elevate humanity spiritually and they did; and I explained this through the simile of those teachers who raised a very young pupil’s consciousness and knowledge at different levels throughout long years. But if we want to answer the question whether each individual prophet was successful or not, we should say that the degree of their success or temporary failure depended on the faith and patience of their followers at their age.

Now I want to recite some verses from the Sura Al-Ra’d and Al-Saaffaat. But before this let me mention a point that some friends and supporters of this masque asked me to say. As you know, this masque is half-built and it does not have proper space for men and women to sit comfortably. Well, the person in charge asked to mention this so that you make some contribution towards this charitable cause. To tell you the truth I am not very good at asking people for money! Anyway I was asked to say this and I mentioned it at this point before I forget!

Well, let’s go back to our reading of the Quranic verses. The first verses I recite

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\* Sura 3, Aya 125.

are verses 16 to 18 of Sura Al-Ra'd which you also find in the papers already handed to you: "...say 'Allah has created everything, and He's the One, the Overpowering- He sends down water from the sky, and fills channels and river-beds to overflowing, so that the torrents bear the swelling foams along with them, much like the scums that surface, when metals have been molten in the furnace...". First of all we are told that all there is belongs to God and then from the beginning of verse 17, we read about the water sent down from heavens. Here I must stress the beauty and eloquence of the verse. The next point is that we are not foretold that a similitude is given; we are suddenly and beautifully thrown into it. Well, we go on reading the verse and then we come to 'the forth or foam on the surface of fast-flowing currents of water'. If you happen to stand on a high spot and watch the flood-waves in the river below you, you just see the froth on the surface but not the fast flow of water beneath.

Well, let's read on: "...for making armaments and various vessels; God makes by such similitude, the truth distinct from falsehood...". Minerals and metals are molten in the fire and then people manufacture all sorts of ornaments, golden, silver, etc. and while being melted, you notice scums and foam-like liquids on the surface, just like the foams on the surface of torrents; but the precious material underneath, just like water underneath the froth of a flood, are not readily seen. Yet what is more precious: the water, the most important element for life or the iron, the gold, silver or the foam over them that is so conspicuously seen?! And then the Quran says: "...and so God makes, by such similitude, the truth distinct from Falsehood...". Then we read: ...As to the foam, it will be quickly gone, and that which is of use to man, shall be remaining on the earth...". The foams and scums will disappear, one moment you see them and the next moment they're not there. But water is there forever. Thus we learn from these simple similes that Truth is eternal and the truthful missions of divine prophets will ultimately be fruitful. Those elements, who oppose the prophets, are like bubbles on the surface of water; they're doomed to annihilation. In verse 18 of the same Sura we are told: "For those who do respond to the call of their Lord, there shall be fine reward, but the rejecters of His call, had they at their disposal all the wealth on earth and as much more, they would

surely give it up for their ransom! As their rejection is evil, Hell certainly is their Home, a resting-place most awesome!”\*

We see again that final salvation is for those who follow the revolutionary mission of the holy prophets but those who follow falsehood, if they owned the whole treasures of the earth, they could not save their souls and their final resting-place will be Hell!

Finally, I have briefly explained some verses from Sura Al-Saaffaat which you find in the papers handed to you. They are Ayas 171 to 173 of this Sura and we read: “surely Our Word already has gone forth, to Our servants the messengers- that they shall certainly be succoured- And that the Quran hosts will surely be the winners.”\*\* God Almighty says: We have already ordained the fate of our prophets and it can’t be changed. What is that ordainment? That they will be succoured and that they will finally be victorious. And again, the only condition for their victory is the firm faith and steadfast patience of the faithful. Our holy Prophet and Imam Ali (AS), the commander of the faithful, always, in the peak of struggles and battles called on Muslims to be *patient*. What does this mean? It means that Muslims should never be shaken, should never give up and should never forget their goals. Today too, if world Muslims have these two important factors in mind, that is, faith and patience, in their march towards cultural, economic and political advancement, they’ll certainly overcome their pagan enemies.

Muslims should never believe that they are doomed to remain backward, humiliated and to suffer from poverty, or that the big powers in the world, that are irreligious and anti- Islam, could be oppressing, exploiting and bullying them forever. No, this is a true supposition. If the Islamic countries, and the masses of the Islamic umma, some 700 million people\*\*\* do have firm faith in their own school of thought and struggle on patiently and steadfastly, they will certainly succeed throughout the world; this is the Quranic advice to all Muslims at all times. And finally I should add that the mission of the divine prophets will ultimately embrace success and salvation; and we are the followers of those prophets of God

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\* Sura 13, Aya 18.

\*\* Sura 37, Ayas 171-173

\*\*\* This total belongs to the year 1974.



today. There is no reason to feel humiliated, weak and defeated. Why should we think that the enemies of Islam will always be victorious?! No, this is not true; we shall succeed provided that we constantly strengthen our Islamic faith and our Quranic patience.

Here our discussion comes to an end but I would like to inform you that we shall be dealing with very important issues in the coming days. As you know, in these meetings I always try to translate and explain the content of the verses of the Quran before they are recited in the pleasant tones of our respected reciters. Now let me make some supplications to God Almighty before asking Mr. Fatemi to come and recite the relevant, Quranic verses:

O Lord, please help us to follow the path of your prophets,

O Lord, we implore you to strengthen our faith and our patience,

O Lord, pray help the Islamic umma to overcome their enemies,

O Lord, please make us immune from hypocrisy, polytheism and internal disputes,

O Lord, pray assist those people who do something to benefit Muslims and those who try to spread the sublime Islamic teachings,

O Lord, we implore you to help us to become the true followers of your Prophet Muhammad and his pure progeny,

O Lord, we beseech You to make each day of our life better than the day before in respect of our faith, beliefs, consciousness and patience.

21st Session

The End- Result of Prophethood (2)

22nd Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 8, 1974)

*“Surely We shall extend, in this world’s life, Our help to Our apostles and to those who do believe, and We shall do likewise, upon the Day when witnesses arise;(51) the Day where the wrong-doers’ excuse shall be unto them of no use, but theirs will be a Curse, and theirs will be an evil Place.(52) In former times We granted Moses the Guidance, and We made the children of Israel, be heirs unto the Scripture:(53) a Guidance and Reminder to understanding men.(54)”*

*(Sura Al-Mo’min, Ayas 51-54)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, yesterday I explained that God Almighty has given the good news to His prophets, who carry out the mission trusted upon them and to all those who call people to truth and to divine religions that He will help them to succeed in this world and to grant them grand rewards in the next world. I also said that we must look at the missions of the prophets as unified, continuous struggles that finally led humanity to mental maturity. They contributed to this maturity and human consciousness as in the example I cited yesterday: different teachers who in some 12 or more classes taught a very young pupil to become a wise, educated grown-up and that some of the teachers who taught him in the primary classes may have died or were killed but this did not stop the pupil’s educational progress.

The divine prophets have been performing their religious tasks throughout the history of mankind, not for a few years as in the case of teachers I mentioned; they have been carrying the heavy burden of guiding humanity and helping mankind to reach the Zenith of cultural, moral progress and have faced many hardships in fulfilling their missions including tortures, persecution and death. After Prophet Noah, numerous divine prophets continued to carry out the mission and so did our holy Prophet who enhanced his predecessors’ struggles so that mankind could constantly march forward. And, as we believe, humanity also awaits the appearance of the very last ambassador of God, our 12<sup>th</sup> Imam Al-Mehdi (AS). The belief in the coming of this last ambassador is shared by other religions and nations.

The logic behind the success of prophets' missions does lie in the quality of the *continuation* or sequence of the Prophets' work and their sequential oration on monotheism: Moses after Abraham, Jesus after Moses and so on. Thus in this context we notice that Noah was not unsuccessful, Abraham was not frustrated, Zachariah, the Jewish priest who was sawed in two and another prophet who was thrown down into a deep well, were not unsuccessful, because each of them carried out his mission despite all dangers, and their godly work was carried on by the following prophets. All this is a short recap of what I fully explained yesterday.

A second important issue which I only pointed at yesterday is this: Apart from the universal, ultimate success of God's prophets as I explained, some of them were in fact most successful in their time or in a short time after them in establishing a monotheistic system and society. The most obvious is the case of the holy Prophet of Islam; the formation of a virtuous community after the demise of Moses. Abraham succeeded in creating a divine community, Solomon was able to gather all people of his time around the flag of monotheism in vast regions of the world and the conversion of the whole Roman Empire into Christianity as a result of divine teachings of Jesus. This demonstrates that some prophets did establish divine, monotheistic societies.

Now we may ask ourselves why others did not succeed in their own time? Yes, there were other prophets who did not have the opportunity to reach their goals in their own time. As I said already, Zachariah was cruelly murdered, Prophet John (the Baptist) was beheaded and others were persecuted in different ways. The answer lies in the important principles of firm faith and committed patience: their friends, followers and supporters lacked these absolutely necessary qualities and no prophet could achieve his sublime goal single-handedly. And whenever their followers patiently and faithfully fought on and were not shaken, the prophets did succeed. The prophets of God speak the truth that the world was created on the basis of truth. The prophets are bound to succeed unless the people around them are not ready to accomplish their missions. In verses 171 to 173 of Sura Al-Saaffaat which we recited yesterday, God says: "Surely Our Word already has gone forth to Our servants, the messenger, that they shall certainly be succoured and that Our hosts will surely be the winners". God thus ordains that the hosts,

the warriors and the people who believe in Him, will be the triumphant parties; this is an inviolable injunction. So if you see that some of such seekers after truth were defeated, it proves that those supposedly fighting on the path of God were not true believers and lacked the unshakable faith necessary for overcoming their opponents and in one word, they were not *Jundallah* (the army of God), because if they did possess the necessary qualities, they would have been victorious according to the Word of God.

Yes, firm believers always fight to the end, they never forsake their leaders and commanders and, even if they think they're about to fail, they would still continue their struggle. In fact a Quranic verse tells us the same: "And when at length Our messengers despaired, and thought that they were looked upon as liars, Our Help came down to them..."\*. This shows that some prophets were under such immense pressures, accusations and opposition that they had almost lost hope and that their supporters and followers were also despairing, but because they possessed unshakable beliefs and continued their struggle on the path of God and exactly when the truthful front were thinking that maybe God Almighty has not promised them victory, the Help of God came down and they were triumphant.

Therefore, when we read historical accounts about some personalities such as Zaid-Ibn-Ali\*\*, who was shot and killed at the Kufa Mosque or Muhammad-bin-Abdullah\*\*\* known as 'Nafsi-Zakiya' who fought Mansour the unjust ruler but was defeated and Ebrahim-Bin- Abdullah\*\*\*\* the brother of Nafsi-Zakya and Husain-ibn-Hassani\*\*\*\*\* who was killed together with all his followers near Medina. All these incidents should not form a general pattern or universal experience that whenever there is a confrontation between *right and wrong*, the rightful

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\* Sura 12, Aya 110.

\*\* He was the Alavite who rose against the oppressive rule of Husham-Bin-Abdulmalik and fought the army sent against him in Kufa, but many of his supporters left him at the most sensitive phase of battle.

\*\*\* He was a most learned man of Bani-Hashem. When Mansour became the Khalif, he arrested all descendants of Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Husain and jailed them where they all died or were murdered. Hearing about these heinous crimes, he rose in Medina, took over the city but was later defeated by the Khalif's army.

\*\*\*\* A descendent of Imam Hassan (AS); he rose against the khalif with some 300 followers but was defeated in the vicinity of Mecca.

\*\*\*\*\* He rose up in Basra and asked the people of Kufa to join him and on the way to Kufa, he had to fight the Khalif's army and was martyred near this city.

believers will be defeated. Some people ignorant, of the Quran, suppose this; this is exactly what the oppressors and godless rulers love most, they do encourage this way of thinking that all faithful efforts against them are doomed to fail!

Zaid-Bin-Ali's failure and murder does not mean that all those seeking truth and justice will always be defeated. No, it means that we are devoted to godly truth and justice, we must do our best and struggle to realize our goal; we can't believe in the Quran but think the Quran itself will realize our just goal without any effort and struggle on our part! For reaching the goals of truth, justice and virtuosity, many should struggle, many should offer sacrifices; they must be steadfast and patient and ready to face martyrdom. Zaid-Bin-Ali's struggle was truthful and he managed the rebellion against Husham very well, but many among his followers feared the might of the enemy, some were hoodwinked by the adverse publicity of the Khalif's henchmen and abandoned him at the most crucial moment of his struggle. So you see, if the followers of a godly leader do the best in their power faithfully, they'll have the upper hand, if they don't behave so, they'll fail. This is a universal reality. There have been many schools of thought in the world that were successful through the ceaseless, faithful sacrifices and struggles of its proponents; some of them were in fact false ideologies, untruthful doctrines and against the natural order of things and against human nature but they were successful due to the facts I mentioned. How come then the movement seeking truth and struggling in the path of God should not embrace victory if their supporters and followers are not morally shaken?

Well, at this point I should start translating and explaining the Quranic verses jotted down in the papers handed to you, but I just remembered one of Imam Ali's (AS) sermons concerning what we have been discussing, and I think it would help us to fully understand the issue we're discussing. I don't quote the original Arabic; I just translate and explain some sentences in this sermon. The Imam (AS) tells us about the way the faithful fought along with the holy Prophet (PBUH) when in some battle-fields they confronted our fathers, sons and uncles who struggled in the path of paganism and polytheism. We never said to ourselves: 'oh, this is my own brother, father, etc. I shouldn't kill him'; no, we fought them and killed them mercilessly. Ali (AS) goes on: and when we returned from the battle, we

never regretted it and we never said to ourselves: ‘oh, I killed my son or my uncle for the sake of this new religion’; in fact our faith was more strengthened after such confrontations. Anyway, there are more instructive lessons in Ali’s sermon as when Muslim combatants tried to go faster than their comrades to face the enemy; it seemed as a race towards martyrdom. Imam (AS) finally says that when God saw how we fought in His path, He did help us into victory. The Imam gives this sermon when he was the Khalif of the umma many of whom had become lazy, weak, egoistic pleasure-seekers and divorced from the true, Islamic teachings and so he warns them: if we, at the time of the Holy Prophet, acted as you do, I swear to God that Islam would have never flourished.

Now, what we do learn from Imam Ali’s sermon? Ali’s statements are exactly as those of the Prophet and he walked on the same path as his brother, the holy Prophet did. He’s informing us of a great secret, the secret about the advancement of Islam and the triumphs of the faithful Muslims. The secret is: those days on the side of the holy Prophet, we were most patient with burning hearts, we left the comforts of an easy life behind to go to battle-fields, we sacrificed our lives and all material attractions for the sake of God, but today, you people are not ready to take on any tough tasks or to go through any hardships on the path of God; those days we embraced success and today we are backward and hopeless; the reason for this state of affairs is obvious, as obvious as two and two make four.

Now let’s turn to translating and explaining the Quranic verses that contain God’s promises and good news to His prophets and the believers who faithfully follow them. First we read some verses from the Sura Al-Mo’min; “Surely We shall extend Our help to Our apostles and to those who do believe, and We shall do likewise upon the Day when witnesses arise.”\* Those who know Arabic, do notice that the particles ‘lam’ and ‘inna’ in this verse make God’s promise most emphatic, that is, We will most certainly and undoubtedly support them, not only in this world but also on that Day when witnesses do witness for or against individuals; most interpreters say that ‘the Day’ means ‘the Day of Resurrection’. There are certain narrations attributed to our Imams which extend this divine Help to after the advent of Imam Mahdi (AS); this interpretation, however, is not our concern now.

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\* Sura 40, Aya 51.

The verse goes on to say: "...the Day whereon the wrong-doers' excuses shall be of no use to them...". When does this happen? "The Day when witnesses arise" and on this Day the world oppressors are absolutely helpless and the excuses for their wrong-doings will not benefit them. There is another verse is Sura Al-An'aam which says: "...upon the Day when certain Signs from God should come, faith will have no benefit for the persons who had no faith before..."\* After this they'll only face eternal damnation in Hell.

Anyway, in the Sura Al-Mo'min, before the verses we quoted, the Quran cites the case of Moses to emphasize God's support for His prophets. In the context of Moses and Pharaoh and what Moses does against Pharaoh's schemes and violence, God Almighty once again promises to help his prophets. Here the Quran says: "In former times We granted Moses the Guidance, and We made the Children of Israel, be heirs into the Scripture, a Guidance and a Reminder..."\*\*. As you see, God grants the Scripture or the Book and divine teachings to Israelites and they kept them for many centuries. This means that God's prophets were successful, because if 'taaghoot' rulers had dominated them completely, they would have done away with all their divine acquisitions and would not allow them to behave according to the teachings of their divine Scripture which was 'a Guidance and a Reminder'. In the same Sura, immediately after this God addresses our holy Prophet and says: "Therefore have patience, for true is God's promise." Why should he be steadfastly patient? Because God's promise is the absolute truth and he will be definitely helped. This is the same promise by God as mentioned in Sura Al-Saaffaat: "Surely our Word already has gone forth to Our servants, the messengers, that they shall certainly be succoured"\*\*\*; there are many more verses in the Quran indicating the same promise. And what's the condition for this kind of help from God? If you're steadfast, if you resist in the face of all opposition and if you never turn back from the holy path of God. God will definitely help you.

Let us now read some verses from the Sura Al-Anbiyaa. I would like to recommend to you to read this Sura over and over again, some of the most excellent

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\* Sura 6, Aya 158.

\*\* Sura 40, Ayas 53-54.

\*\*\* Sura 37, Ayas 171-172.



considerations about the divine prophets are included in this Sura where God Almighty says repeatedly that His prophets will be succoured and will be met by success: the victory of Moses, the achievement of Abraham and the failure of anti-Abraham evil forces and narrations about Noah, Solomon and others. In all these cases the divine prophets go forward and the forces against the prophetic revolutions, the reactionary elements and those opposing the new ideology of God's prophets, are utterly defeated and broken down; this is the godly tradition of history.

Well, the Quran says: "Never, before you, have We sent but men, to whom We gave- Our Revelations-Nor did We give them bodies which could dispense with food, nor did they live for good!"\* God says that He has always sent revelations to His prophets, that they were chosen from among mankind who did eat and walk, that is, He did not send other creatures such as angels and that they lived and died as other men. But "We always fulfilled our promise to them, and we delivered them and whom We willed, and We did put an end to people breaking every bound."\*\* Yes, God saves the faithful and destroys all oppressors and transgressors. Then God Almighty addresses the new umma of Islam and says: "And now We have sent down to you a Book which, for your good, you will understand. What! Aren't going to use your brains?"\*\*\* All this is meant to increase your knowledge and awareness and to strengthen your gift of wise thinking.

The Quranic verses continue: "Numerous are the guilty habitations that We have broken down, and later, replaced them with other nations."\*\*\*\* This verse is really like a happy exciting serenade which shows, beyond any doubts, how divine prophets were successful through God's help and succor. This divine help is not necessarily through an invisible Hand as some ordinary people imagine. No, this help is rooted by God in the nature of things in this world, that is, if you do struggle relentlessly, you will ultimately be successful.

Yes, God does destroy the societies, civilizations and systems based on dis-

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\* Sura 21, Ayas 7-8.

\*\* Sura 21, Aya 9.

\*\*\* Sura 21, Aya 10.

\*\*\*\* Sura 21, Aya 11.

crimination, exploitation, class differences and godlessness. In past history, God says, there are many such societies that He did away with. And the next verse is about the horrendous condition of the oppressors and transgressors when they see God's scourge coming upon them: "Now, when they felt Our Vengeance coming, lo! They were from it running! Oh, flee not but come back to your luxuries, and to your homes wherein you lived in ease! Perhaps you will be questioned!"\* This scourge or vengeance could be a catastrophe sent upon them from the sky or it may at the moments of defeat at the hands of the faithful led by their prophets. In both cases under similar circumstances, they start fleeing and leaving behind all their precious belonging, homes and castles in which they satisfied their evil, carnal desires. There is some great sarcasm or cutting irony in these verses about the opponents of God and His prophets; they are asked to return to their previous state of oppressing the people and to answer some probable questions! Finally they say to themselves: "O Woe to us, they wailed and moaned 'we have been doing wrong indeed; their lamentations came not to an end, until we made them like a corn-field mown, as ashes in extinction.'\*\* All the wrong-doers could feel was the awful sorrow about what they had done before we turned them into 'ashes in extinction'.

Now, we are coming to the end of our discussion today, so please pay particular attention to a few verses I recite which in fact explain the infra-structure of this historical reality. Why should the movement of God's prophets proceed to be successful and why should the opponents of the prophetic mission be finally defeated? Once again the perfect answer to this question is found in the holy Quran: "For We did not create the Heavens, the earth and all there is between, for Our Own recreation!"\*\*\* God is telling us that He did not create the skies, the earth and all there is between them for no purpose or as playthings! No, the Lord of all universes does not do anything purposelessly or uselessly; He has created everything for rightful, truthful purposes and for reaching certain destinations and certain sublime goals. And humanity as a creation of God Almighty has to proceed on a certain path which is the truthful path of God. This short verse is sufficiently clear

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\* Sura 21, Ayas 12-13.

\*\* Sura 21, Ayas 14-15

\*\*\* This verse and the next two verses are from Sura 21, Ayas 16-18.

for the enlightened believers to understand more than what we notice at the first glance; we do need to contemplate over such verses deeply.

In the next verse we read: “nay, We will hurl the Truth at Falsehood, until the former smites the latter, and lo, it vanishes; but woe to you for falsehood that you utter (against God)”. This means that God Almighty will destroy falsehood through Truth; yes, this truthful option, which lies in the nature of mankind and the cosmos, will ultimately break down falsehood and you’ll see it withering and dying away, but you, oppressors and transgressors, followers of untruth, will be in a sorry state of mind for what you said about God. I am not going to recite the following verses, but you may deliberate on these verses and see how beautifully and simply the Quran goes on about the attributes of God. One must really become more familiar and more intimate with the Quran to enjoy and absorb such delicate, sublime and simple points in it. Then we’ll see how the Quran talks to you, whispers into your ears, advises you and how eloquently but simply inform you about Creation, Truth, and the final defeat of Falsehood. It tells you in simple terms that everything you see or don’t see was created by God, that everything belongs to him and thus His sublime, truthful injunctions and laws should also rule over the lives of mankind. And now to end this discussion, let me make some supplications to the Lord of all there is:

O Lord, help us to be the true followers of Muhammad (PBUH) and his rightful progeny,

O Lord, do not separate us from this holy dynasty,

O Lord, let Muhammad (PBUH) and his truthful progeny be kind and sympathetic to all of us

And: O Lord, pray help us be the followers and practitioners of your holy Quran.

22nd Session

The faith In Prophethood  
& Its Ensuing Commitments

23rd Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 9, 1974)

*“Those who embraced the Faith and left their homes to fight in Allah’s cause, and those who gave them shelter and help, are true believers; they’ll have pardon and a Provision splendid.”*

*(Sura Al-Anfaal, Aya 74)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, in the frame work of our discussions on prophethood, there is a vital issue, which if not understood, our belief in prophethood will be of no practical use. This last discussion on prophethood is a guarantee of the practical effects of prophethood in our lives. Now, what is this last issue, you may ask? Well, let’s start with what we all believe in and say loudly: I testify that Muhammad is the servant and the messenger of God”. We repeat this in our daily prayers, in our call to prayers and in *Shahadatain* (the two principal testimonies). Well, is such a testimony to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) accompanied with any commitments?

Let me cite an example to make the matter more clear. Two friends are talking about flowers and one of them says: I think that narcissus is much more sweet-smelling than rose-water, I really testify to it! And the other friend believes otherwise. Well, what is the importance of this statement? You happen to like narcissus better than other flowers, so what?! You see, whether you prefer this or that flower, it has no effect in your life and it does not bring about any commitments.

But we say ‘I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God’, in our prayers or when we hear the call to prayers from mosques throughout the country as indicators of the general state of our society, does this make us committed to anything or not? That is the question. And the answer to it is absolutely affirmative. Now, what sort of responsibility is the believer is committed to when he or she declares his faith in the messenger of God? I may briefly answer this question and say: the person testifying to this prophethood commits oneself to continue the work of our holy Prophet in the path of God; of course this is easier said than done because it is a great, heavy responsibility and, basically being a member of the Islamic umma, means carrying on the divine message of prophethood and struggling on its path.

Some ordinary people think that if we just believe in the holy Prophet and say that his prophethood lies in our hearts, we have fulfilled our religious obligation and have brought ourselves one step closer to Paradise. You must think about this seriously and find out if you also think so. Some people also think that mankind was being burnt in the flames of God's wrath and then the holy Prophet appeared and people just said 'we testify that Muhammad is God's messenger', and by uttering this sentence, they were all saved and were blessed by God's Mercy. Now if they also perform their prayers and fast for some days or pay their obligatory alms of *zakaat*, then they will be more deserving to receive Mercy. And when they did perform these injunctions, they would still be pardoned because in their heart, they believed in the prophethood of our holy Prophet!

The result of this way of simple-minded thinking is that if you just declare that you are Muslim, not Jewish, Christian, materialist and the like, you'll receive the good news of going to Paradise because you chose Islam as your religion and, as I said, if you also do some other things like praying and fasting, all the better!

Well, let me tell you that this sort of thinking is quite wrong. Surely we should have faith in our Prophet; but belief in his prophethood brings about certain commitments, and our firmness of faith is measured by the degrees of fulfilling those commitments or obligations. If your faith is only reflected in words or in your hearts but you do not carry out the obligations that the faith in prophethood requires, then you may be called a believer but not a truly faithful believer. What will God Almighty do in the case of such people? I do not know, but according to the criteria of this world's struggles, I cannot call such a person a believer.

It is said that even this kind of superficial faith may protect your life and property because you happen to be in the general sphere of Islam. But here the issue is not the protection of lives and properties. We want to see whether a person is a true believer or not. I say that a person that neglects the commitments that faith in prophethood absolutely requires is not truly faithful and I will cite some Quranic verses in this respect in a few minutes and prove this claim through God's words.

So, what is this commitment? To answer this question, you must first find out

what the holy Prophet was doing during his blessed life-time? What was the firm foundation that the Prophet tried to set up in the Muslim community to remove all paganism, falsehood and oppression in the world? We ought to look around and see whether that solid foundation and the monotheistic society desired by the holy Prophet are complete or not. If we clearly look at the world around us and see that it is not so, then we ought to do our best for the complete realization of those prophetic goals. Let's cite an example in this respect: you want to pick up a heavy stone, you try hard but you can't make it move, so you should ask five or ten other persons to help you; or imagine you want to build a house but you are not able to do it alone, then you call on some workers and builders to do the job, but you could also help, say, by taking some bricks to the site; if you say that you can't even do this, then surely you're a liar!

So, as I said, a Muslim should be committed to his belief in prophethood, otherwise his testimony about the Prophet is false or just superficial; it would be like the testimony of the Hypocrites as mentioned in the Quran: "When Hypocrites come to you, they declare 'we do bear witness that you are indeed God's messenger'; yea, God does know you are His messenger, and God does witness that the Hypocrites are utter liars!"\* Yes, these double-crossing persons who were later called 'the Hypocrites' used to go to the holy Prophet and say that they believed in his prophethood, but God rejects this and says: I know he is My prophet but I also know that you are liars!

Thus, commitment to prophethood means commitment to set up a world order as Islam suggests. The holy Prophet was raised to change the people's way of life as ordained by God Almighty. And so, if you look around and see that humanity's way of life is not like what God has advised, if you notice that today different schools of thought are dragging mankind astray and if you regret that Islam today has remained inactive and ineffective and that it only lies in some believers' hearts, then your immediate, absolute responsibility and religious duty is to do your best to change the world into the pattern and substance of what Islam stipulated as Muslims devoted to God's Prophet and his holy mission.

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\* Sura 63, Aya 1.

Now, as noted in the papers handed to you, Islam formed a new front in the community against the array or ranks of the faithless people. If you study the Quranic verses, you'll find out that religion, in its fundamental sense, stands for the creation of a new front. Let me explain this a little. After the prophethood of the holy Prophet was declared, the people in the backward, ignorant community of the time, who were all following a silent, slavery system, gradually changed into two opposing camps. Their society was travelling, say, on a slippery road. The holy Prophet calls out and says that this road will take you to perdition. Some people believe what the Prophet says and so they return, but some others do not heed his call and go on as they have traditionally done.

Therefore, as I said, positioning of forces is changed and a new camp led by the Prophet is formed. Remember that the Prophet was alone at the inception of his mission; he did his best to attract the people to the new message of God and people in group of twos, fours or dozens joined him gradually and it was later that the Prophet succeeded in arraying a strong-willed camp of the faithful against the hellish camp of the disbelievers; so now there were, as in the case of two warring armies, two camps: the Prophet's companions and his bitter enemies.

What did the Prophet intend to do? He meant to take the people to eternal happiness and salvation, that is, to a paradise in this world and the paradise in the next. Those who didn't join him will never enjoy that salvation. And there were some people who listened to the holy Prophet and noticed that what he said was the truth, but they also saw the strong opposing camps and feared them. So they chose safe places for themselves and their family and did not participate in any rightful action, though they were sure that the Prophet was on the truthful side. Will such persons be salvaged or go to God's paradise? Of course, not. All those people who do not take a stand between truth and Falsehood could hardly be forgiven or blessed by God. Those who are not with the Prophet, are inevitably against him; in the case of Imam Ali (AS) also, all those who did not help him and took neutral positions ended up being against him. The Quran teaches us the same, and Imam Ali, in a statement, easy to understand, says: 'The silent are the brother of the content (with the evil circumstances) and those who are not with



us, are against us.”\* this is obvious, because those who are silent and do nothing against an oppressive rule, are in fact helping it. In the battle between right and wrong, Islam does not recognize any middle or mediocre position.

There were some famous persons such as Abdullah-Bin-Mas’oud or Rabi’-Bin-Khuthaim who, before the famous battle of Seffeen, begged Imam Ali (AS) and said: We have our doubts about this battle between two Muslims armies, please dispatch us to some frontier-posts to battle pagans”! They thought that Ali’s administration was like some governments, as in the two World Wars that were fighting for power, for gaining more wealth and colonies! They didn’t understand that in a battle between Truth and Falsehood or between right and wrong, there is not any middle ground: if you are not with the truthful front, then and don’t fight for it, you are in practice helping the opposing front that is confronting the truthful front. When Imam Husain (AS), on the way to Karbala, asks a certain Muslim to help him, he says: O You, grand-son of the God’s Prophet, I am ready to give you my horse and my sword to help you, but I don’t accompany you! Most of our Islamic narrators have opined that this man was a wretched, unfortunate person, for if a Muslim does know his Prophet, his godly mission and his truthful tradition, then he can’t sit idly by, to take no risks for furthering the faithful cause and still saying that he is a follower of the holy Prophet. We are warned by the Quran about such attitudes: “O You believers! Wherefore do you profess that which you never practice? It is disgusting in the Sight of God when you say what you do not practice.”\*\*

Woe to me if I’m also saying what I don’t practice. Why should I, as a follower of the Prophet, say things that show I’m really a follower of Abu-Jahl, when I’m in fact a polytheist and why should I claim that I am a follower of Imam Ali (AS) when I do follow Muawia? What is the difference between Ali and Muawia? We could draw the lines of their differences in our own society; imagine a person among us who never tells lies, hates bribe-giving and bribe-taking, is never concerned with his own comfort and pleasure-seeking and is unshakable when carrying out God’s injunctions and the Islamic tenets and perhaps too serious and

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\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Al-Rawzah

\*\* Sura 61, Ayas 2-3.

tough in fulfilling his responsibilities: his brother asks for more money from the public treasury and he slightly burns his brother's hand with a hot tongs! Now imagine another person, exactly the opposite: He is ready to give you a lot of money, he helps you with your pleasure-seeking and in satisfying your carnal desires and appoints you to high positions of power; all this will be yours on one condition: don't help Ali, and even if you don't help me, say, some flattering words about me, it will suffice!

Well, truthfully speaking, which one of the two characters I described will you choose in our time and under present circumstances? Are you ready to help the one whose companionship involves a lot of hardships, struggles, obligations and responsibilities? Are you spiritually prepared to help this man in preference to the other who gives you money, position, comfort and individual pleasures? Now, if you opt for the former, God be with you and help you gain final happiness and salvation. But if you are attracted by those worldly pleasures, easy-going life and superficial honours, and if you travel to Syria to join Muawia and tell your wife and children: I'll be waiting for you in Damascus and, in one word, you leave Ali (AS) alone, then you'll have to face your God *alone*, as some apparently great figures of the time abandoned Ali's camp and left him alone.

Let's go back to Islamic history. Abdullah-Bin-Abbas, the cousin of Ali (AS) and the Prophet (PBUH), a famed Quranic exegete and an accepted character among both Sunni and Shi'ite branches of Islam, had exactly the same cowardly behaviour with Imam Ali. He was not a companion of the holy Prophet because he was only a child then, but because of numerous Narrations he quoted from the Prophet, he became very famous. I did some studies about him and found out that he was a companion of the second Khalif, he liked him very much and devotedly followed him. It's incredible that many Islamic sects, even those who oppose one another, revere him! He was appointed the governor of Basra; he took all the Basra public treasures with him and travelled to Mecca to live in the safe, holy precincts of God's House. Why did he do this? Perhaps he meant to spend all that money for alms and other charitable purpose!! No, he bought a big house and some slaves and some nice-looking slave-girls to live in comfort and satisfy his carnal wishes.

Let's imagine that Abdullah-Bin-Abbas were alive today, what would he do? Surely he would repeat his narrations about Imam Ali and would tell us what a great believer Ali was and narrate stories about Ali's courage, selflessness, virtues and his unrivaled services in the path of Islam. Would we then believe it that he was a follower of the Quran and the Imam? No, not at all, we would surely admonish him saying: if you were really a faithful Muslim, you should have proved this when being tested under difficult conditions; a hadeeth (narration) from the holy Prophet informs us: 'In troubled, turbulent circumstances, the real nature of men shall be revealed'\*. If he were alive today, we would tell him: you were the closest person to Ali (AS), you knew him better than many, if you were a faithful person, you would have not done what you did, you wouldn't run away with the money belonging to the public treasury. There is a letter by Imam Ali (AS) in *Nahj-al-Balaagha* addressed to Abdullah-Bin-Abbas; but the late Sayyed Razi, the collector of the book, writes 'a letter by Ali to *one of his governors*'. Razi lived at the time when the Bani-Abbas ruled the Islamic world and he probably was cautious not to name Abdullah-Bin-Abbas, but, according to most researchers, it is obvious that the letter is addressed to him; this has also been confirmed in some other Islamic sources.

Let me sum up: the belief in prophethood requires the commitment to follow the Prophet's path, fulfilling one's obligations and responsibilities as he wished, that's all. Now let's begin reading and translating some of the Quranic verses written down in the papers handed to you. They are verses 72-74 of Sura 8 (Al-Anfaal): "those who believed and fled their homes risking their property and lives to fight in Allah's cause...". This does not only concern the Prophet's time, no, it is valid for all times; at the prophet's time, many people migrated to strengthen the Islamic community because they sincerely believed in the Prophet's message. There were, however, others who had embraced Islam but questioned themselves: 'Why should I abandon my house, shop, my friends, my kith and kin and other valuable things to join the Prophet in Medina? As you see, you need to have a firm, unshakable faith to leave your dearest and nearest to help the divine cause. They probably said to themselves: Well, the Prophet wants us to

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\* Nahj-Al-Balagha - Saying 217

perform daily prayers, we obey; he wants us to fast for 30 days, ok, I fast for 60 days, but why should I leave my home in Mecca?! Yet this migration was absolutely necessary, for the Islamic society was very newly-established and it had to be strengthened and defended against its enemies. So migration was an absolute condition of having a firm, truthful faith.

Next we read in the same verse: "...and those who gave them shelter and support are certainly each other's friend and allies...". As the people who had migrated did not have any place to live in and no means to earn their livelihood, those who gave them shelters and supported them are the faithful who fulfilled their responsibility; they are all united in a friendly, faithful front like hard bricks in a well-built wall.

And now let us carefully consider the rest of the verse: "...but to those who believed but did not flee their homes, you do not owe such support, guardianship and friendship, until they also migrate...". Those who believed the holy Prophet but did not take up the responsibility to migrate are not yet in the category of the former two groups who helped and guarded one another; there can't be close Islamic connection or coherence with them. Yet there is an exception: if they are attacked by enemies and asked for your support, you ought to go and help them because they are your co-believers.

What we learn from this Quranic verse is that helping Muslims anywhere in the world is an Islamic duty. The verse also tells us that we are obliged to defend Muslims under attack, even if they have not migrated. Of course in the world today, that kind of migration to the first, Islamic community is not an issue. The third point we learn is that we should not enter into battle with disbelievers with whom we have a treaty or pact: "...yet if they plead for help in faith, it is incumbent on you to help, except it be against the tribes with whom you have a treaty; Allah is Cognizant of all your deeds."

The next verse teaches us another lesson: "in fact the disbelievers are each other's friends and allies; if you will not do the same, there will be much mischief and great corruption everywhere." This tells us that all Muslims should unite because the ungodly front is united against you and you could easily see this; those

who choose to remain in the middle and not helping, are in fact in the camp of the enemies of your religion. We are further warned that if we are not friends and allies, there will be great sedition and corruption in the world. Sedition means the absence of religion and corruption means the absence of God's laws and injunctions in the society.

Now let me read verse 74 of Sura Al-Anfaal: "Those who embraced the Faith and left their homes to fight in Allah's cause, and those who did give them shelter and support, are *true believers*...". Such believers are true believers but those who have embraced Islam and do not do anything in the path of God, are really false believers.

Finally let me draw your attention to verse 81 of the Sura 3 (Aali-Imraan) which needs a brief explanation to be better understood it: "Behold! Allah took a covenant from His prophets...but in time, a messenger will come to you to sanction what you have got, do then believe in him and give him help...". God says that We took a covenant from all Our prophets that after you will come another prophet who affirms what We have given you. So when after Moses comes another prophet, say, Jesus who sanctions all you taught your followers, they must follow him and support him. How is this support realized? The answer is in the fact of Moses advising his friends and followers to help the prophet after him who has the required divine signs and does sanction the prophetic teachings of his predecessor. Then God asks: "...now, will you affirm this and accept the burden I lay on you as binding?" all prophets of God accepted and affirmed this covenant with God Almighty. This means that all believers in Moses had to believe in and support Jesus Christ and so on until the very last prophet of God, our holy Prophet. But did the followers of those prophets carried out this divine covenant? No, the majority of them did not!

## Chapter Four

### Wilayat

23rd Session

Wilayat

24th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 10, 1974)

*“O You believers! Do not take for guardians the enemies of Mine and foes of yours; you shows them friendship while they are the ones who disbelieved the Truth to you revealed, and drove out the Apostle and yourselves, because you did believe in God, your Lord! If you come out to struggle in My Cause, seeking to please Me, do you then extend secret affection to them as friends?! And I do know full well what you conceal and all that you reveal, and whosoever of you may do this will surely stray from the right way.”*

*(Sura Al-Mumtahina, Aya 1)*

In the Name Of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the issue we raise for our discussion today is the question of *wilayat*\*, and the way I understand it, on the basis of the holy Quran, has not usually been explained by others. Of course the words *walee* & *wilayat* are quite familiar with the Shi'ites. We say and hear it when praying to God, we find it in our narrations, it is repeated among the public and its remembrance is always associated with reverence and holiness. And as Shi'a followers of Islam, we never separate ourselves from *wilayat*, in fact we do not live without *wilayat*. Many people think of *wilayat* as starting from Imam Ali (AS). But my discussion goes back to the roots of *wilayat* and its roots in the holy Quran. If I could explain this properly, God willing, you'll find out what an interesting, progressive principle it is and that a community or nation devoid of *wilayat* will be in a pitiable, confused, spiritual state. I am sure you all shall comprehend it.

When I complete this discussion you will also know why it is said that a man devoid of belief in *wilayat* is not a true worshipper of God and his daily prayers, fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca are not of much value and will not be worthy of receiving God's forgiveness. There are many Narrations in this respect and one oft-repeated is this: 'if a man does pray into late nights, fasts all days (not only in the month of Ramadan) and gives up all his wealth and property in the path of God but lacks belief in *wilayat*, that is not be familiar with the *walee* of God, all his deeds have been in vain.'

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\* We do not translate this word into inexact phrases such as 'authority of guardianship' because the lecturer has fully and sufficiently explained it in his discussions of this issue.

\*\* Al-Kaafi - Chapter Al-Iman wa Al-Kofr



This brief description of wilayat is to show its importance, but now let me begin to enter into our main discussion. Again, most briefly, wilayat is the continuation of prophethood, it is inseparable from prophethood and, in fact, it does complete the issue of prophethood. If there is no wilayat, prophethood will remain incomplete. I should also add that this issue is a difficult one and explaining it is even more difficult. But I implore God Almighty to help me do my best and try to complete and finish this discussion in a few sessions.

In order that you could follow the discussion, I'll have to shortly review what we have said so far about monotheism and prophethood. What do God's prophets come for? They come to help humanity towards spiritual perfection, and to familiarize people with moral laws sanctioned by God. We have a tradition (Ha-deeth) from our holy Prophet: "I was raised to enhance and complete noble, moral, characters"\*; in one word, the prophet are there to reshape mankind. How do they go about this? Do they set up educational classes? Do they establish a philosophical club? And do they build up temples and shrines? We have already answered these questions in the negative. But, figuratively speaking, they create a new human-making factory. The prophets of God struggle for decades to create their desired human beings; they are not satisfied by converting a few people, their aim is the whole mankind, they want that their message will gradually and automatically reshape the world community.

Now, which is this new human- making factory, so to speak? Their factory means the creation of an Islamic system and community. All people say that prophets come to create moral men worthy of the name *human* and they all believe that God's prophets educate people to travel on the path of God. This is true but there is a problem here which is of most fundamental importance. Do the prophets of God approach people as individuals converting them to their creed one by one? Do they set up a philosophical club to train some devoted students? No, the prophets of God and our holy Prophet performed something much firmer, stronger and more universal. In the case of our Prophet, he established an Islamic community to forward his godly objective continually.

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\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Al-Iman wa Al-Kofr

What is the nature of this Islamic community? This question does not concern us in our present discussion. So I only say a few words about it. An Islamic community is a society or civilization governed by God Almighty, the injunction and laws of God are carried out in this community and all appointments are made according to the will of God. Sociologists usually draw a cone to demonstrate different hierarchies. If we follow their example, we may say that in an Islamic community, God is on the top of the cone and humanity and the religion of God are drawn below it. And all social, political legal and economic relations are decided upon in the framework of God's religion and God-given laws. A shining example of such a society is Medina at the time of the holy Prophet; he acted as God's deputy in executing laws, in providing regulations for all affairs and guiding people to the right path.

In such an Islamic society everything is God's. Congregational prayers and sermons, even march-pasts and battle-cries are carried out in the Name of God. The Prophet delivered his sermons in a mosque; he saw to people's problems and dispatched warriors to defend Islam in the same mosque. All temporal and spiritual issues were guided by the Prophet in that House of God. Anyone who joined this community was absolutely impressed and tried to be a good Muslim, if not a perfect one.

On the other hands, in the non-Islamic or non-divine societies, many people try to remain as virtuous persons according to their human nature but they fail because of prevailing conditions and social pressures. Say they do not want to give or receive bribes but it is not possible; they do not want their wives and daughters to do anything shameful, but social circumstances, fashions and luxuries do not allow them. There are numerous factors such as pictures, films, cinemas, inordinate clubs and harmful get-togethers that constantly take people away and away from God; their prevailing, social and psychological pressures do not often let you remember God. But in a true Islamic society everything helps you to remember your Creator: its bazaars, mosques, the government offices and your friends, your parents and your kith and kin help you remember God Almighty, and take you away from being the servants of the powerful and the wealthy.

If the leadership of the holy Prophet would continue, say, for some 50 years or if the leadership had passed to Ali-bin-Abi Taalib (AS), the closest to the holy Prophet among Muslim believers, one could surely claim that even all the hypocrites of the time would have turned into true believers and all people who did not know what Faith was, could have turned into the kind of believers who only served God and Islam; because this is the real substance and nature of a true Islamic society and divine prophets are raised to establish such a society when people, not in groups of hundreds and thousands, but humanity as a whole, will convert to the true religion of God and certainly among them you would find the truthfully faithful as well as superficial believers.

I explained those issues about the prophet's missions because I intend to talk about 'wilayat' in a new way, that is, I mean to discuss the roots of wilayat, not in a simplistic manner as some people think. Now let me ask this question: is the prophet able to administer such a society single-handedly? Of course not. Doesn't such a society need an administration and organized units to carry out its commitments? Doesn't it need soldiers to defend it against its enemies? Doesn't the prophet need some helpers and comrades to help him further his message? Yes, the answer to all those questions is in the affirmative and our holy Prophet carried out all these obligations through ordinary, worldly means, not by some extra-ordinary events. So the prophet does succeed in bringing together such a small, but united, unified, steadfast and patient group in the first place. He does this by reciting the Quranic verses to them: "You shall invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and with kindly exhortation..."\*. God tells His prophet to exploit God's words and revelations and find ways into the hearts and souls of people around him in this way. Thus the Prophets manage to gather a group around them, of the most faithful, the most firm and the most unshakable, of the kind described in the Hadeeth: 'those who will never be shaken by the blamers'\*\*; that is, those who never tremble at the accusations and allegations of disbelievers and will steadfastly continue walking on the path of God. These are the first and foremost Muslims.

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\* Sura 16, Aya 125.

\*\* Nahj-Al-Balagha - Sermon 192

Thus prophets create a new front to further their cause. In what sort of societies do they live? In the case of our holy Prophet, he first formed a small but devoted group of Muslims in the backward, ignorant environment of Mecca; the members of this group had to be iron-willed and most firm in their faith in order to survive in the face of many problems, hardships and animosities. They had to be inseparable from one another or, as it is said these days, they strictly followed an unshakable, organizational discipline. Because people are a small, oppressed minority, they could be easily influenced by the thoughts and traditions of the majority and its prominent figures. So the Prophet, in order to keep them as his devoted, selfless companions, kept them closely linked together and kept them away from the influence of the majority; these faithful companions are the ones on whose shoulders, the new structure of the future Islamic society would be built. As an example, some mountaineers, say, a group of ten, who intend to reach the top of a tough, snowy mountain, are advised to stick together by very firm ropes, because as separate individual they may slip on icy surfaces and fall to their deaths. They are also advised not to carry heavy bags with them. Now do we have a name for this unbreakable, firm rope in the Quran and Islamic tradition? Yes, we do have a name for this; it is called *wilayat*.

In our discussion we have not yet touched upon Imam Ali's wilayat; this will be discussed later. We are now talking about the principle, the concept and the roots of wilayat. So far I have told you that wilayat requires a firm coherence and comradeship among a group of people who are after a common goal, a single destination and a united, ideological front and consistent cohesion. Why do they have to respect such peculiarities? The answer is to survive and not be affected by the prevailing circumstances. This is called wilayat in the holy Quran. Thus the Prophet instilled all these characteristics in his followers, and established a unique brotherhood among them so that later they could bring about the Islamic umma and form an Islamic society.

These early believers and followers of the holy Prophet were advised not to mix with the opponent of monotheism, not to join the Jewish groups, not to associate with the Christian camp and not to be friends with the polytheists; all these measures were necessary for the true believers to stay clear of any ideological

pollution by the enemies of Islam and Prophethood. And let me here emphasize that even after the establishment of the Islamic society and a great umma, the need for wilayat is still necessary and here we'll have to expand and broaden our discussion to see why wilayat is needed. At this juncture, we may also pay particular attention to the sort of wilayat believed and expressed by the Shi'a branch of Islam. We have already noticed that wilayat at the time of the holy Prophet, when Muslims were surrounded by an ignorant, backward and pagan society, was absolutely required for the later success of the Prophet's divine mission.

We may also add that the small, Shi'a communities during the later rule of some perverted, anti-Shi'a administrations could not have survived if it were not for their deep, unshakable faith in wilayat. How did the Shi'a communities survive against all odds in the oppressive khalifs, their tortures, murders, imprisonments and the devastating, anti-Shi'a propaganda by the servants of these regimes? It was only through their deep and profound belief in wilayat from which they never separated for a minute.

You have heard of certain streams in the oceans that flow inside other tumultuous, strong currents, waves and adverse conditions but, it is said that this pure, sweet, small stream goes on its way without mingling with other strong currents or being affected by other salty, muddy and bitter currents. Now let us extend this example to the world of Islam under the rule of the Khalifs of Bani Umayya and Bani Abbas when schools of thought, ideological currents and political thinking of various hues and colours were fighting one another. When you look at this state of affairs for centuries, you will notice that Shi'ism continues its own small, spotless stream despite all odds and you are really surprised at its pure, congruous and resistant continuity. Which was the factor that kept it in its pure state? Nothing but belief in the rightfulness of wilayat, the wilayat that brings people together in a most coherent and brotherly way. Wilayat has the same meaning of wilayat at the time of our holy Prophet. But this is only one dimension of wilayat; there are other dimensions to the question of wilayat which I'll talk about later.

The holy Quran speaks of the faithful as one another's *Owlia*, that is, guardians, comrades and affectionate friends and brothers. In the words of many early

Islamic jurists, Shi'a equals faithful, and true believer. Immediately after converting to Islam, the most important issue is faith. What does this kind of interpretation mean? It means the faith is what the logic of Shi'ism proves. Our pure Imams (AS) kept the Shi'a faith alive by bringing true Muslims together as brothers and guardians of one another the way the holy Prophet kept them united, unshakable and steadfast, otherwise Shi'ism could have withered and died as numerous other Islamic sects did. As I said this was one dimension of wilayat. But there is another dimension to it, which is perhaps more important, and that is 'the wilayat of the walee-al-Allah'; what does this wilayat of the walee of God mean? What is the wilayat of Imam Ali (AS) or Imam Saadeq? Why should we today believe in the wilayat of the Imams? Does this mean that we only ought to love the Imams? How wrong are they who think so! Wilayat is not at all restricted to loving and respecting the progeny of the holy Prophet. Are there any Muslims who don't respect and love them? Even those who fought against them in early stages of Islam did have respect and love for them, but they were unfortunate to be the servants of oppressive rulers, yet they opposed them and fought them for worldly attachments, positions and wealth. It is reported that Mansour, the Abbasid Khalif wept when he heard the news of Imam Saadeq's death; but who had ordered the poisoning of the Imam? It was he who had ordered it! Maybe he respected and loved the Imam!

A similar case is Ma'moun, the Abbasid Khalif. Some claim that he was really a Shi'ite! He knew that Imam Reza (AS) was the rightful Imam, but did this suffice? If it is a question of knowing in your heart that the Imams should have been the true, lawful leaders of the Islamic umma, then Haroun, Ma'moun, Mansour, Muawia and even Yazeed, the murderer of Imam Husain (AS) were also true Shi'ites! No, they acted differently and killed or poisoned the Imams because they did not sanction their unjust, oppressive and un-Islamic administrations. Many of those who fought Imam Ali (AS) did have respect and kind regards for his sublime virtues, but for temporal gains and cheap, worldly rewards, they joined the camps who fought him. So the kind of wilayat we are explaining is not about loving or not loving the Prophet's holy progeny. We must think about wilayat to find out what kind of wilayat we believe in. some people would like to fool them-

selves by expressing their love and reverence for the Imams (AS) and not paying any attention to those commitments that their belief in wilayat requires.

On the occasion of Al-Ghadeer, people usually recite this prayer: ‘Praise be to God who *made* us resorters to the wilayat of Ali-bin-Abi Taalib (AS)’\*. I often advise my friends to say: ‘O God, pray *make us* the resorters to...’, that is, beseeching God to help us become true believers in wilayat. Anyway, I think we have talked about one dimension of wilayat sufficiently. And I think that the Sura Mumtahina in the Quran could also be called the Sura Al-wilayat and now I shall recite, translate and explain the verses 1 to 4 from this Sura. It begins: “In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful; O You believers! Do not take for guardians the enemies of Mine and foes of yours;...”. The translation of ‘owliyah’ in the papers handed to you is good; it says ‘companions, comrades’ because some people translate the word as ‘friends’; this is an incomplete meaning because the verse talks about the ‘enemies of God and believers’, and it is obvious that you should not be friends with such enemies! The verse tells us something more than this: you should never allow them to become your guardians, you should never let them infiltrate your ranks, but you should consider them as your opponents and foes which in fact they are.

Next we read: “...you show them friendship but they are the ones who rejected the Truth that was revealed to you; and drove out the Messenger and yourselves because you did believe in God, your Lord...”. They are the people who drove you and your Prophet from their houses and their city only because you did believe in God the One, God Almighty and your Lord, they are your real enemies, and you should never let them help you. “...if you come out to struggle in My cause seeking to please Me, do you then extend secret affection to them as friendly, fellow-combatants?!...”. The verses tell us that if you go out to fight on the path of God and if your objective is to please your Lord, then you should not take God’s enemies as your helpers.

This Sura is of utmost importance; it does not say that you should not cooperate or be friends with *all* disbelievers, that you should have no relationships and that

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\* Mafaatih-Al-Jinan - Rites of Zi-Al-Hajja

you should cut all ties with them. The other verses in the same Sura clearly tell us what groups of disbelievers are your stubborn enemies; I'll talk about this tomorrow, if God will. But now let us continue reading the first 4 verses of this Sura. "...do you then extend secret affection to them as friendly companions?! And I do know well what you conceal and that you reveal; and whosoever of you may do this, will surely stray from the right way." God says that if you maintain open or secret contact or companionship with those who oppose the Truth revealed to you and show enmity to you and the Messenger, you should realize that I know about it all, and that anyone among you who does this is surely astray from the right path. And then God does introduce such opponents.

But before I read the following verse, let me tell you something about the occasion of the descent of this verse. According to most Quranic commentators, this verse was revealed after a person by the name of Haatib-bin-Abi-Balta'a did something wrong. According to reports, this man was a Muslim of weak faith. The Prophet was about to march against the pagans of the Quraish clan. Haatib thought that the Prophet and his companion may win or lose the battle, and in either case his relatives who were among the Quraish may be hurt or killed. Well, he is a soldier in the Muslim troops of the Prophet. Thus he tried to be clever and probably thought: I am a Muslim soldier of the Prophet, I participate in his jihad against the disbelievers and surely I'll be rewarded for this. So I better write a letter to them and warn them about the coming battle, for if Muslims face defeat, the disbelievers will still be my friends. This is a cautious measure; I fight for the Prophet and still keep my friendship. In short, he meant to have his cake and eat it!! Anyway, he wrote a letter to his kith and kin in the Quraish clan, gave it to a woman he trusted; she hid the letter under her clothes and set off to Mecca. But God informed His prophet about this by revelation whereupon the holy Prophet dispatched Ali (AS) and a few other companions to ride fast and stop the woman on her way. Well, they found the woman and seized the letter from her. The Prophet then questioned Haatib about his misdeed and he, in his defence, said: O You, Messenger of God, I have many relatives and close friends there, I feared for their lives, I wrote this letter to soften their hearts towards me as I am a soldier of the Islamic camp! Well, the commentators say that this verse is about this kind



of dubious thinking. It does explain that they are your ideological enemies, they are people who aim at destroying you and your religion and that they will never be kind to you.

The next verse in this Sura makes the point absolutely clear: “if they gain the upper hand over you, you’ll find that they are foemen...”. This is like saying: You foolish Haatib, don’t be mistaken in thinking that they will reciprocate your affection if they win the battle; they will treat you most ruthlessly. The verse goes on: “...they shall unleash their hands and tongues to do you evil wrongs, and they will keenly crave that you may disbelieve...”. This means that if they defeat you, they won’t allow you to be believers even only in your hearts, no, you’ll have to become pagans and infidels just like them.

In the next verse, there is a decisive warning about the question of Haatib’s relatives and about all Haatibs that may appear later: are you going to compromise with the enemies of God because you like your kith and kin? Are you ready to disobey God’s order because some disbelievers are related to you? How could such relations help you when facing God’s retribution? Here again the Quran warns such people: “Neither your kinsmen, nor your children would be to you of any benefit upon the Day of Resurrection; betwixt you He brings separation, for Allah sees your every action”.

Here, let’s quote verses 34-37 of Sura `Abasa in this respect: “The Day when man forsakes his brethren, his mother and his father, his wife and his own children, for every one of them upon that Day, shall have enough for his pre-occupation!” Your nearest and dearest shall be of no benefit to you, you are separated from one another and each person has to answer for his deeds as an individual. Yes, on that Day you are not to face even your brother, wife and children. The very son and daughter of yours whom you love so much and do everything for them, will refuse to stay next to you, people don’t want to face one another, because each individual is deeply sunk in his own thoughts about what he did or did not when he was alive on earth. Those who provide everything for their own children or their dear ones at the expense of committing sins and doing unlawful things, if they did truly understand the Quran, they would

surely change their behavior and their ways of life, because God does witness whatever you do.

Now let's go back to the rest of the verses in the Sura Mumtahina which are written down in the papers handed to you "Indeed you have a fine example in Abraham and his companions when they said unto their own people: Lo! Clear of you are we and what you pray to, instead of God; we do reject you, and enmity and hatred shall for eons between us run, until you do believe in God alone..."\*. These verses are the same as what God Almighty tells the faithful; God says: learn from what Abraham and his followers did, it's a great lesson, you do the same. What did they do? They clearly and fearlessly told their own perverted clan that 'we hate your false goods and goddesses, we reject you completely and, as long as you do not believe in God the one, enmity and hatred between us shall ceaselessly continue'.

The Quranic verse almost repeats the fact of Abraham and his companions being an excellent example: "Surely in them you have a good example of the people who have their hopes only in God and in the Final Day; as for the ones who turn away, God is in need of nothing; He is the Ever-Praised."\*\* Well, those who do not believe and go astray, will not be harming God, for God is absolutely Needless; they will only harm themselves in both worlds. Thus Abraham and his followers did say to disbelievers 'we abhor you and your gods'.

Our own 4<sup>th</sup> Imam, Imam Sajjaad (AS) also spoke in the same manner with the deviated people of his time. There is a hadeeth (narration) in the book "Bi-haar-al-Anwar" about Yahya-bin-umma-Tuwail, a devoted disciple of Imam Sajjaad (AS), addressing the people in the Medina Mosque. These people, among whom the Imams Hassan and Husain (AS) had lived for years, did not help these Imams when needed. In fact they did not have any liking or attachment to the ruling Bani-Umayya Khalifs. So why didn't they help the rightful Imams? Because they were chicken-hearted cowards who, fearing the suppression and persecution of the deviated rulers, left the progeny of the holy Prophet alone in Karbala; they were not disbelievers, they only feared for their lives.

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\* Sura 60, Aya 4.

\*\* Sura 60, Aya 6.

Anyway, Yahya addresses these people quoting the content of some verses of the Quran we already mentioned: ‘We are clear of you, we disown you, and enmity and hatred shall run between us forever.’\* This is exactly what Abraham said to those people. As you see, the wilayat that Yahya believes in is the same wilayat as at the time of Abraham. This means that if a Shi’a person does not follow his Imam and joins the camp of the enemies through fear or greed, he is no more a Shi’ite, he is no longer on the path of God. Yahya-bin-Umm-Tuwail, after the demise of Imam Sajjaad, succeeded in strengthening and fortifying the Shi’ite organizations. He was later arrested by the faithless, blood-thirsty governor, Hajjaaj-bin Yousof; he ordered his henchmen to cut off his hands, his legs and finally his tongue and he died as a true, selfless, Shi’ite martyr who never submitted to the oppressive, un-Islamic rulers.

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\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter Ali-Ibn-Al-Husain

24th Session

The Ties of the Islamic Umma

25th Ramadan 1394 (Sep, 22, 1974)

*“O You believers, take not Jews, nor Christian for your guardians; they are guardians of one another. If one of you takes them for guardians, he’ll then become one of their number, and God does not bless with Guidance the people who transgress.(51) Yet you see those who have a sickness in their hearts running to woo them; they opine ‘we worry lest a change of fortune bring us some disaster!’ Ah, may Allah bring about a triumph or a manifest, event from His own self, to make them most ashamed of what they hid inside the breast.(52)”*

*(Sura Maa’ida, Ayas 51-52)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, before starting our main discussion today, I’d like to quote a famed Narration attributed to our holy Prophet (PBUH) which says: ‘Blessing of God upon any man who does his work attentively’\*. This means that in everything you do, you must be most cautious, watchful and circumspective. As an example, we should, in this mosque, think beforehand of all probabilities and incidents such as the microphone being faulty, the lights being cut off and the like; we must always think about probable events. There is a narration from our dear Imam Ali (AS), in one of his sermons recorded in Nahj-al-Balaagha; briefly it says: I am not like an unintelligent animal in deep sleep in its den, an easy prey for hunters, no, I am always watchful, I always try to foresee probable events and I always learn lessons from what goes on to constantly increase my experience to confront future events. Here we must follow our Imam to constantly increase our experience and be ready to face problems and try to solve them.

Well, let’s go back to our discussion of *wilayat* which I hope to bring to a satisfactory conclusion within a couple of days. I have already told you about the establishment of an Islamic society and the Islamic umma. Now when we do have an Islamic society based on divine laws and injunctions, then the most necessary factor for its continuation and progress is in Quranic *wilayat*, as I explained yesterday. We should not confuse this Quranic *wilayat* with the concept of *wilayat*

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\* Shawahid-Al-Tanzil Li-Ghawa'id-Al-Tanzil

that some ordinary people have in mind. We are now dealing with the concept of wilayat as designated in the Quran. If the Islamic umma is to respect the Quranic wilayat, they have to pay attention to all three dimensions of wilayat as I briefly explained before. The first dimension is about their internal relations, that is, relation within the Islamic community. The second covers the Islamic external relations, that is, the umma's relations with non-Islamic society

The first dimension on internal relations will be realized only when utmost coherence, unity and solidarity is secured among all groups within the Islamic world without any adversity, enmity or harmful differences among them. In case some units or groups in the world of Islam start fighting each other for any reason, the Quranic injunction is that all other than Muslims should do their best to put an end to it by mediations and brotherly compromises, but if one party is the aggressor or fights for wrongful causes, all other Muslims should unitedly try to stop him and make it see the truth. This is the very Quranic verse in this respect: "if two parties among the faithful are at war, the one against the other, make peace between them, but if either of them transgresses against the other, then you must combat the transgressor until it submits to Allah's order, and when it does so, make peace between them in fairness and with justice..."\*. As you notice the Quran tells us that if a party is the transgressor, you must unitedly oppose it and, if necessary, fight it until it returns to the peaceful path of God. This is God's injunction about preserving the unity of the Muslim umma.

What I've said so far was about the intimate relationship among the Muslims umma. Now, what about the external relations with non-Islamic people? In one word, the Islamic umma should administer its relations with them in such a way that it will never be subjugated to them, never be influenced by their thoughts and doctrines and never abandon its independent policies under their influence. Being in one camp or front with them is absolutely forbidden. Here I better relate the story of minting coins in the world of Islam. I sum up the story: in early centuries of Islam currencies for business transactions were of foreign origin, specially Roman, and once the Romans had threatened to stop the flow of their currency into the Islamic world. According to certain reports, one of our Imams, either

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\* Sura 49, Aya 9.

Imam Saadeq (AS) or Imam Baaqer guided the Khalifate administration how to mint Islamic coins and not to be dependent on non-Islamic governments in this important affair. The interesting aspect of this report is the fact that this case is one of the exceptional times when our Imams (AS) guided the Khalifs whose authority was usurped.

Thus we as Muslims are once again advised not to be influenced an iota by non-Islamic, specially anti-Islamic powers. Islam is not against having fair relations with such countries but Islam rejects all exploitative, colonial relations with them. You must know about the incident of Tobacco Concession given to a foreign company called Regie by Nasser-al-Dean shah; the concessions granted to this company would allow it to control many business deals as well as supervising the Iranian Customs Office. So Ayatollah Mirza Shirazi issued a *fatwa* against it, all people supported it and the Shah had to cancel the contract. Another significant case was that of the British East India Company allowed to operate in India by some weak-minded, Mongol, Muslim rulers that ended up in turning India into a colony of Britain for decades; in fact Britain become a real empire by this Company plundering the wealth and resources of India. Those Muslim rulers should have known better about granting such immense concessions to foreign countries but unfortunately they did not have a proper, Islamic insight. Islam never sanctions such relations with non- Islamic nations.

Of course when we cite such examples about relations between the Islamic world and other countries, we never mean that Islamic societies should live in political isolation from the rest of the world, no, not at all. We could have diplomatic, political and commercial relations with non-Islamic countries and we do exchange ambassadors with them. But we should never allow them to have *wilayat* over us; our relations with them are not like the kind of united, coherent and ideological relations we have with other Islamic communities. As I said earlier, these are two dimensions of wilayat: brotherly, religious s with other Muslims and prevention of any non-Islamic or domination by non-Muslims.

We have talked about Quranic wilayat. We must also explain wilayat as believed by the Shi'ites because some people think these are two different kinds

of wilayat! There is a very delicate point here: the wilayat or imamat in Shi'ism derives from the Quran. We must answer the Question why we attach great importance to our relations with Imams and obey their orders, advices and injunctions with our hearts and souls. The answer, as I pointed out earlier, lies in the Quran: if an Islamic society is to move in one direction, to unite all its forces and to prevent all external, harmful influences, it must, according to Quranic wilayat, have a central authority in a pious leader so that all Muslims could be inspired by him, listen to him and be at his command; this Imam is the one who knows all about exigencies of the umma, the corrupting elements among them and is able to decide upon what's good for the umma. It is absolutely necessary for the Islamic umma to have this central authority to lead the affairs of the Islamic society; this leader should not fear anything on the path of God, and if necessary to be ready to give up his life for the interests of the umma. What do we call such a person? We call him *Imam*.

Imam is the person who is ordained by God to administer the affairs of the umma. What does it mean to be chosen by God? Does God introduce him to you by name? The same way that Imam Ali (AS) chose Hassan and Husain as future Imams of the umma? Well, let's take a glimpse at the Quran again when it says that the divine prophets are also Imams: "He (God) said 'I am making you an Imam for the people'..."\*. This is what God Almighty says to Abraham; Imam means the ruler of the faithful, the leader and the sublime guide of the people.

Now this Imam is sometimes clearly mentioned by God as in the case of Imam Ali (AS), the commander of the faithful, and at other times he is shown us through his attributes and characteristics. One such case is what has been related from our 11<sup>th</sup> Imam, Al-Hassan-al-Askari (AS): 'The person from among the theological jurisprudents who is a perfect guardian of his own self, a firm keeper of his religion, a defier of his worldly, carnal desires and an absolute obeyer of his *mawla* (the Prophet or Imam), then it is binding on the public to follow him.'\*\* A person with such pious qualities could be an Imam, that is, a leader of the faithful whom all believers follow because he is himself a firm believer, a fair and just person

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\* Sura 2, Aya 124.

\*\* A Tafsir Related to Imam Hassan Asgari



whose actions and decisions are truly inspired by God's injunctions.

Thus, the Quranic wilayat, as I already explained, requires the existence of such an Imam at all times because if the great mass of the Islamic umma is to remain united, coherent, strong and unshakable, it has to constantly keep its solid link with imamat, the beating heart of the living, Islamic umma. Please pay proper attention to this third dimension of wilayat: the strong practical and spiritual link with this ever-living center of Islam to manage all our deeds, activities and behaviour.

What does then the wilayat of Imam Ali (AS) mean? It means that we should, even in our thoughts, be his followers, to follow him in all our deeds and never be separated from him for a single moment; this is the real meaning of wilayat. And here is when we understand the conception of the Prophet's narration revealed by God: 'The wilayat of Ali-ibn-Abi-Taalib is my safe haven, and whoever enters this haven, will be immune from My retribution.'\* Immune from My retribution? This is a great promise. Muslims in general and followers of Islam, if they follow Ali's behaviour, practice and struggle will never face God's retribution. This is absolutely true, if you and I truly recognize Ali (AS), then we could rightly claim to have embraced *wilayat*.

Those who claim that Quranic verses are beyond our human understanding will never faithfully be associated with Imam Ali (AS) because it is Ali (AS) who says: 'you all should know this Quran as an adviser that never betrays, it is a guide that never makes you go astray and it is a lecturer that never lies; whoever is intimate with the Quran, will either gain something or lose something, that is, it will increase one's guidance or decrease his ignorance.'\*\* The Imam (AS) so emphatically encourages the people to read and understand the holy Quran and so, does a person who claims the Quran cannot be understood, is really a follower of Imam Ali's wilayat?! Ali (AS), the Commander of the Faithful risks his own life for the sake of God on numberless occasions, but then a certain person who is not ready to give a little of his property or risk his social or business status on the path of God claims to love Ali's wilayat! Only those people are true followers of wilayat who are inseparable from Ali, both in their thoughts and in their deeds.

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\* Oyoon Akhbar-Al-Ridha

\*\* Nahj-Al-Balagha - Sermon 176

Dear brothers and sisters, the way I described wilayat for you is exactly what the holy Quran says about this important subject. So now, please pay attention to the Quranic verses I read, translate and explain for you. These verses are from the Sura Al-Maa'ida which tell you about the positive dimensions of wilayat, that is, your close ties with wilayat, its negative dimension, that is, cutting off such ties with non-believers and the third dimension which says how intimately connected you should be with the wilayat centre, the Imam or the virtuous, Islamic ruler.

Well, let's read out the verses 51 to 56 of Sura Al-maa'ida: "O You believers, you who have faithfully embraced Islam, do not take Jews, nor Christians for your guardians...". The original Arabic word is 'owlia', a plural from of 'walee'. As you see, it's again the question of wilayat. This means that you should not have the same sort of guardianship, friendship, coherence and close ties with them as you maintain with your fellow- believers. "...they are guardians of one another..."; so don't think that they have different names or that they are in different camps, no, against you and your religion, they are united, So "...if one of you takes them for guardians, he'll then become one of their number...". This means: if you connect yourselves with their 'wilayat', you'll undoubtedly become like them and go out of the Quranic wilayat. And: "...God does not bless with Guidance the people who transgress." Then you have lost your own religion and God's Guidance.

The next verse tells us: "But you see those, who have some sickness in their hearts, running to woo them...". The weak-minded people with their sick hearts *race* towards them; they do not go just to meet them to talk to them, but they run and race towards them as if they are in love with them! Now, if you ask such a person: why do you behave like this? Why do you make friends with those who are against your religion? Why don't you oppose them? They answer: "...we worry lest a change of fortune bring us some disaster!!" how familiar are such excuses from some opportunists: 'if I am not friendly with them, I fear some changes may cause me trouble in case Muslims are the losers'! The Quran then admonishes such people saying: "... may Allah bring about a triumph or a manifest event from His own Self to make them most ashamed...". The Quran then promises victories for the faithful camp and ordain what God will, so that those

people become sorrowful and ashamed of what they nurtured in their minds and hearts; they say to themselves: if we only knew the faithful front would be triumphant, we would not have compromised with the enemies of God and Islam!

According to the Quran, after such divine events, the believers would be amazed: “Are these the men who swore their strongest oaths by Allah that they would stand with you? Lo, all their deeds are now in vain and they will end in utter failure.” This is how the believers think about those hypocrites who always expressed their support for them and said that they shared their beliefs. Yes, orally they always expressed that they were with us, but later it was found out that they were sick in their minds and hearts and that they were only evil, opportunistic elements.

Well, so far we have fully discussed the external relations of the Islamic community or the quality of their relations with non-Muslims. But we must also pay particular attention to our internal relations and our approach to relations among Muslims and their faithfulness in their own religion. In this respect, let me cite the next verse in the Sura Al-Maa’ida: “O You who have believed, if among you some were to renounce their faith, God would soon raise another people who do love Him as they are loved by Him...”. Such people, as described in this verse, form the ideal, Islamic community: they love God and God loves them. So if there are some of us who say ‘O God’ I worship You, I love You and I always remember You, but they do not follow the path of God and His divine Prophet, they are only cheap liars because another Quranic verse tells us “Say: if you do love God, then follow *Me* and God will love you...”. God says if you love *Me* then follow My prophet; your love for *Me* is proved by following My prophet, that is, the one who has wilayat over you. This means that love between God (or His prophet) and the people is mutual.

What are the other characteristics of such firm believers? Verse 54 of Sura Al-Maa’ida inform us in this respect: “...they are most humble towards other believers but forcefully stern against the disbelievers, keen strivers in the Cause of God and fearless of the blaming of any blamers...”. They have the most intimate relations with other believers, they lack any arrogance or personal pride towards their

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\* Sura 3, Aya 31.

fellow- believers, they think of themselves as small parts of the Islamic umma, their motto is: ‘for the people, of the people’ and they strive on the path of the believers. Yet they are most stern and firm facing the pagans, the disbelievers and the enemies of God Almighty, and never affected or influenced by their plans and plots. The other characteristic of such faithful believers is that they are constantly striving in the Cause of God, and in this struggle, they never fear any insults, blames or allegations, and all this is due to: “...this is the Grace of God, and He bestows it upon whomever He will, for God is Bounteous, the knower Infinite.”

Next the verse talks about the heart-felt, spiritual ties of the Islamic community with that centre of all Islamic attractions, the leader, the Imam, the Prophet. True deliberation in the Quranic verses, enlightens us in regard to questions that we often thought are non-Quranic! The Quran tells us about the internal and external relations of the Islamic umma, and then it tells us about the heart and centre of all these relations, the leader, the Prophet and the Imam. Who is it? The Quran says: “Your true *Walee* is only Allah, and His Apostle, and believers...”\*. Well, truly God is your only walee but God Almighty does not incarnate among the people, to sit with them and tells them what to do and what not to do. So we immediately read in the verse: “...and His Apostle...”. As there is no difference or conflict between God and His messenger; God and His messenger are the same, as far as revelations and injunctions are concerned.

Now, the prophets are not to live forever as we read in verse 30 of Sura Zumar addressed to the holy Prophet: “You shall certainly die, they too shall pass away.” So what should be done after the Prophet? In the verse we read, we have the word ‘believers’. Well the next question is who among the believers? Could anyone who has believed possess the qualities to lead the umma? No, but there are certain signs and indications. The verse continues “... those who set up *salaat* and pay *zakat* while bowing down (*ruku*’)...”\*\*. As you know, many Quranic commentators say that the one who paid zakaat while doing ruku’ was Ali-bin Abi Taalib (AS). There are commentators who do not interpret the verse as we do. They say that the verse does not refer to a particular person and that it refers to all true be-

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\* Sura 5, Aya 55.

\*\* Sura 5, Aya 55.

lievers. Well even in such a case, do we know any truer and firmer believers than Ali (AS) after the holy Prophet. Anyway we are talking about wilayat in our Shi'a beliefs that are also supported by historical facts. And our discussion is focused on the positive aspects of imamat or wilayat because it is absolutely necessary for all Shi'ites to know themselves better and make their faith firmer and stronger, but we do not intend to defy or renounce other schools of thought in this respect.

There are some people who say that we must first talk about Islam to prove its truthfulness and that Shi'a beliefs could wait! You must know, however, that our Shi'ism is based on our understanding of Islam and the Quran and it is a fair, logical and just understanding. In fact in all our discussions we have been dealing with Islamic principles and the fundamental ideology of Islam through our Shi'ite school of thought, but we do not engage in any ideological quarrels with other schools, we extend our hand of friendship to them, for Muslims are brothers of one another and we do have common enemies. Two brothers should not quarrel when their enemy is standing outside their house. We understand Islam from a Shi'ite view-point but we never want to challenge our Sunni brothers; in our view sowing such differences is absolutely unlawful (haraam).

Let's again read the verse we discussed and sum up what we have said in a few words: "Your true *walee* is Allah, and His Messenger and the believers, those who set up salaah and pay zakat while bowing down...". We said that there were three dimensions to wilayat: the first was the maintenance of internal ties, the second was the cutting off close ties with the opposing camps and the third was the continuing, steadfast relation with the centre, the beating heart of the Islamic umma through firm adherence to wilayat. Now, if we did respect these three dimensions, what will be its end result? This question is answered in the Quran: "And those who take Allah and His Apostle and the believers as their guardians must know that the Party of God will be victors for certain."\*. Those believers who submit to the wilayat of God and His Apostle and the believers will ultimately be victorious; such believers will be triumphant and will defeat all opposing forces.

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\* Sura 5, Aya 56.

25th Session

The Paradise of Wilayat

26th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 12, 1974)

*“The people who, if We establish them through the land, will keep up prayers, and pay Zakaat, and advocate whatever is righteous and forbid what’s evil; and the final decision and end of all affairs rests with Allah.”*

*(Sura Al-Hajj, Aya 41)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, what we touched upon so far was a brief description and explanation of a community or an individual who embraces wilayat and the perspective of a society in which wilayat reigns. What I said in previous days in this respect was the result of deliberation in some Quranic verses, the traditions and narrations reached us by our Imams; we then concluded that wilayat has several dimensions or manifestations.

Well, one dimension was that the Muslim community should not be dependent on external elements and not have lasting coherence with non-Muslims. Certainly by this we do not mean that the Islamic society should be isolated from the rest of the world and not have any social, political or economic relations with other non-Islamic nations and communities. No, this is not the case. What we mean is that the Muslim society or the Islamic umma should not be dependent on them, to follow them and be dissolved in their culture, or in their political and economic systems; it must stand on its own feet.

The next dimension was exactly the opposite of the first dimension, that is, utmost solidarity, coherence and vigorous, intimate relations among all Islamic elements. This aspect of wilayat in a Muslim society requires that all individuals in the umma solidly follow one goal and coherently move in the same direction. We do have narrations from our holy Prophet and other sources saying: “The believers, in their mutual, social, compassionate relations, should function as one body”\*. They all should as one hand against their opponents and enemies. In a verse from Sura Al-Maa’ida which I read out yesterday, you noticed the same advice: “...most humble towards believers, forcefully stern against the disbelievers...”. The same theme has been more clearly expressed in another verse:

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\* Sura 5, Aya 54.

“Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and his followers should be solid of heart against the disbelievers but most compassionate amongst one another...”<sup>\*</sup>. When they face adverse fronts, you see them in solid ranks of absolute impregnability but within the umma all individuals are supposed to direct one another towards benevolence, truthfulness and doing good; they should all recommend one another in the direction of truth, resistance against corruption and evil behaviour and absolute togetherness in reaching their Islamic goals as in the example of the mountaineers, I cited yesterday, who were tied together by a long rope which does not allow one to slip and fall down. In an Islamic society all people are supposed to help each other morally and intellectually. If you come across a person who may be weaker than you in religious, moral or intellectual comprehension, you are duty-bound to help him as much as you could because the members of an Islamic community should be attached to one another as an intimate, large family. This is another manifestation of wilayat.

Now a third dimension of wilayat that in fact guarantees the two dimensions already discussed is the need for a central, Islamic authority or administration based on certain, important conditions. As I said, because the Islamic society should be a unified, coherent body, internally and externally, it would not be possible for scattered authorities or differing administrations to function and carry out its unified goals. Therefore it is necessary for the Islamic society to have an administrative center or authority because if there is a plurality of authorities in different, geographical parts of the Islamic umma, it would not be in a position to defend itself against the hostile, adverse parties or fronts. A simple example be how our body parts function: if the right hand takes its orders from a certain nerve center and the left hand from a different nerve center, your hands would obviously not be able to function in unison, say, in seizing and holding something.

The Islamic society, as I said, has to form a united front against some world elements that operate against it; they cannot achieve this if some parts act immediately, others react at another time and a third part hesitates to act; it will certainly not be able to defend itself. Briefly speaking, if we do support those two

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\* Sura 48, Aya 29.



dimensions of wilayat already mentioned, we have to have a powerful command centre to inspire and administer the whole umma.

This central authority supposed who is to administer the affairs of the umma, to appoint competent officials for various functions and to prevent any harmful disputes or conflicts among various Islamic parts, should necessarily be appointed by God Almighty; this person should possess certain qualifications: most informed, most virtuous, the best representative of all constructive, spiritual elements found in Islam and a true manifestation of all Quranic teachings Well, what shall we call such a person? We call him *walee* because, according to what I described about the two most important dimensions of wilayat, it is necessary for the Islamic society to have a walee of proper qualifications to guide the umma.

The next question raised now is if people like you and I may be included among believers in wilayat? Perhaps we are, but does our society as a whole follow wilayat. You may ask: does it make a difference? Yes, it does, because, as in a human body, if a member or two are healthy, it does not necessarily mean that the whole body is healthy.

Now we must find out what characteristics a believer in wilayat possesses and if we notice that you and I, if God will, do have faith in wilayat, then we should see what the characteristics of a community of wilayat-believing people should be like. Are there no problems facing the believers in wilayat living in a wilayatless society? Does this mean that the belief in wilayat, in them does not accompany any responsibilities? Is their life an agreeable life in this wilayatless society? Doesn't this belief in wilayat in a wilayatless society harm an individual's firm belief in wilayat? These are issues that Muslims men or women, especially the youth, should ponder about. When a believer in wilayat lives in a wilayatless society and does not feel that he has any responsibility about others, wouldn't his own beliefs be harmed and become useless? These are questions that you yourselves should think about because my limited time does not allow me to discuss all such issues in detail.

Now we must first try to see what kind of person is the one who believes in wilayat? How should he behave as a person believing in wilayat? Secondly we

should think of people who have gathered together as a group or community. How should they behave to become believers in wilayat? And under what social conditions would they become deprived of wilayat as expressed in Islam? The third question I raised for you is this: could a person who believes in wilayat think that because he believes in wilayat, he does not have any other obligations or responsibilities to help bring about a society that does believe in wilayat? As I mentioned earlier you ought to deeply think about these issues and refer to Islamic, Quranic teachings and authentic sources to gain a better understanding about them.

The fourth question is this: if a believer in wilayat lives in a wilayatless society but does not feel that he has any obligation to help the society to become believers in wilayat, does not such an attitude harm his own belief in wilayat? Well, the fact that this person does not try to urge and convince others to also believe in the important principle of Islamic wilayat, may weaken and destroy his own belief; or perhaps he could preserve his belief in wilayat in his heart despite his lack of action in this respect.

I now try to briefly talk about these questions and after that you could compare the two attitudes of people towards wilayat: a firm believer in the progressive, sublime and Quranic principle of wilayat who does his best to spread it further in the Islamic community and another lazy, fearful, comfort-seeking person who is after his own personal interest, yet he still think that he is a believer in wilayat! Some people think that wilayat only means weeping and shedding tears at certain ceremonies held to remember the Imams (AS) or only uttering the phrase 'peace be on them' after their names are mentioned or keep the love of Prophet's household in their hearts. Certainly it is important to honour the members of the Household, certainly it is necessary to weep when hearing what injustices they went through and certainly it is great to learn lessons from their sufferings and their martyrdoms. Yes all these deeds are important and most valuable but they do not make you a firm believer in wilayat for wilayat is far above and beyond such acts. The person who weeps loudly when hearing about the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) and the unique tragedy of Karbala, does something good, but he would be awfully wrong if he thinks that only shedding tears makes him a true follower of wilayat.

These are very delicate points and you must pay particular attention to what I am saying because there are certain ignorant, or evil-minded, persons who suggest that we do not agree with shedding tears at what Imam Husain went through. This is absolute nonsense; we completely agree with those who weep and shed floods of tears when hearing about this Imam. Weeping for Imam Husain (AS), if you learn lessons from him, could even liberate nations\*.

At this juncture I should mention the Tawwaabeen (those who did not help Imam Husain (AS) at karbala but later repented); they sat at the grave of Imam, wept and mourned for a couple of days and decided to fight the army of Yazeed to the last drops of their blood. I should also add that everyone in the Islamic world, Shi'a or Sunni, mentions the name of Imam Ali (AS) and Imam Husain with great veneration and admiration. All our Imams did their best for Islam and suffered tortures and executions or were martyred in the path of God. That's why I said that there is no Muslim who does not know these virtuous members of the Household or does not mourn for what they went through to uphold and advance Islamic teachings. I am certain that if you travel to a place where people have never heard about Islam and if you could tell them the true accounts about these Imams and what they did for their belief in God, the Prophet and Islam, they would surely revere them.

Thus if you ever think that you do believe in wilayat because each time the name of, say, Imam Ali, is mentioned, you do utter 'peace be upon him', you are absolutely mistaken. No, this is not the kind of belief in wilayat that may take you to God's paradise. Certainly a part of wilayat is to mourn for Imam Husain, the lord of martyrs. I stress this point because there are some ignorant people- I hope they are ignorant not evil-minded- who ridicule the mourning ceremonies and try to oppose the people who do believe in wilayat; this is a simple trick, they limit the important principle of wilayat or imamat to such secondary matters, they intend to do away with this important, Islamic principle.

‘A man, who has true belief in wilayat, does have a daily-increasing, intellec-

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\* Notice that this firm statement is made in 1975, four years before the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 which was partly due to the ceremonies of Tasua' and Ashura (Imam Husain's martyrdom) and many other continuous religious gatherings and demonstrations in which millions of Iranian Muslims participated. (Editor)

tual and practical dependence on his *walee*.”\* You must find the walee, the God’s walee and try to distinguish the true walee of the Islamic umma. After you find him, then you do your best to suit and link all your thoughts, your deeds, your spiritual tendencies and your way of life to him only, follow him sincerely, act according to his recommendations and carry out jihad by recognizing the friends and the enemies of the walee. A believer in wilayat should ceaselessly think and act as I explained.

Now which of you is ready to raise his hand and truthfully say: yes, I am a true believer in wilayat? And among you who could confess and say: no, I have not been a wilayatful person?! If we claim that we have the love of Ali (AS) in our hearts and shed some tears when his martyrdom is mentioned but our thoughts and deeds are contrary to Ali’s teachings, and we call this wilayat, we must know that we are only joking; we have only created a myth or superstitious inclination about Ali (AS) to be ignorantly happy that we really follow him! This is a real injustice towards Ali (AS) and his descendants, because wilayat is for Islam and if we don’t understand it, we are committing a big anti-Islam error.

The fact that Imam Saadiq (AS) tells us that the believers in wilayat are those who do practice it and adds: those whose thoughts and deeds are against us, are in fact our enemies because the Imam (AS) described wilayat in a way very different from wilayat as understood by those ignorant elements who go on living under the name of Imam Saadiq’s wilayat. Then why shouldn’t you and I not deeply understand wilayat as the Imam did? Why do we wish to keep ourselves in the hell of the worldly life while aspiring for God’s Paradise? Why do we wish that, when we are taking our last breaths of life before dying, the moments when our long-wished desires are to be realized, there should be no good news of entering Paradise? It would be a great pity if a believer’s life is not closely linked to his walee?

Now let’s pay attention to wilayat in the society or community. Wilayat in a society depends on the walee being recognizably ascertained; all should know that such-and-such a person is the walee. Secondly the person of walee should

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\* A Tafsir Related to Imam Hassan Asgari

be the source of inspiration and happiness for all groups, forces and their social activities. All orders and laws should be given by him and he should supervise the satisfactory execution of these laws and regulations. The person of walee should be the engine of all power and energy in that society and all people ought to watch him and follow him in the right direction. Such a society would be a wilayatful society, that is, a society enjoying God's wilayat.

Imam Ali (AS), the Commander of the Faithful, was not in the position of the Islamic walee for some 25 years after the demise of the holy Prophet. Therefore the Islamic community lacked wilayat for some 25 years. Certainly during these long years, people such as Salmaan or Abu-Dzar did follow wilayat as individuals but the Islamic umma was wilayatless for some 25 years. After this long time, Imam Ali (AS) was chosen as the Khalif and so, during the reign of Imam Ali (AS), the umma did have a walee and possessed wilayat because Ali (AS), with his characteristics and spiritual values that were elevated under the guidance of the holy Prophet was the umma's commander, inspirer and law-maker. So we see that when imamat and wilayat rule an Islamic society, when enjoining good and forbidding evil as managed by the Imam, when he is administering the society and when declaration of war or establishing peace come from the Imam's words, then such a society is indeed a wilayatful society.

Now if you feel you are a believer in wilayat, you should thank God, and if you don't feel so, you ought to seek for it. It is a blessing of God to believe in wilayat and you should thank God for this divine bounty because, as I will further explain, there is no greater blessing than belief in wilayat. So let us strengthen the belief in wilayat in our own minds and souls. Try to follow Ali (AS), try to create a link between Ali (AS), who is the walee of God, and ourselves. Of course such efforts are hard, it needs a jihadi effort and it involves many deprivations. After Ali (AS) all our pure Imams did their best to revive wilayat, to enliven the Islamic society and they carried out this mission in their proper ways.

Struggling in the path of wilayat does not mean sitting comfortably at home and swearing at Zaid and Amr; no such oral statements help your wilayat but they may take you further away from true belief in wilayat. The true way to revive

and strengthen wilayat is to recognize our Islamic walee of the time as ordained by God Almighty. As I said yesterday, some walees are divinely mentioned by name such as Ali, Hassan-bin-Ali, Husain-bin Ali and all other Imams (peace of God be upon them all). At other times walees are not mentioned by name. One of these Imams so tells us in a reported narration: “the one among the jurisprudents who has absolute control over his carnal desires, who safeguards his religion and is most obedient to the injunctions of his own walee”, could be recognized as your walee. Thus, both kinds of walees are in fact chosen by God because divine injunctions have been observed in their choosing. As an example, such considerations have been observed by those people who have followed the wilayat of Grand-Ayatollah Borujerdi. Of course you all could do your own research about this, but our present discussion is not about the ways and methods of finding the proper walee; we are discussing the very principle of wilayat.

Now you may ask: what happens in a society that enjoys wilayat? The short answer is: a dead society comes to life. You may imagine a corpse that has a brain but it doesn't function, it has eyes but cannot see, it has a mouth but cannot eat and it has blood that does not circulate through the body. Now imagine that this dead body is somehow returned to life. Now his brain, his nerves, his blood and all other parts perform their functions and he is able to be active socially, to make new friendships, fight his opponents and spiritually advance towards perfection.

Well, have the example I cited in mind to understand the importance of wilayat in Islamic communities, that is, instead of the dead body, think of a morbid, wilayatless society. There are talents in this society but they often go astray or are ruined; people have talents and intelligence but such gifts are employed in the cause of corruption, wars, human slaughter, human exploitation, injustice and oppression, people in this society do have the sense of hearing but they don't listen to truth and their brains do not order them to do what's right and truthful. This is a small picture of a wilayatless society.

As you already know, the wilayatless, Islamic community after the demise of the holy Prophet trod on a path that led to the weak khalifate of Uthman eventually to the oppressive, godless rule of Muawia. Why was the Islamic society so

misled? Because it lacked wilayat exactly as expressed by Fatima-al-Zahra (AS) when addressing the wives and daughters of the Prophet's Companions and the early migrants which you have all read about. The holy Prophet had also predicted the coming of such days when an Islamic society devoid of divine wilayat could go astray. The words uttered by Fatima (AS) are still echoing in our ears. But an Islamic society enjoying divine wilayat will help the growth and perfection of all God-given talents to humans, it will strengthen all human values; it tries to distribute wealth in order to do away with class privileges and establish true justice.

And finally let me translate and explain the verse 41 of Sura Al-Hajj which was recited at the beginning of this session: "The people who, if We establish them through the land, will keep up prayers...". Praying and prayers are symbols for remembering God and walking on the path of God and all their words and deeds are directed by what God has taught them. We read on the verse "...and pay Zakaat...". My understanding of the term Zakaat goes beyond the common interpretation of certain stated alms or charities; my take of this term is nearer to something like a suggestion towards distribution of wealth, but I am not quite certain about this and I'm studying the matter more deeply. Yet what is certain about Zakaat is that it is a step towards some sort of 'adjustment of wealth' in an Islamic society and we have certain Narrations that point to this aspect of Zakaat.

Any way the verse goes on: '...those who advocate whatever is right and righteous and forbid what is evil...'. we sometimes think that this Quranic phrase only means that I just advise you not to do a certain thing that's bad but do something else which is good. But no, this is just one of the manifestations of this Quranic injunction. Imam Ali (AS) was asked why he had to fight Muawia and he said: to enjoin good and to forbid evil. The historical report about this is long and I do not read it here. Imam Husain (AS) moves out from Medina and he is asked: where are you going to, sir? And he replies: To enjoin good and to forbid evil. Thus you see how vast and great is the dimension of 'enjoining good and forbidding evil or wrong'. And finally, if you have wilayat in the Islamic community, all Islamic obligations: praying to God, giving of alms (Zakaat), enjoining good and forbidding evil are all brought to life again; the dead body will be alive again .

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\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter History of Husain

26th Session

About Wilayat (1)

27th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 13, 1974)



*“God certainly commands you to give back your trusts unto their rightful owners, and that to judge with fairness when passing judgments on men and women; excellent is the counsel God is giving unto you all, for God’s All-Hearing, Ever-seeing (58). You who believe! Obey God and obey His Messenger and those entrusted with authority among you; should you quarrel about a thing, refer it unto Allah and unto His Apostle, if you believe in God and the Last Day; this is the best, and it will settle things finally with truth.(59)”*

*(Sura Al-Nisaa, Ayas 58-59)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, we have already discussed the principle of wilayat according to some verses of the Quran and its most important dimensions, but there are certain secondary questions about wilayat that are also of great importance for the Islamic community and its direction to reach its sublime goals. As written down in the papers handed to you, there are two issues I discuss today and tomorrow, if God will, I shall talk about these two aspects about wilayat.

We already proved, on the basis of the Quran, that the Islamic umma must keep up and preserve its internal, intimate links and it should reject all forms of external dependence. Now, in order for the umma to carry out these two important duties, it needs to have a strong central authority to administer and lead the society in all its social, political, economic and moral activities. The name of the person invested with such authority is *walee* which means the governor, the commander and the ruler. This means that all Muslims are inspired by the walee, he is the director and the administrator of the Islamic society in all its ideological and practical affairs. Now the question is raised: who is this walee of the Islamic community? How do we recognize him? Do we have answers to such questions? Yes, we do and I have briefly hinted to these issues in our previous sessions; it is not a very difficult thing to understand, but now I intend to expand the issue in a more logical, natural method.

The simplest answer in this respect is given by the Quran itself: the true walee

of the Islamic community is the Almighty God. This is exactly what we learn by monotheism and by prophethood and we shall shortly find out that the principle of wilayat tells us the same thing. In parenthesis I should add that the principles of our school of thought should be the same, that is, all principal issues should be congruent, harmonious and consonant. No school of thought may contain fundamentals that negate or reject its other principles. Unfortunately nowadays certain simple-minded believers infer or deduct certain conclusions from some principles that are in total contradiction with other basic principles.

In an Islamic society the one who has the absolute right to command, to execute laws and to administer all affairs of the society is God, for the Quran says: "...and Allah is the walee of all believers"\* . According to my own research throughout the Quran the fact that God is the Patron, the Guardian and the Ruler of all humans is an indisputable question. I must clarify the matter a little further; we are not talking about God as the Creator of skies, planets and all there is in the world of existence, this is obvious. Here we are talking about the fact that all social relations among humanity, their individual lives and their laws and regulations should also be inspired by God; the ruler of an Islamic society should, therefore, do his best in the framework of the Islamic system. This is what we always call *the Alavite system* which operates in the framework of Islam and the Quran. For if there is no administrator or ruler in the Islamic community, despite laws being given by God, there shall be no coherence or congruity in that society; this necessity has been confirmed by Imam Ali (AS) who said that the Islamic community was in need of a virtuous commander or a central body to supervise the affairs of the umma.

Now we ask: who's that person and what qualities should he have? What kind of person could rule over the human societies? Who could have the practical reigns of a society's wilayat in his hands? Well, the answers to such questions vary in different schools of thought. Some have said: 'the kingdom belongs to the one who overcomes', that is, whoever is more powerful; this is indeed the Law of the Jungle! Some other schools declared: whoever is more popular with the general public; some opined: the ruler should belong to such-and-such- his-

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\* Sura 3, Aya 68.

toric dynasty. In short, different opinions have been expressed based on tastes, distastes or opposing logics.

The Islamic answer to this question is what we read in verse 55 of Sura Al-Maa'ida: "your true walee is only Allah, His Apostle and those who have believed...". The person who, on behalf the Creator of the world, practically administers and executes what's ordained is His Messenger. Indeed when God's prophets exist in any community, it would be meaningless for others to govern that community. The issue is: what is to be done after the prophet's demise? The Quran again answers this question as we read in the same verse: "...and those who believe...". Well it says that the believers are your walees. This apparently requires that we have as many walees as the whole number of believers! Thus we face further questions: who among the believers? What qualities should a believer have to deserve the sublime position of the believers' walee? This verse of the Quran obviously points to believing persons but at the same time, it does give us the criteria and the signs of the person who could become the walee of the believers so that he could be chosen according to divine, Quranic criteria, that is, chosen by God. The verse says 'those who have believed; it means those who truly, truthfully believed. The necessity for such faith or belief is to be unshakable, unbounded and continuous, not weak, superficial and incomplete beliefs.

Such truthful believers are those who have proved it throughout their lives by their behaviour and deeds that they are real, true believers. There are other conditions for such believers cited in the same verse: "... those who set up Salaat and pay Zakaat...". As you see the Quran uses the verb 'yughimoon' meaning 'setting up' which means 'help spread Salaat' and 'establishing Salaat', not just 'doing prayers'; otherwise the Quran would employ the verb 'yusalloon' which means 'doing prayers'. Setting up Salaat in a society means that the real spirit of prayers is revived in that community and that all people will perform their prayers; a prayerful society means that the name of God and the remembrance of God are constantly in the hearts and minds of all people. In such a society no crimes are committed, no treacherous acts are carried out and no real, human values are ignored; in such a society all deeds are done in the name of God, all directions are aimed to reach God and everything people do is for God's satisfaction.

The main reason for oppression and injustice, thefts and burglaries, all social vices and deviations and even tolerating oppressive rules is rooted in forgetting God Almighty. But people in a society where the remembrance of God is prevalent, a society ruled, say, by Ali-bin-Abi Taalib (AS) never commits any unjust act. In such a society, a person like Abu-Dzar who is the victim of oppressive acts and, though he is threatened, beaten and exiled, does not submit to injustice; this should be the example of a society in which Salaat is properly observed. So one of the signs for the believers to be worthy of the position of walee is the setting up of Salaat throughout the society. The second important point is 'to pay Zakaat'. Well, all believers are supposed to pay their Zakaat. Here as I mentioned earlier, the issue goes further than simply paying up one's individual Zakaat. But the person of walee is the one who does make this practice and all other kinds of alms and aids most common in the society and in fact executes some form of redistribution of wealth throughout the Islamic community.

The verse then goes on: "...which bowing down...", that is while praying to God. I know how some interpreters say about this Quranic phrase: they believe the verse is saying that such great believers are always kneeling down and that it does not refer to any particular person. But the original Arabic is quite clear; it says paying Zakaat even when they are bowing down and praying to God. The reports say that Imam Ali (AS) did give away his ring to a needy person while bowing down. Well, he did not wait to finish his prayers and then help the person in need. He sees a needy person begging, he cannot tolerate that, so he gives away the only thing he has on him. This incident has been authentically reported. After this event, the relevant, Quranic verse was revealed. Thus he has been chosen by such delicate references. This is unlike the practice of Muawia who says categorically: 'this is my son, Yazeed, he will be my successor and you must all obey him!' God Almighty does not do as Muawia! The divine verse refers to the qualities of the walee after the holy Prophet, because all necessary criteria are resplendent in him: perfect faith in God, the spreading of Salaat, absolute devotion to helping the poor and dedicated to establishing equality and justice in the Islamic world. Thus the Quranic verses shed light on the philosophy of khalifate and wilayat and the man possessing such qualities and suited to

the Quranic criteria should be the successor to the holy Prophet, therefore he is in fact chosen by God because no man on earth has the right to rule over others without God's sanction.

The only One Who has the right to govern humanity is God and certainly God has the power to transfer this right to a man according to the interest and the good of the society. We do know that whatever God does, is directed at the good, happiness and final salvation of humanity, He is the One Who chooses the Prophet and after his worldly life ends, He describes the criteria, the attributes and the qualities in the future leaders or imams of the umma. Thus after the pure Imams of the Prophet's Household, whoever possesses those qualities could be the walee of the Islamic umma. There are more Quranic verses in this respect than the one I quoted; some are written down in the papers landed to you and you may yourselves look through the Quran and find some more.

In fact what has been emphasized on in Islam is to prevent the reign of government falling into the hands of some elements who would lead people into Hell. We have witnessed this in the history of Islam after the glorious early periods when the administration fell into wrong hands. A great amount of poisonous propaganda was fed into the minds and souls of the people by unjust oppressive rulers. In such atmosphere people could not distinguish right from wrong or black from white. When you read the history of Islam in the second and third centuries A.H., you are awfully amazed at the extent of the disastrous actions by the khalifs and people in power in the name of Islam! You could then ask yourself: were the people in these centuries the descendants of the same Muslims who could not be patient even with Uthman; they surrounded his house and finally murdered him in an ugly, ruthless way. Now these Muslims tolerate an Abbasid Khalif who spends great sums of money extravagantly at his wedding evening, the money belonging to the common treasury that could help thousands of the needy people. These believers witnessed such atrocious deeds and never uttered a word of protest!

An example of such corrupt extravaganza was the occasion of the wedding of Ja'far Barmaki, Haroun-al-Rashid's favorite vizier. He was then about 29 years of age (Haroun had him murdered 7 years later!) Anyway, at his wedding-night

Haroun had ordered the making of hundreds of small bunches of gold. He then ordered that, instead of the customary sugar-plums, these small bunches be dropped over the heads of the wedding couple which would be picked up by anybody present at the wedding ceremony. When people opened the small bunches or boxes they found some wrapped-up thin papers inside them. These papers were actually the ownership documents of many villages, cultural areas and the like! One may imagine what happens next to the poor peasants, villagers and labourers working or residing in these areas. But the khalif doesn't care about the people. At this very time Yahya Alavi, a descendant of Ali (AS) is trying to gather people around him and recruit warriors in the mountains of Tabaristan, northern Iran, to fight the oppressive Khalif. He and his wife lived in very poor conditions but were dedicated to fight the oppressor; this was a brilliant case of rising against oppressive rulers by a member of the Prophet's Household.

Now my comment does not concern Haroun; if Haroun did not do what he did, he wouldn't have been the oppressive, evil Haroun that he was! Haroun is a member of the ruling class who did not care about the common people. I am concerned with the majority of the people who had lost their sense of justice and zeal for equality that Muslims did possess in the early stages of Islam's progress. They did not feel any responsibility and they did not think that they had any obligations vis-à-vis the prevailing state of affairs. Why had the people changed so drastically? The answer to this question lies in the intense publicity and propaganda by the oppressive regimes and their agents for many years which had influenced the minds and hearts of the people in evil ways. So we notice, again and again, the importance of having just, virtuous persons as the rulers of the Islamic umma.

Now let us pay attention to the Quranic verse we already cited; it says "You who have believed, obey God, obey His Messenger and those with Authority among you..."\*. Well, the Arabic phrase 'ulul-amri minkum' means those entrusted with authority among you or those in command. We may then ask: who is this person with authority or command? Some ignorant Muslims suppose that anyone who is more powerful and could order others to follow him is the *ulul-amr* as God has said! If we are supposed to obey and follow anyone who has more power,

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\* Sura 4, Aya 59.

then, as an example, we should obey a rough, ruthless highway robber who has temporal domination over a mountainous area as an ulul-amr in his position! Another funny example in this respect was an edict by one of the Safavid kings, I don't know how authentic the report is; but he had presumably ordered men not to visit shops and bazaars for three days; these three days were for women to go out without their brothers, husbands and sons accompanying them. He pretended that he wanted women to comfortably do their shopping without men bothering them. But on those three days and evening allocated to women, only the king's male courtiers, commanders and officials in high positions could join the women and mingle with them!! Well, is such a king a divine ulul-amr too?! Is his edict a God-inspired one?

The kind of walee that Shi'ism believes in is the one who has his wilayat through God, directly or indirectly, by name or by authentic signs and symbols. Yes, the walee is one from amongst you but he must have been appointed by God one way or the other. Every wilayat should originate from God. Now let's take a look at Haroun-al-Rashid once again. He was guilty of murdering many prominent Muslims, he dealt with the common treasury of Muslims as his own, the famed Ja'far Barmaki, his closest friend and vizier, together with most of his dynasty members, were put to the sword within a few days, and the ruthless, atrocious, anti-Islamic things he committed cannot be counted. But then Abu-Hanifa, the famous, Islamic jurisprudent objects to the adverse opinion of Imam Ja'far Saadiq (AS) and says: Why do you oppose 'the ulul-amr' of the time?! Haroun is the divine ulul-amr in the sight of Abu-Hanifa!

The logic of Shi'ism about this question is an exact one. We do infer from the Quran that walee is an appointee of God but, at the same time, we do clarify the signs and the criteria for this most important position among the Islamic umma so that people are not deceived by some empty, superficial arguments. Some people have said: well, we do approve of Ali (AS) as our walee, but now Haroun is his successor; he is a member of Bani-Abbas and the Bani-Abbas go back to the family of the holy Prophet and Imam Ali (AS)! The Abbasid Mansour used to say: we accept Imam Hassan (AS) as Khalif but he has sold his right to Khalifate! He continuous: and we took the Khalifate back by force from those to

whom it was sold. This is the peculiar logic of Mansour! This kind of reasoning is in fact saying: we respect the right of Ali (AS) to Khalifate but there is no distinction or contradiction between the khalifate or wilayat of Ali (AS) and that of the Abbasid Haroun!

The Shi'a school says: no, this is absolutely wrong, because when you approve the Khalifate of Ali (AS), then you should necessarily respect his criteria, qualities and deeds in his wilayat or his Khalifate. Ali (AS) was chosen as walee or ulul-amr because he possessed all those necessary criteria and qualities; so if a person lacks those qualities and does not possess the necessary criteria, he could obviously not be the walee of the believers. In fact some of those later Khalifs not only lacked the necessary criteria but possessed qualities that contradicted those criteria. This was the first point of our discussion today.

The second point is written down in your papers together with the relevant, Quranic verse. One may ask: what is God's wilayat for? If one asks this question and says: for what reason do you say that wilayat is with God? The answer is that this is due to a natural philosophy in Islamic ideology. In the Islamic world-outlook everything in the world as in the infinite cosmos has its origin in the power of God, as a Quranic verse says: "all beings in the space of Nights and Days are His, and He's the One who hears and knows."\* Well, when all created beings, their movements and their destinations are with God, then clearly the social laws and laws for humanity and the administration of jurisprudence should also be with Him; this is inevitable.

Now I try to quickly go over the verses quoted in your papers, to translate them and explain them briefly. These are the verses 58 to 60 of the Sura Al-Nisaa: "God certainly commands you to give back your trust unto their rightful owners and that to judge with fairness when passing judgments on men and women...". God commands you about what is in trust with you and being careful in returning them to their proper owners, and even more careful in judgments that decide between right and wrong among people. The verse goes on: "...excellent is the counsel God is giving unto you all, for God's All-Hearing, Ever-Seeing". Most beautiful

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\* Sura 6, Aya 13.



is God's advice because whatever He commands you to do is based on his perfect, infinite knowledge, because He even Hears your most internal, intimate needs and because He gives and grants to you whatever you really and truly need.

Well, that was verse 58. The content of this verse was about all kinds of trust and their returning to their rightful owners. Trust has a more general meaning than you owing me one Tuman and paying it back to me. All God's bounties granted to us are trusts. Obedience to God and obeying His laws means obeying God's injunctions and avoiding what He has forbidden. This verse is in fact an introduction to the verse that follows: "Obey God, and obey His messenger and the ulul-amr among you...". Here we notice that the Islamic thesis differs from what some other schools of thought believe in. the Islamic thesis does not announce that government and public administration may not be necessary at all in the future! Some schools of thought believe that once we reach the ideal society, then there will be no rulers and no administrative apparatus. No, Islam does not predict such a society.

The Khawaarij\* declared 'laa hukma illa li-Allah', that is, only God is to rule us. And Ali (AS), in response to them uttered his famous statement: 'A truthful word intended to serve evil and falsehood'\*\*. Certainly our true ruler is God Almighty who has given us laws and injunctions for rightful ways of living. But who is to carry out God's laws? The holy Prophet and the ulul-amr after him. So when Khawaarij said that God was their only ruler, they intended to rule out the most important aspect of Islamic rule, that is, they did not want anyone to execute God's laws! Ali (AS) also adds: 'All human societies are in need of rulers as administrators.' This is absolutely correct because the existence of laws is not enough and human by nature, may not obey the laws. We do need administrators to supervise their proper execution. The divine ruler or administrator should be a most virtuous person. You couldn't have two rulers or two ulul-amrs who are not in agreement with each other. There have been rulers in the Islamic world who did not possess the criteria set by God and the Quran, and the common sense of ordinary Muslims rejected them. Are such people also God's ulul-amrs? Here

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\* Those who, under their misguided interpretation of some Quranic verses, opposed Imam Ali (AS) and fought against him.

\*\* Nahj-Al-Balagha - Sermon 40

is exactly where we differ with our Sunni brothers. What is apparently reported of their schools of thought is that, in their opinion, anyone who seizes power is God's ulul-amr.

Let's read out the rest of the verses "...should you quarrel about a thing, refer it unto Allah and unto His Messenger, if you believe in God and the Last Day; this is the best and it will settle things finally with truth." This is another instance where the Quran draws our attention to the good result when you have divine-inspired rulers and warn us about the consequences of following evil rulers. This point is more clearly expressed in the next verse of Sura Al-Nisaa, verse 60; it says: "Mark the people who claim that they do believe in Revelations sent to you and in what was revealed before you, yet, in their disputes, they seek to settle things through the judgment of *taaghoot* (Satanic powers, evil authorities), though they were ordered to deny them all; indeed Satan intends that they should go astray, very far away from the right way." God tells His prophet to look at the people who suppose or pretend to be true believers but they take their disputes to *taaghoot* or to evil, ungodly authorities for judgment! They take their inspiration from such authorities in their actual day-to-day affairs. And Satan takes the opportunity of their deviations to lead them so far from the path of God that it would be almost impossible for them to go back and repent.

We do now notice that obeying God, His messenger and the ulul-amr or walee of the umma has a clear, natural outlook in the philosophy of Islam because everything there is belongs to God. Tomorrow, if God will, I'll discuss some other, important aspects of wilayat.

27th Session

About Wilayat (2)

28th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 14, 1974)

*“And so upon reciting Al-Quran, do seek refuge with God from Satan, the Damned, Rejected One (98). No power could he wield, against those who have believed, whose trust is only in their Lord (99). But only he has power over people, who take him as their patron, and those who join some partners unto Him, as the Pagan (100).”*

*(Sura Al-Nahl, Ayas 98-100)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, what we shall be talking about after the recitation of the verses you heard is this: after comprehending the fact that anyone who claims to be a servant of God, should recognize his own walee who is divinely appointed and should obey the one, directly or indirectly, appointed by God. Briefly speaking, a Muslim should only obey God's walee in all his day-to-day affairs. I also said that the ones chosen to be his representative on earth were firstly his prophets and after them, the 'owlia', that is, the ones known to you as the divine governors or administrators. I also explained that those appointees by God are either directly mentioned by their names or by possessing certain criteria or characteristics described in the Quran.

Our discussion today concerns the person who lives under a non-divine wilayat. We want to answer some questions in this respect: what is the judgment about this person and what the consequence of his behavior? The issue of wilayat is an obvious, practical, undoubted principle of Islam, and other issues we discuss are important but secondary questions about wilayat. In the holy Quran, any wilayat other than the wilayat of Allah are described as taaghoot wilayats. As I have explained in our previous sessions taaghoot is taken from the original Arabic word *tughyaan* which means 'rebellion, revolt, insolence, perverseness and stepping out of natural, intrinsic framework of human life'. If we assume that humanity was created to tread upon the road to perfection, then any element or agent that stops this march to progress and perfection is taaghoot. If a person or a ruler encourages or forces people to live their lives in non-divine, corrupt ways, that person is also a taaghoot. Humans are on the earth to do their best in the right ways and go forward, so any factor or person encouraging people to laziness, mere pleasure-seeking, egotism and not caring about his fellow-men is in the position of taaghoot.

Humanity should progress on the path of God to obtain happiness and salvation and those who prevent this process are taaghoots. Thus we notice that taaghoot is not a proper noun. Some people think that taaghoot is the name of a certain idol or icon. We may also think that it is a kind of idol. Sometimes this idol is your own carnal desires or your money and your mere pleasure-seeking. This idol could also be the one you love and worship or a person you follow blindly. This idol is sometimes inanimate, that is, made out of clay, silver or gold and it could be animate as an oppressive ruler. If you search through the Quranic verses, you may observe that, among evil groups such as *mala'*\*, *mutrafeen*\*\*, *al-ahbaar*\*\*\*, and *ruhbaan*\*\*\*\*, taaghoot has a higher, more commanding position; but this is outside today's discussion. To sum up, we may say that anyone who goes out of the wilayat of God, will necessarily fall into the Satan's tap or taaghoot's wilayat. Do Satan and taaghoot have anything in common? Yes, they have a lot in common and I now try to clarify this point.

According to the Quran, Satan and taaghoot are the same. Here I better read the relevant, Quranic verse: "Those who believe and fight in the path of God, but disbelievers fight in the way of taaghoot; thus fight against the friends of Satan, be sure that Satan's craft is weak"\*\*\*\*\*. The Quran says that believers fight for God and those rejecting the Faith fight for taaghoot; then immediately the verse tells believers to fight the friends, allies and comrades of Satan. As you see Satan and taaghoot are interchangeably employed. Satan is any external element or incentive that could urge and lead men towards committing evil things, corrupt practices, degeneration and deviation, oppressing others and be unjust. All such factors are satans or satanic.

There are satans among men, among the jinns, among our relatives, men or women, and among socially important persons. There are satans among strangers and we have satans inside ourselves including emotions, desires and ideals. They are all satans and one of them is Satan called Iblees in the Quran who was

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\* The courtiers and high officials in a corrupt, oppressive system.

\*\* The pleasure-seeking, comfort-loving and irresponsible rich.

\*\*\* Some of the Jewish, religious leaders.

\*\*\*\* Some of the Christian priests.

\*\*\*\*\* Sura 4, Aya 76.

arrogant enough to reject God's order to bow down in front of Adam, the pure, chosen one of Allah (Safi-al-Allah). We are used to utter 'damnation of God upon him' whenever this Satan or Iblees is mentioned, whereas he is not the only satan and perhaps satanic behavior did not begin with him and perhaps satanic behavior will not end with him! Satans are numberless in our world: we even touch them, see them and accompany them. Whatever leads humans astray, from the path of God, and encourages them to commit sins, to be corrupt and to do what is wrong and unlawful is satan and satanic.

Now let's go back to our topic of discussion: any kind of wilayat, other than that of God, is satanic or taaghoot-inspired. The person who does not live in the shade of God's wilayat, should know that he or she is living under the sovereignty of satan and taaghoot and following their commands. You may ask: what is really wrong with living under the wilayat of taaghoot? What sort of corruption and evil does that bring about? The Quran has a few answers to such questions.

The first answer is that once you submit to the wilayat of satan, then it will dominate your whole existence, your fruitful, constructive energies and your mind and soul; satan will have you in his grips totally and shall not allow you to employ your human power and your intellectual initiative in the right direction; he will drag you along with him to where he wants. It is obvious that satans or taaghoots shall not lead you to light, to spirituality, to welfare and salvation; such things are not the goals of satans, for them their own exigencies are their priorities and so you will be as tools and means for their evil purposes.

If you pay attention to what I say and describe, you'll find out how our comments apply to historical facts from the beginning until the present. If you accept the wilayat of satans, you will be totally in their claws and they drag you along the paths they desire, because they don't give a damn about your good, your interest and your spiritual progress! If you are a victim, if you go astray and if you are sacrificed, satans do not care a jot!

Let's now read and explain the relevant, Quranic verses. Though I'm used to deliberating over the verses of the Quran, I sometimes feel bad because I think I have not deliberated enough on them to comprehend the depth of the Quranic

teachings. The Quran says: “He that opposes the Apostle, after the Guidance was made most clear to him, and follows other than the faithful’s way, We will let him steer on his chosen way, and let him land in Hell.”\* The person who has received Guidance through the holy Prophet but later steps out of the teachings of prophethood and starts opposing and fighting the Prophet and chooses the ways of disbelievers, then, here’s the crux the matter: ‘We let him follow his chosen way’, that is, God allows him to follow his chosen evil wilayat; it was his own fault, so let it remain. This is the tradition of Creation, it is the law of Creation. All this was for this world; how about the next world? ‘We will let him land in Hell’, the Quran says. When we take a glimpse at historical events, we’ll clearly see that it has always been so.

These issues are of high importance; they are important, social issues. But from such points of view, we have not studied the Quran sufficiently and have rarely observed them in the history of Islam. It would be most fruitful if some researches interested in the Quran would deliberate such social, historical questions and then try to compare them with facts of history. It is not my method or habit to only talk about history. But today I feel I should talk a few minutes about some important events in the history of Islam.

Well, one significant example to learn from, is the city of Kufa. You all have some memories about this important city and its people. You do remember that Imam Ali (AS), chose Kufa, from among the towns and cities in the vast world of Islam, as the capital of his Khalifate. This was a positive point in favour of Kufa. Again you do remember that the people of Kufa did participate in the battles Ali (AS) had to face. The Jamal Battle was won by their assistance, so was the Battle of Nahrawaan; and in the Battle of Seffeen, the tribes, living in Kufa and its surrounding areas, were the principal elements to bring this battle to an end. And then you do remember that Imam Ali (AS) blamed the same people for not answering his call to defend Islam. And again it were the most eminent personalities of this city who went to see Imam Hassan (AS) and declared that the whole city would be under his command. They were the same people who wrote dozens of letters to Imam Husain (AS) begging him to come to Kufa and be their

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\* Sura 4, Aya 115.

imam because, they said: ‘we do not have an imam, a leader and a just ruler and we are under the domination of a rebellious ruler who knows nothing about God and His Messenger; the writers of these letters included such great, truthful personalities as Suleiman-bin-Sird, Habeeb-bin-Mazaahir, Muslim-bin-Usajah and many others. Yet it was the same people who fought Husain-bin-Ali (AS) in an unbalanced, unfair battle against him and created the disaster and the mass-murdering the descendants of the holy Prophet in Karbala. And again, as I mentioned before, many people of this city later repented for not having helped Husain (AS) and were called *tawwaabeen* (repenters) after the disastrous events in Karbala; they rose against the oppressive ruler of the time and were, in an unequal battle, killed to the last man.

Also they were most instrumental in many uprisings against the rule of Bani-Umayya and Bani-Abbas, and God knows how many Kufans sacrificed their lives and recorded many shining pages of courage and selflessness in the history of Islam; and certainly we do witness their laziness, spiritual weakness and ideological deviation at other times. So we could rightly ask the question: why did they behave so differently? Were the people of Kufa of two contradictory spiritual mind-sets? Were they the same people who Zainab-al-Kubra, imam Husain’s sister addresses as: ‘O You, people of Kufa, people of deceit and injustice’\*? The issue of Kufa is, in my opinion, a big question worthy of further research, socially and psychologically. Kufa in Islamic history could be a most interesting subject to study and it would be most desirable if some specialists, sociologists and psychologists could carry out a collective research on this odd city and its strange-behaving people! On many occasions the people of Kufa behaved as the best Muslims in the Islamic world and at other times they acted as the worst, faithless people.

Well, I may add that there are two aspects to be studied about the people in Kufa. For more than 4 years they were guided and governed by Ali (AS), the most virtuous ruler after the holy Prophet. Could the people in this city not have learned anything from the character, the behavior and the sermons of such a personality? They certainly did. Though Ali’s rule was not successful in vast

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\* Bihar-Al-Anwar - Chapter History of Husain



areas outside Kufa, it certainly succeeded in raising the spiritual and moral criteria among the Kufans. That's why Kufa has since been a cradle of raising, training and educating personalities who possessed the highest, Shi'ite values. Having said this, I should add that it does not mean that the whole people of Kufa possessed such values. To explain this further, you should know that in all human societies there are certain groups who represent the best values of the society and they are usually most vocal, active and revolutionary, say, a thousand or a few thousand people in a society undertake some heroic tasks and achieve their goals but the whole society becomes famous in certain respects because of the activities and achievements of those groups. And by 'these groups' I don't mean a certain sociological class or division, but some informed, active and principled minority.

But we may also observe that the majority of people or the mass of the people are just like masses, say, in Tehran, Isfahan or Mashhad, so we cannot say that the majority of the people in Karbala were better or worse than the masses in other places. The only difference is that Kufa, for its enlightened, active minority and a breeding place for revolutionary Muslims, threatened the ruling clique, and so the rulers always appointed their most ruthless, evil and immoral servants as governors of Kufa; these governing butchers used to suppress, imprison, torture and murder people and by spreading poisonous publicity tried to keep them in poverty and ignorance and servitude.

Why did they behave so? The answer to this question was the existence of that informed, struggling minority; the oppressive ruler tried to deprive them of the support of the masses. They did all they could to keep the residents of Kufa in a constant state of 'fear for their lives'. Such conditions were not witnessed in other towns and cities. All I am saying is that the people in Kufa were not evil by nature, but that they had to live under special, threatening circumstances. That's why I said that if some specialists would carry out a comprehensive research about the conditions of people in Kufa, they would probably come up with clearer explanations about the changing behavior of the residents in this city.

Let me also tell you about an instance of such oppressive measures against

the people in Kufa. The Umawi Khalif, Abdul-Malik sent Hajjaaj-bin-Yousof, the most ruthless, blood-thirsty man in his army to Kufa. He was accompanied by some 50 or 60 swordsmen and, according to some historical accounts, he arrived in the city at midnight wearing a mask on his face so that people could not recognize him immediately. Then, at dawn, he joined the people who had come to Kufa Mosque to do their prayers supposedly led by a prayers imam. He then climbed the pulpit, sat there and did not say a word. The people saw a strange-looking person sitting on the pulpit. People whispered among themselves asking ‘who could he be?’ And so the attention of all people in that grand mosque of Kufa was attracted towards him. Now the objection to the behavior of Kufan people is this: ‘you are all Muslims, you see the awful-looking stranger sitting on your mosque’s pulpit, why doesn’t any of you dare ask him, who the hell are you?’ There are thousands of people present at the mosque but none dares ask this question. This shows their really weakened psychology.

Now Hajjaaj, watching the people mesmerized by his presence, says loudly: ‘It seems that the people of Kufa do not recognize me? So I have to tell you who I am’. Then he recited a praiseful line of poetry about himself and continued: ‘now I take off my turban and this cloth covering my face’. Some people whispered: ‘He looks like Hajjaaj and this echoed through the mosque. Hajjaaj, Hajjaaj! They were now really frightened; they thought: the blood-thirsty Hajjaaj has come here and sat on the pulpit, what’s his intention? The frightened people never thought: well, he is one man and some 50 henchmen, but we are thousands and we could easily overcome them; no, they are too frightened.

Hajjaaj, who sees how weak and frightened these people are, addresses further: ‘O People of Kufa, I see heads on your bodies which are very ripe to be cut off! I believe it is necessary that some of you be beheaded’! The people were now more frightened. Well, Hajjaaj had not gone there equipped with tanks and armoured vehicles! He and his men could not kill the whole people of Kufa. Suppose they could, whom did he want to govern, you cannot rule houses, walls and mosques. Now Hajjaaj rose on the pulpit, called out one of his slaves and ordered him: come here and read out the Khalif’s letter for these people, then I’ll know which heads to cut off! The slave began to read the letter that came from Abdul-Ma-

lik-Marwan, the Khalif, the Commander of the Faithful! It said: in the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. O You people of Kufa ‘Salaamun Alaikum’. Here Hajjaaj ordered his slave to stop reading and shouted ‘silence, you, people of Kufa, you are most impolite and stupid, the Commander of the Faithful greets you and you don’t respond to his kind words.

Then he addressed his slave again and ordered him to read the letter from the beginning again: the Khalif, Abdul-Malik- Marwan says to the people of Kufa ‘Salaamun Alaikum’. Now all the people in that large mosque cried out in one voice: ‘salaam to the Commander of the Faithful’. There was a happy smile on the face of Hajjaaj and said to himself: I am through with the people of Kufa, they are finished! And it was so in fact.

Well, the reason I talked about Kufa, like a story-teller, was that I noticed you could be a little tired on these last days of Ramadan after listening to some difficult topics and discussions and did need a change!

Now we return to the verses written in your papers, I translate them and give some explanations: “He that opposes the Messenger after the Guidance has been made most clear to him and follows other than the faithful’s way, We will let him steer on his road...”\*. Well, as in the case of the Kufan people, once you welcome the kind of Hajjaaj and greet back the salaam of his Commander of the Faithful, who was in reality the Commander of the unfaithful, then God is not going to get rid of Hajjaaj miraculously, He lets you live with Hajjaaj . As long as you submit to people like him, they will dominate your lives, your hearts and your souls until you change and do something to save yourselves; this is the tradition of history and it is the tradition of Creation.

In fact learning from history is like a previous life for us, so I recommend that you familiarize yourselves more and more with historical events and deeply muse over your research in history. It’s interesting to tell you that Hajjaaj was killed by the same authorities for whom he carried out his evil deeds; he was murdered in a most horrendous manner. And here I may quote the tradition which says: ‘whoever helps an oppressive, unjust authority, God lets him suffer under the

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\* Sura 4, Aya 115.

same oppressor”\*. All such historic events offer us valuable, warning lessons; I mention such points and leave their relation with the Quranic verses to your own comprehension and intelligence.

Now let's read the verses 98 to 100 of the Sura Al-Nahl: "And so upon reciting Al-Quran, do seek refuge with God from the Dammed the Rejected One." Brothers and sisters, this means that after reading the Quran, understanding it and probably learning it by heart, now try to keep it. What does keeping it mean? It means that by taking refuge with God and remembering the Quran, you could always protect yourselves from the temptations and suggestions of Satan. Could you resist these satanic temptations? Yes, you could. The answer is there in the same verse: "...no power could he wield against true believers whose trust is merely in their Lord." You see, this evil, powerful Satan and other satanic forces could not deceive the faithful who only trust in God; no, he has no power over those who are really walking on the path of God.

Well, who are the people whom Satan could subjugate and deceive? The next verse answers this question: "But he only has power over people who take him as their patron, and those who, like the pagans, join some partners unto Him."\*\* Briefly, Satan has dominance over those who submit to his *wilayat* and those who assign partners to God, that is, the polytheists. Now we better comprehend the essence of the previous verse that said whoever opposes the Prophet, after receiving Guidance, We let him go astray on the path he has chosen. So those who separate themselves from the Prophet and give up their faith in prophethood, shall fall into the bosom of Satan, an evil way that will land them in Hell.

And now we read the verses 115 to 120 of Sura Al-Nisaa, explain them and wrap up our discussion today: "The only sin that God does not forgive is the worship of other gods besides Him..."? to understand this point clearly, we must go back to the discussions we already had on monotheism or the unity of God. In one word, those who assign partners to God, have gone out of God's *wilayat* and so they will not benefit from God's forgiveness. One meaning of God's forgiveness or 'maghfirat' is the redemption of your spiritual scars and

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\* Nahj Al-Fasahah

\*\* Sura 16, Aya 100.

cleansing the soul from the dust of disobedience to God. When one repents and returns to the wilayat of God, he could become worthy of God's forgiveness. The verse continues: "...but He forgives, whomever He prefer, his lesser sins...". Lesser sins than polytheism would be forgiven by God Almighty, if He so wills. But you must know that God's will should not be taken for granted. The 'maghfirat' of God comes when you make up for what wrong you did and return to the way of God sincerely and truthfully, but if one is still attached to some partners for God, then according to this verse of the Quran: "...they have surely strayed too far!"

Let's explain this phrase 'straying too far' a little more. When you are traveling towards a certain destination, sometimes you are lost, but you are only about one kilometer off the road, but you may be lost, say, in a desert and be some ten kilometers away from the main road. In the latter case, it is not easy to go back and find the road. You must really try hard and exert all your energy to find the right road and you need some expert guides to direct you to the right way. Yet if you are dozen of kilometers off the right road, you will be in real trouble. The verse goes on describing polytheists and the behaviour of the Satan: "Nothing do they invoke, instead of God the One, but some false goddesses and, in fact, they only call upon a rebellions Satan whom God has laid His curse upon, for he had said: 'surely I will attempt to hold the reins of great proportion of your created humans; I will mislead them and most surely attempt them with all sorts of vain and false desires...'".

As you see, Satan has openly said to God that he will do his best to deceive humanity and to lead them astray. This is true because it is like an agreement between God and Satan that the two camps, the camp of God and camp of Satan, are distinctly separate never to compromise. The Satan and all other satans and satanic elements will behave the same, that is, they all will do their best to dull men's wisdom and vision and bring them under their own, satanic wilayat. Satan says: "...surely I tempt them with all vain and false desires...". So I would like you to specially pay attention to the original Arabic of this promise of Satan: *la-umanniyyannahum*, I will tie them down by far-fetched, false desires and vain

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\* sura 4, Ayas 117-119.

ideals! What is this satanic scheme about? Let's imagine some ordinary wishes by the people in general: the desire to live in comfort, ease and luxury for some years, the desire to get out of this small, old house and to live in a big, aristocratic house, the desire to become the director-general of certain department to receive a huge, monthly salary, and many other wishes and desires that would stop you from doing anything in the path of God.

Anyway, in the same verse, we are told something about certain, ignorant traditions among the people of pre-Islamic civilization as slitting the ears of some animals to safeguard their health, their provisions and their happiness! This Quranic verse is a symbol of all stupid, superstitious and ignorant beliefs before the shining advent of Islam. Satan then says: "...and I order them to disrupt and alter God's Creation!" The wish of Satan is quite clear: he wants to change the divine qualities of human-beings; I will take them out of your wilayat, bring them under my dominance and lead them to paths that are opposite of what they were created for! These are all what Satan pledges in front of God. Satan is bound to lead everyone astray, his pledge is enmity with God and against all His laws and injunctions meant for the happiness and salvation of humanity. It is for this reason that God Almighty says: "...whoever chooses Satan for his protection instead of God, ruins himself beyond redemption. He makes them promises, and he does shape many a painted, empty hope in their minds, but Satan's promises are nothing but pure deceptions."\* I think that the translation of these verses which you find in the papers handed to you, are absolutely clear and need not any more explanation.

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\* Sura 4, Ayas 119-120.

28th Session

About Wilayat (3); The Migration

29th Ramadan 1394 (Oct, 15, 1974)

*“And anyone who migrates in Allah’s way, will find many places of refuge on earth and abundance of bounties; even if he does forsake his dwelling for the sake of God and His Messenger and thence death overtakes him, shall receive his meed in full from God, for God is Forgiving, Merciful.”*

*(Sura Al-Nisaa, Aya 100)*

In the Name of God, the Beneficent the Merciful, the very first thing I must mention in our discussion today is that the issue of *migration* is directly related to the question of wilayat. I have already explained that wilayat is there to guarantee the firm relations and unshakable solidarity among all believers and the prevention of any dependence on the opposing groups or fronts, and later the setting up of a strong, central administration to strengthen brotherly ties among all Muslim groups and Islamic communities. I also clarified the question of the *walee*, that is, the leader, imam or the supreme administrator necessary for the continuous progress of the umma towards divine goals. I also mentioned the Quranic verse about Imam Ali (AS) giving alms to a poor man ‘while bowing down in his prayers.’

So we see that if we do not reduce the important principle of wilayat to some petty, secondary issue, we’ll soon find out that *migration* is most related to belief in wilayat, because if a believer is devoted to live in the shade of wilayat, he’ll sometimes have to migrate from a *wilayatless* society to a *wilayatful* community. If one wants to really be a servant of God, not a follower of taaghoot and he feels that he lives in a wilayatless community that leaves his existence, his life, his energies and his happiness under a satanic wilayat, he should save his own soul by travelling to a place where he could live under the happy, resourceful shadow of wilayat. The exit from that oppressive wilayat and entering the just, divine wilayat is called migration (Hijra). As you have noticed, I have already talked about 3 dimensions of wilayat; Hijra is the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension.

Why should one escape the satanic wilayat of taaghoot? I raise this question and, while I try to answer the question, I want you to think about it and find an answer, whether positive or negative, according to your knowledge of Islam and the Quran; and if your answer is the opposite of mine, we will discuss the matter



further. Now this is the question: Couldn't we be under the wilayat of taaghoot and still remain a Muslim? Can't we imagine a Muslim who happens to live under the wilayat of Satan and yet be a servant of Al-Rahmaan? Is it probable that when an anti-divine oppressor dominates the whole horizons of humanity's life, when the people's way of thinking, their emotions and feelings are decided by the same ungodly ruler and, in one word, when all people are in the grips of a satanic, powerful authority, I repeat, is it probable that a Muslim remains a servant of God? Is this possible or not? I want you to try to analyze this question and I don't want you to quickly come up with an answer. It must be deeply thought about.

Now, I say a few words to help you think about this rather difficult question. The question is: could a person be under the wilayat of satanic powers and still remain a Muslim? In fact this question consists of two parts closely connected. Let's analyze these two parts and see what they really mean. The first part is about the wilayat of Satan or satanic powers; what does being under satanic wilayat mean? Well, if we look at the issue of wilayat through the mirror of the Quranic verses we quoted in this respect, then we'll know what this evil wilayat really means. What we understand from those verses, is that the wilayat of Satan, in its general sense, means that Satan or satanic authorities dominate all aspects of men's life, their talents, energies, initiatives, mental and intellectual powers, that is, whatever man thinks about is in the path of satans and whatever he does is exactly what satans wish. A simile for such a circumstance would be the condition of a person who has slipped and fallen down into the rapid current of a mountainous river and tries hard to save himself. Certainly he doesn't like to hit a rock, and surely he doesn't like the current to take him to the sea or into a swamp; he doesn't want to be drowned and he tries hard to get hold of something to save himself, but the current is awfully fast and strong and carries him along.

The wilayat of satanic forces is similar to this simile and therefore the Quran warns: "And We made imams (leaders) who invite people unto the Fire..."\*. There are leaders, authorities and ungodly powers who lead their followers and those under their rule into the fire of Hell. Elsewhere the Quran tells us: "Have

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\* Sura 28, Aya 41.

you not ever thought of those who did repay God's Grace with unappreciation, and drove their people with them into the House of Ruination, known as Gehenna? They will surely reach it, but it's a wretched station!"\* Don't you ever learn lessons from those who were unthankful of God's bounties? What were the bounties of God? They could be everything: the blessing of authority, worldly power, the administration of the affairs of communities, God-granted talents or all the energies and instinctive, human gifts; these are all divine bounties that could go to serve the good of the human society.

If not under the power of such satanic wilayats, the people could be among the best servants of God and sources of good for their communities but those satanic regimes led them astray: "...and drove their people with them into the House of Ruination." Well, we could say 'hell with those damned satanic leaders'! The more sorrowful was the fact that they led the masses into perdition and into Hell which is a horrible residence. It is reported that Imam Musa-bin-Ja'far read out this Quranic verse for the Khalif Haroun-al-Rasheed to warn him that he was leading himself and the people under his rule to final perdition and Haroun retorted 'do you mean that we are kaafirs (disbelievers)', that is, we don't believe in God, the Prophet and the religion of Islam?! What the Imam meant was that those who frankly and openly announce that 'there is no God, prophets and prophethoods are myths and Quranic verses are lies' are one kind among the disbelievers, in fact, the best of disbelievers! Because they openly and candidly pronounce what they do not believe in and so you do know them and you could easily choose your approach to them.

Yet the worse kind of disbelievers are those who pretend to be Muslims and true believers but they are unthankful to what God has granted them, who employ God's bounties and God's blessing in wrongful ways and ultimately lead all people under their rule to wilayat of taaghoot and ultimately to Hell. Those who live under the wilayat of taaghoot are almost helpless. I don't say that they completely and absolutely lack the will to choose. As I said in the example of the one fallen in the current of a fast-following mountainous rivers, they do everything to save themselves but the flood-like current carries them on to death. They wish to save

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\* Sura 14, Ayas 28-29.

themselves from this current that takes them to Hell but they can't do anything about it, for everything and everyone about them are being carried in the same direction. You all may have happened to be among a crowd of thousands of people; you want to go left but the crowd presses you to go to the right and you are not allowed to go the way you intend to. A person likes to live a clean life, he wants to live as a Muslim and die as a Muslim but the tough social current does not give him a chance, no matter how weakly you try to go otherwise; the more painful fact is that sometimes you don't even feel you're being carried away despite your heart's desire! Just like the fish caught in a big net in the sea hundreds of meters away from the shore where the fishermen are standing and pulling the net; the fish are still being pulled towards them in the water but they don't know where they will soon end up!

This invisible net of satanic systems works the same; they pull you to where they want and you are unconsciously drawn to destinations unknown to you. They are taking you to Hell but sometimes you think you are being led to Paradise! This is the wilayat of taaghoot or the wilayat of Satan. All I said so far concerned the first part of the question: could one live in a satanic system of wilayat and still remain a Muslim? Now we know what it means to live under the rule of such ungodly systems. We could, of course, delve into history and find out more about the evil conditions and circumstances of living under taaghoot domination.

You may take an historical glimpse at the Islamic community under the two dynasties of Bani-Umayya and Bani-Abbas. Under both ruling systems, there was great advancement in the fields of knowledge and science: we know of numerous, great physicians, numerous great astronomers, numerous, great translators and numerous, great historians, artists and scientist in various fields. Some foreign authors such as the French Gustave Lebon are amazed at the incredible scientific progress and civilizational achievements under these two dynasties in the second, third and fourth centuries after the advent of Islam. Now we may ask: did all these great achievements end up in furthering and perfecting the Islamic society and humanity? Some ten centuries have passed since those golden days of progress and prosperity. We may not have any prejudiced outlook about those centuries. In talking to the non-Islamic world, we could boast about them and say: yes, it

was the world of Islam that established so many universities and many highly-advanced schools of medicine, philosophy and natural sciences.

Yet, among ourselves as Muslims, couldn't we ask some fair questions: did all those great achievements end up in the further prosperity and progress of the Islamic communities? After some 10 centuries, what do we have to show? What happened to all those rich scientific and cultural achievements? Why does the Islamic umma's civilization not shine today as in those early centuries? The briefest answers to these questions are that the satanic rulers wanted everything for themselves, not for the good and interest of the Islamic society. I try to explain this because some people may find my brief answer dubious and unsatisfactory. The Khalifs of the time, such as Haroun, Ma'moun or Mansour helped bring about a 'translation revolution' but their purpose was to elevate their own names, not to raise the knowledge and cognition of all Muslims; their other activities in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, literature, theological jurisprudence and natural sciences were aimed at their own fame and grandeur, but their rules were most oppressive which brought about great class differences, made the poor poorer, degraded the social and individual morals and debased the people's ethical values.

If you want to understand the issue better, let us take a look at the filthy civilization of our temporary world. The leaders of this present world boast about their incredible new inventions, their discoveries of this or that drug or surgery to cure certain, lethal diseases and other scientific achievements. But from a moral and humanitarian outlook, they are still living, say, in the Stone Age. One percent of the people own some 90 percent of the wealth and capital in these so-called advanced countries and millions of people live under the poverty line. This picture is exactly the same as that during those golden centuries of Islamic rule under satanic tyrants. These rulers and the aristocratic minority enjoyed all sorts of opportunities and amenities while the majority of people faced hunger and even starvation; other awful class differences were also witnessed but the faithless rulers did not care about the conditions of the masses and they cared less about the moral and spiritual progress and moral elevation of the people or about issues such as divine virtues and Islamic laws were forgotten.

Yet under these satanic regimes, there were honourable, virtuous people whom we could take pride in: Mualla-bin Khanees, a follower of Imam Saadiq (AS) and his deputy for collecting alms and charities was arrested, tortured and later put to death; Muhammad-bin-Abi-Omar-Azadi, a companion of three Shi'ite Imams, was arrested and ordered to reveal all the names of the followers of the Imams; he rejected the order. He was lashed a hundred times but did not speak a word; and in his later years of life he was arrested many times and tortured. Yahya-bin-Zaid-bin-Ali-ibn-al-Husain, as a very young man, he was present at his father's uprising against Husham, the Khalif of the time. After his father's martyrdom he went to Khorasan, many people joined his struggle against the oppressive Khalif and so he succeeded in seizing Herat. But in the ensuing battle with the Khalif's Khorasan army he was killed, and then his head was cut off and laid on a high post for all to see! We may also cite the example of Ibn-Umm-Tuwail who rose against the Khalif, but was arrested and executed; his hands and legs were cut off and his tongue was cut out of his mouth.

Thus, as we see, so many great people rose against the satanic regimes whose period of rule orientalists such as Mr. Gustave Lebon consider as the golden period of Islamic rule. Briefly speaking, in the wilayat of taaghoot or Satan, you may witness progress in many fields and people's energies and talents could be employed to advance in many areas but the general state of the people is just like what we witness in the so-called advanced countries in the West today where human values, virtuous criteria and divine injunctions are not worth a penny!

So we may return to the question we raised at the beginning of today's discussion: could one live as a Muslim under the wilayat of taaghoot? What is the proper, Muslim way of life? Well, living as Muslims means that all human talents, all human powers and all human opportunities are completely under the wilayat of God Almighty and that all their moments of life, their soul and minds, their property and wealth, their thoughts and activities or even their sleep and rest are spent in the service of God. Could you give us an example in this respect, you may ask? Yes, we have had examples of such groups, communities and societies of the past as the groups who migrated from the domain of satanic forces and walked towards the path of God. And we do have the example the Muslim community at

the time of the holy Prophet; at that time the people in Medina formed an Islamic society of servants of God. Any step taken was on the path of God. Even the Jews and Christian who lived under the wilayat of the holy Prophet behaved in Islamic ways, that is, in their personal beliefs and behaviour, they were absolutely free but in the society they lived as Muslims; we could claim that their ways of living were far better than Muslims who lived in the Age of ignorance! In the wilayat of the holy Prophet everything belonged to God, money was to be used in the path of God, swords were being draw in the path of God, tongues and thoughts were at the service of God and feelings and emotions were God-inspired ones.

We could also claim that under the wilayat of Ali (AS), the Commander of the Faithful, the social circumstances were more or less Islamic despite all odds and enmities and deviations that the Muslim Community had faced during the previous decades. In fact Ali (AS) inherited a community that had largely gone astray in the 25-year, period after the demise of the holy Prophet; we could even say that if the holy Prophet were to reappear, he would be faced with the same problems and difficulties Ali (AS) faced. Please not that what we have said so far concerns the societies in general.

But among groups of people and small minorities the conditions differed; as an example, the groups of the people who followed our Imams in those centuries were exceptions to the general outlook we talked about. Unfortunately today is the last day of the holy month of Ramadan and it is not possible for me to discuss the very important question of *imamat*. If we had the opportunity I would have told you about the quality and characteristic of Shi'ite communities during the lives of our imams and about the relationship of the imams with their followers, about the relation of Shi'ites with their surrounding taaghooti environment; how they lived under satanic regimes but traveled on an opposing path to the prevailing taaghoot rulers. Those who helped Imam Husain (AS) in Karbala, were good examples of those who never obeyed the ruling cliques. So you see, when you study history, that there did exist certain communities who, though under a satanic regime, were practicing true Islam.

But as far as the mass of ordinary people and the general public are concerned,

one cannot remain a true Muslim in satanic, oppressive circumstances where all his energies, talents and opportunities could be employed at the service of God. No, as I explained before, it is almost impossible for the mass of ordinary people to remain true Muslims under taaghoot, and no matter how hard they try, at least parts of their faith in Islam would be at the service of the dominating, social forces and so they cannot be a perfect servant of God. There is a Narration in the noble book 'the Principles of Kaafi' under the title of 'the conditions of men who want to obey God under an ungodly ruler'. I give you a brief translation of this Narration: 'the people who live under the wilayat of God, despite their sins and shortcomings in their personal or private lives, will ultimately be salvaged; on the other hand, those who live under the wilayat of taaghoot or Satan, despite their good personal and private deeds, will suffer retribution'. I have often tried to explain this Hadeeth by citing a simile: imagine you intend to go to Mashhad from Tehran. If the bus you are travelling in does take the right roads, you will surely reach your destination. But if your driver takes the wrong roads or is, for some reason, intent on travelling to Tabriz, obviously you will not reach your destination of Mashhad, in this case whether your fellow-travellers treat one another properly and politely or they swear at one another and constantly quarrel, you will not reach Mashhad in both cases; they may have suffered on the way but they do reach their destination. On the other hand, if the driver is taking you to Tabriz and your fellow-travellers are very kind and polite people and help one another, but they keep quiet and do not object to the driver who is going the wrong way, you'll never reach your destination.

In the first case, the driver was a trustworthy man who knew the roads well and he did take you safely to your destination, though some people behaved badly on the way. But in the second case, the driver was not trustworthy person or he was drunk or he had a personal business in Tabriz and didn't care about his passengers, and the passengers did not or dared not object to him, they would not reach their intended destination, despite the fact that the passengers were people of good deeds. In a society run by taaghoot or satanic rulers the people, whose leader is like the bad driver mentioned, will not reach their destination of remaining a true Muslim and gain salvation.

Well, what are they, who are under such condition supposed to do? Here again a Quranic verse answers the question: “when angels seize the souls of those who are sunken in sins against their own selves, they ask ‘how was your circumstance?’ They answer: ‘we were oppressed upon the earth ...’”<sup>\*</sup>. The angels, while seizing the souls of those people who were unjust in their own lives, ask them: How was your behavior in your lives, where did you live and why did you fall into such a wretched state? One feels that the angels, like doctors who visit their patients, are sympathetic with them! They answer ‘we were among the oppressed of the world’, that is, we had no will of ourselves, we had no authority and we were being governed against our wishes. As I said previously *the mustazafeen* or the spiritually and materially oppressed are those masses of people who are helplessly ruled over by satanic authorities and all their social actions, directions and deeds are decided by others.

Thus we see that the oppressed are those who are unaware of what goes on in the society and they don’t know where they are being led to, they can’t decide whether they go this way or that way, and they are being pulled this way and that way as harnessed animals, in fact like an oil-press horse on the upper millstone going around, with covered eyes, not knowing that it is not going anywhere! If this horse were an intelligent being, it would, in the evening, think ‘I must have reached the vicinity of Paris by now!! But when, in late evening, its eyes are uncovered, it sees that it is exactly where he was in early morning! It knows nothing about anything! This is the state that the oppressed are reined in. the opposite state of affairs are seen in the societies ruled by walees of God as in the governance of our holy Prophet when moral values and human dignity were respected; but even in such a society, God tells His messenger: “... take counsel with them (the people) in the affairs...”<sup>\*\*</sup>. In such societies people enjoy human, moral values, and all people are dearly respected and God’s advice is to consult with them about the affairs of the community. But under unjust, ungodly and oppressive, taaghooti systems people are kept in ignorance and therefore the *mustazafeen* form the great majority of the people.

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\* Sura 4, Aya 97.

\*\* Sura 3, Aya 159.



Well, the sinners defend themselves and tell the angels that they were *the oppressed*. But the angels ask them: "...Was Allah's earth not vast enough for you to migrate therein..."\*. Here we do witness that the logic of the angels is similar to wise human logic. The angels in fact blame them for not making any wise, courageous move to get out of the hellish prison they lived in by immigrating to some other place on the vast earth of God. I think our great poet, Saadi saying:

'Do not be bound by anyone or any place

As God's earth is immense',

was in agreement with the angels. Anyway, the angels blame them for not going to a spot on earth where they could be free to worship God, to employ their talents and energies properly and not to be suppressed by satanic rulers. The sinners do not respond to this second question by the angels; in fact, they seem not to have a logical answer. And the Quran further says that their final residence will be Hell, an awful place to live in!

There is of course one exception to this general statement: not all people are in a position to travel far and wide; old men and women, children, the sick, the very poor and the like are included in this exception. That's why the Quranic verse goes on: "...exempted are the helpless men and women and children who do not possess the means, nor do they know any routes or lines; these are the ones whom God may pardon, for God is Benignant, Oft-Forgiving." Such oppressed people cannot find a way towards the Light of Islam and they are truly unable to do anything under the prevailing conditions. The verse of the Quran expressly announces that they may be hopeful of God's forgiveness because God's Most Forgiving.

And then in the same Quranic verses we read about God's consolation concerning those who migrated, lest they think that migration may land them into misery and loss. The verse says: "And anyone who flies in Allah's way will find many a place of refuge on earth, and abundance of bounties..."\*\*. The pagans of Mecca would torture anyone who had spent one Dirham in the path of God but when Muslims migrated in the path of God to Medina, they found out what a fantastic

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\* Sura 4, Aya 97 - 99

\*\* Sura 4, Aya 100.

place it was under the guidance of the holy Prophet; they found out how they were spiritually elevated and how they could enjoy God's bounties. Now what if when travelling from Mecca, the town of disbelievers, to Medina, the town of the faithful, they happen to pass away on the way? Well, again the Quranic verse tells us that their rewards will be with God Almighty because they were travelling on the path of God: "...even he who does forsake his dwelling for the sake of God and His messenger and thence death overtakes him shall receive his meed in full from God, for God is Forgiving and Merciful."\* Well, our discussion of migration in the path of God is not complete but we have no more time, so I only add that, as we said, migration is leaving the wilayat of taaghoot to places where wilayat of God, such as the wilayat of the holy Prophet, the Imam (AS) or a true walee of God prevail. Now the very last question is: what shall we do when there is no such place in the whole world? Should we remain under satanic wilayats? The brief answer is that the holy Prophet himself was among the migrants but before the migration of the Prophet and his companions there was no such place, so the Prophet and his companions did create such a place by their migration. As we now notice, sometimes it is necessary to migrate and lay the foundation of a divine, Islamic community so that other believers could also join it. And this was a brief account on the importance of Hijra or migration.

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\* Sura 4, Aya 100.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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- 65 سورة البقرة/ آية ١٢٨ ﴿رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾  
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- 140 سورة البقرة/ آية ١٦٧ ﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّا كُنَّا كَرَّةً فَنَتَّبَرَأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّأُوا مِنَّا كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ﴾  
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- 205, 206 سورة البقرة/ آية ٢١٣ ﴿كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾  
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- 90 سورة البقرة/ آية ٢١٤ ﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَكْبِرِينَ الْبَاسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزَلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهَ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ﴾
- 115 سورة البقرة/ آية ٢٥٥ ﴿اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ﴾
- 95, 96, 275 سورة البقرة/ آية ٢٥٧ ﴿اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ﴾
- 50 سورة البقرة/ آية ٢٨٥ ﴿آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾
- 345 سورة آل عمران/ آية ٣١ ﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾
- 151 سورة آل عمران/ آية ٦٤ ﴿قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾
- 364 سورة آل عمران/ آية ٦٨ ﴿إِنَّ أَوَّلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾
- 256 سورة آل عمران/ آية ٧٩ ﴿مَا كَانَ لِشَيْءٍ أَنْ يُوْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّينَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ﴾

- 319 سورة آل عمران / آية ٨١ ﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَ حِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَضْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَضْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ﴾
- 292 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٢٥ ﴿بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُمْ مِنْ فُورِهِمْ هَذَا يُغِدْكُمْ رُجُومًا بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ﴾
- 23 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٣٠ ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي بَعَضًا عَنْ مُضَاعَفَةٍ وَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾
- 24 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٣١ ﴿وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ﴾
- 23 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٣٢ ﴿وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَ الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾
- 23 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٣٣ ﴿وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَ الْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾
- 23, 29, 30 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٣٤ ﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَ الضَّرَّاءِ وَ الْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظِ وَ الْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَ اللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾
- 30, 31 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٣٥ ﴿وَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَ مَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَ لَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَ هُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾
- 31 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٣٦ ﴿أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَ نِعَمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ﴾
- 60, 99 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٣٩ ﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَ أَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾
- 230 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٤٦ ﴿وَ كَايِّنَ مِنْ نَسِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رَبِّيُونَ كَثِيرًا فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ مَا ضَعُفُوا وَ مَا اسْتَكَنُوا وَ اللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

- 397 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٥٩ ﴿فَمَا رَحْمَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ لَئِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَظًّا غَلِيظًا  
الْقَلْبَ لَا تَقْضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكُمْ فَأَعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا  
عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 159
- 74, سورة آل عمران / آية ١٦٤ ﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ  
أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ  
لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 164
- 183 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٧٢ ﴿الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ  
الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 172
- 183, سورة آل عمران / آية ١٧٣ ﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ  
191 فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 173
- 191 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٧٤ ﴿فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةِ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَمْ يَمَسْسَهُمْ سُوءُ وَ  
اتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 174
- 185, سورة آل عمران / آية ١٧٥ ﴿أَتَذْكُرُوا الشَّيْطَانَ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَ  
191 خَافُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 175
- 192 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٧٦ ﴿وَلَا يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَصُرُوا  
اللَّهُ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حِطًّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 176
- 49 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٩٠ ﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَ  
النَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 190
- 49 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٩١ ﴿الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ  
وَيَتَذَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا  
عَذَابَ النَّارِ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 191
- 54 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٩٢ ﴿رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَجْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ  
مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ﴾
- Sura 3, Aya 192

- 55 سورة آل عمران / آية ١٩٣ ﴿رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّنَا مَعَ الْآبَرَارِ﴾  
Sura 3, Aya 193
- 363 سورة النساء / آية ٥٨ ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 58
- 363, سورة النساء / آية ٥٩ ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 59
- 372 سورة النساء / آية ٦٠ ﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَكَّمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 60
- 25 سورة النساء / آية ٦٥ ﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي شَئْرِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 65
- 275, سورة النساء / آية ٧٦ ﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 76
- 397 سورة النساء / آية ٩٧ ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فَمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 97
- 398 سورة النساء / آية ٩٨ ﴿إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 98
- 398 سورة النساء / آية ٩٩ ﴿فَأُولَٰئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 99
- 398, سورة النساء / آية ١٠٠ ﴿وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافَعًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾  
Sura 4, Aya 100
- 399 سورة النساء / آية ١٠١ ﴿وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافَعًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾



Sura 4, Aya 115	378, سورة النساء / آية ١١٥ ﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ تُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَتُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَ مَصِيرًا﴾
Sura 4, Aya 116	384 سورة النساء / آية ١١٦ ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا﴾
Sura 4, Aya 117	384 سورة النساء / آية ١١٧ ﴿إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَاثًا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَرِيدًا﴾
Sura 4, Aya 118	384 سورة النساء / آية ١١٨ ﴿لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَا تُخَدِّذْ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا﴾
Sura 4, Aya 119	384 سورة النساء / آية ١١٩ ﴿وَلَا ضَلَّاهُمْ وَلَا مُتَّبِعُهُمْ وَلَا مُمْتَنِّتُهُمْ وَلَا مُرْتَمِّمُهُمْ فَلْيَكَيْتُكُنَّ آذَانَ الْإِنْعَامِ وَلَا مُرْتَمِّمُهُمْ فَلْيَكَيْتُكُنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُبِينًا﴾
Sura 4, Aya 120	385 سورة النساء / آية ١٢٠ ﴿يَعِدُّهُمْ وَيُمْنِيهِمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا﴾
Sura 4, Aya 174	87, 94 سورة النساء / آية ١٧٤ ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُبِينًا﴾
Sura 4, Aya 175	87, 94 سورة النساء / آية ١٧٥ ﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمًا﴾
Sura 5, Aya 18	175 سورة المائدة / آية ١٨ ﴿وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ﴾
Sura 5, Aya 21	291 سورة المائدة / آية ٢١ ﴿يَا قَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَعْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ﴾
Sura 5, Aya 24	40 سورة المائدة / آية ٢٤ ﴿قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّا لَنَدْخُلُهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَادْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ﴾
Sura 5, Aya 51	339 سورة المائدة / آية ٥١ ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

- 339 سورة المائدة / آية ٥٢ ﴿فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَى مَا أَسْرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ﴾
- Sura 5, Aya 52
- 345 سورة المائدة / آية ٥٣ ﴿وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ لَكُمْ حَبِطَتِ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَاسِرِينَ﴾
- Sura 5, Aya 53
- 345, سورة المائدة / آية ٥٤ ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةً لَئِيمًا ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾
- Sura 5, Aya 54
- 346 سورة المائدة / آية ٥٥ ﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ﴾
- Sura 5, Aya 55
- 347 سورة المائدة / آية ٥٦ ﴿وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ﴾
- Sura 5, Aya 56
- 202 سورة المائدة / آية ٩٠ ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾
- Sura 5, Aya 90
- 55 سورة المائدة / آية ١٠٤ ﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ﴾
- Sura 5, Aya 104
- 256 سورة المائدة / آية ١١٦ ﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَّيهِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالِ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ﴾
- Sura 5, Aya 116
- 370 سورة الأنعام / آية ١٣ ﴿وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾
- Sura 6, Aya 13
- 106 سورة الأنعام / آية ٨٠ ﴿وَاحِجَّةٌ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ اتَّخَذْتَنِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ﴾
- Sura 6, Aya 80

Sura 6, Aya 81	106, سورة الأنعام / آية ٨١ ﴿وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾	107
Sura 6, Aya 82	62, سورة الأنعام / آية ٨٢ ﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ﴾	106, 107
Sura 6, Aya 112	269, سورة الأنعام / آية ١١٢ ﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ زُخْرَفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ﴾	276
Sura 6, Aya 113	269, سورة الأنعام / آية ١١٣ ﴿وَلِتَصْغَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَفْئِدَةُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِتُرْصِدْهُ وَيُقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ مُقْتَرِفُونَ﴾	277
Sura 6, Aya 114	155, سورة الأنعام / آية ١١٤ ﴿أَفَعَيِّرَ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ حُكْمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ﴾	160
Sura 6, Aya 115	155, سورة الأنعام / آية ١١٥ ﴿وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾	160
Sura 6, Aya 116	155, سورة الأنعام / آية ١١٦ ﴿وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا أَكْثَرَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ﴾	160
Sura 6, Aya 117	161, سورة الأنعام / آية ١١٧ ﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ﴾	
Sura 6, Aya 118	162, سورة الأنعام / آية ١١٨ ﴿فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِّرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾	
Sura 6, Aya 119	164, سورة الأنعام / آية ١١٩ ﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِّرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَيُضِلُّونَ بِأَهْوَائِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾	

- 164 سورة الأنعام / آية ١٢٠ ﴿وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ﴾  
Sura 6, Aya 120
- 155, سورة الأنعام / آية ١٢١ ﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِْسُقٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَى أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ﴾  
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