



Chapter 2B

HADITH: JUM'AH (FRIDAY) PRAYER

Salman reported that Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"If any man bathes on Friday, purifies himself as much as he can with ablution, oils his hair or applies any perfume he has, then goes to the Masjid and, without forcing his way between two men, prays what is prescribed for him, and remains silent when the Imam speaks, then his sins between that time and the next Friday will be forgiven."*

(Bukhari)

Discussion

Jum'ah is a weekly celebration for Muslims, taking its name from the gathering of Muslims for the afternoon prayer. Jum'ah replaces Zuhr prayer in the Masjid; it consists of a khutbah (sermon) by the Imam, which must be listened to in silence by the congregation, followed by a prayer of two rak'ahs. In Makkah the early Muslims were prevented from praying openly and publically, but in Madina the Muslims felt a desire to observe a weekly gathering like the Sabbath of the Jews and the Christians. Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"We Muslims are the last to come but will be the foremost on the day of Resurrection, even though the former nations were given the Holy Scriptures before us. And Friday was their day, the celebration of which was made compulsory for them but they differed about it. So Allah guided us to Friday, and all the other people are behind us in this respect: the Jewish Sabbath is tomorrow and the Christian Sabbath is the day after tomorrow."*

(Agreed upon)

This hadith shows that the choice of Friday for the weekly gathering was made by Allah Almighty and then given to the Muslims as a precious gift. It was missed by the earlier people who, in their confusion, differed regarding the day as well as the commandments regarding it.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (saw) said, *"The best day on which the sun has risen is Friday; on it Adam was created, on it he was taken to paradise, on it he left it, and the last hour will take place on no day other than Friday."*

(Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (saw) said, *"There is a time on Friday at which any Muslim who asks Allah for something good will be granted it."*

(Agreed upon) Abu Burdah b. Abu Musa commented, *"I heard my father saying that he heard the Prophet (saw) speak about this time, saying that it is the time when the Imam sits down (near the end of the Khutbah) and the end of the prayer."*

(Muslim)

It is obligatory for every male Muslim that has reached the age of puberty to attend the Jum'ah prayer. Ibn Mas'ud reported that the Prophet (saw) said about those men who missed the Friday prayer, *"I have thought about commanding someone else to lead the prayer, then burning the houses of those men who stayed away from the Jum'ah prayer."*

(Muslim)

Jabir reported that Allah's Messenger said, "Prayer in congregation on Friday is obligation laid on those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, with an exception for invalids, travellers, women, boys, the insane or slaves. If anyone neglects it through sport or trade, Allah will have nothing to do with him. Allah is the Independent, the Praised and Worthy one."

(Daraqutni)

Muslims have been commanded to bathe, perfume themselves, wear the best clothes have, and leave early for the prayer in order to listen to the khutbah which precedes prayer. The duty to be clean and presentable, and to smell fragrant is one of the etiquette of sitting in any assembly, especially one that takes place in the Masjid, the House of Allah. Prayer should be a happy and comfortable occasion, and cleanliness is at the heart of achieving this objective. However, it should be remembered that women have been forbidden from wearing perfume outside their homes. This is because fragrance attracts attention, and a fragrant woman walking past other men is bound to attract their attention. The Hijab protects women by covering their beauty, but this will be pointless if the woman is bathed in a seductive fragrance.

When the person enters the Masjid for prayer, he should not force his way to the front by jumping over rows or pushing others. By the same token, those people who arrive early should not sit at the back and thus force new-comers to jump over them. It is recommended to pray two rak'ahs, called **Tahiyyatul Masjid** (Saluting the Masjid), whenever one enters the Masjid. After this prayer the person should sit in silence and listen to the sermon. Ibn Al Qayyim reported that the Prophet (saw) said, "If anyone speaks on Friday while the Imam is preaching, he is like a donkey that carries a load of books (ie. the books are of no benefit to him), and he who tells him to be quiet is as if he did not pray."

(Ahmad)

The khutbah is an integral part of the Jum'ah prayer. It is a basic requirement for each Muslim to listen to his Imam, increase his knowledge, strengthen ties with his Muslim brothers, and be enlightened about the religious, political and social issues facing the community. The Jum'ah prayer is a weekly means of deriving these benefits and is therefore truly a day of celebration.

It is highly recommended to recite Surah Al Kahf (The Cave) every Friday. Abu Sa'eed Khudri reported that the Prophet (saw) said, "Whoever recites Surah al Kahf on Jum'ah will have illumination from the Light from one Jum'ah to the next."

(Al Baihaqi)

Ibn Abbas reported that the first Jum'ah offered after the Jum'ah being held in Madina was held in the Masjid of the tribe of Abdul Qays in Juwatha, Bahrain. Juwatha was a small village, and it is clear that Jum'ah prayer should not be the sole preserve of large cities or communities. It should be held everywhere. Some Muslim jurists hold the mistaken view that it can only be held in large towns in which there is a ruler, functioning market and a flowing river. Some even state that the ruler of the town must give express permission for each Jum'ah to be held. But this view is clearly contrary to the spirit and sunnah of Jum'ah prayer. Any gathering

whether large or small, can hold a Jum'ah prayer as long as one member of the group first delivers the khutbah. In western countries where students and workers find it impossible to get a half-day holiday to enable them to congregate in the Masjid, Jum'ah prayers are often held in schools, universities and offices during lunch-breaks. This is possible because one of the beautiful aspects of Islamic Jum'ah is that it is not a day of rest but a day of prayer and social interaction, followed by a return to normal activities.

In Surah al Jum'ah, Allah Almighty says,

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوا إِذَا نُودِي لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (٩) فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ
وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (١٠)

O ye who believe! When the call is heard for the prayer of the day of congregation, haste unto remembrance of Allah and leave your trading. That is better for you if ye did but know. (9) And when the prayer is ended, then disperse in the land and seek of Allah's bounty, and remember Allah much, that ye may be successful. (10)

(Surah Al Jum'ah 62:9-10)

In Islamic society, work is not seen as an enemy to man's enjoyment of life or to his worship of his Lord, but is seen as an activity necessary for the physical and mental health of all individuals. Men were not created to be idle or lazy. In western countries where men are forced to retire at the age of 65, the retired individuals find themselves at a loss, as if being primed for death. Some retired or unemployed men do indeed lose the will to live. But in traditional, agrarian societies there is no enforced age of retirement, and older people are more content as their lives are full of purpose to the end. The western perception of work as an enemy flows directly from the misguided rulings regarding the Sabbath. In the Ten Commandments revealed to Moses, God instructs him,

“Observe the Sabbath by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maid-servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates....” (Deuteronomy 5: 12-15)

The law of the Sabbath became, not a day of rejoicing and worship, but a day of burden and difficulty. The Rabbis devised a complex code of do's and don't's which remain a burden for their followers. No work really does mean **no** work. In the home the mother may not cook, wash, clean or shop. Strict observers of the law will place food in the oven the night before the Sabbath, and ask gentile neighbours to turn the oven on and off for them. For some, even opening the front door of the house is classified as a chore and therefore forbidden; gentile neighbours may be asked for assistance in performing such menial tasks. Cars may not be driven as this is classed as work, so worshippers will walk to the Synagogue. In Jewish scholarly writings one will even find a debate that raged among scholars in the Middle Ages regarding the permissibility of swatting a fly on the Sabbath.

Christian society did not go to such extremes but did insist that Sunday be a day of holiday and rest. For centuries western countries legislated that shops, businesses, even sporting fixtures be closed on Sundays, but in the latter part of the twentieth century, these laws were hotly debated and slowly repealed. It is now common to see supermarkets and other businesses open and sporting fixtures being held on Sundays.

Islam came to free man from the shackles of such man-made laws which serve only to cripple and torture him. The Islamic laws of Jum'ah are practical, sensible and a fantastic example from which the rest of the world can learn a great deal.

Chapter 3

LIFE OF THE GRAVE (BARZAKH)

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَاقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فَمَنْ زُحِّزَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأَدْخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ
فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ الْغُرُورِ (١٨٥)

Every soul will taste of death. And ye will be paid on the Day of Resurrection only that which ye have fairly earned. Whoso is removed from the Fire and is made to enter paradise, he indeed is triumphant. The life of this world is but comfort of illusion. (185)

(Surah Aal Imran 3:185)

Between the world of the living and the Day of Judgement lies a hidden, dark and terrifying world. This is the life of Al Barzakh, the period of the grave. As the body decomposes slowly in its narrow and dark coffin, it begins a new phase of existence in which it will taste the fruits of its life on earth. If the deceased had lived as a pious and faithful believer, his grave will become a comfortable place of rest. But if he was a disobedient and ungrateful sinner, his grave will become a place of torture and pain. Barzakh will be a taste of that which awaits him on the Day of Judgement. The period of Barzakh applies to the soul rather than to the body, for the body decomposes away while the soul begins a new phase in its existence.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدُهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرْجِعُونِ (٩٩) لَعَلَّيَ أَعْمَلُ صَلَحاً فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا
كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَاتِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرَزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبَعَّثُونَ (١٠٠)

Until, when death cometh unto one of them, he saith: My Lord! Send me back, (99) That I may do right in that which I have left behind! But nay! It is but a word that he speaketh; and behind them is a barrier until the day when they are raised. (100)
(Surah Al Mu'minun 23: 99-100)

At the time of death, the dying person is greeted by angels who come to draw out his soul from his body. Unable to speak out, he watches the departure of his soul to the heavens, his eyes taking on the fixed and glazed expression of death. His final place is then recorded by the angels, either in heaven or hell, and his soul is returned temporarily to his body for the questioning in the grave. The deceased is then greeted by another two angels who come to question him about his life on earth:

Who was his Lord?

What was his religion?

What did he say about Prophet Muhammad (saw)?

Which source of guidance did he follow?

In preparation for this questioning in the grave, it is common practice in many Muslim communities for the relatives of the dying person to remind him or her of the answers to be given when questioned: Allah, Islam, Prophet and Quran. This practice is entirely ludicrous as the questioning in the grave will not be so easy that answers learned parrot-fashion while in the throes of death will suffice to fool the angels. For it will not be the body that will be

questioned but the soul. The body may lie but the soul will only say that which is truthful and accurate. If the deceased had spent his life on earth as a true servant of Allah, obeying Him, thanking Him, loving Him and worshipping Him the way He has asked to be worshipped, then his tongue will automatically and easily reply, "Allah." But if he devoted his life to acquiring money, worshipped wealth, feared only the opinions of other people, loved only the glitter and extravagance of this world, and perhaps worshipped Allah with his lips but not with his heart, then his tongue will answer accurately, "the world."

When the second question is asked, the believer who spent his life acquiring knowledge of his faith and implementing it in all areas of his life will be able to answer, "Islam", with great ease. But the sinner, albeit a Muslim, whose religion was to appease the enemies of Islam, who practised strange innovations in order to please custom, who paid lip-service to Islam while considering it to be out-moded, will not be able to stop himself from saying so.

The believer who loved the Prophet Muhammad (saw) more than anyone else and spent his life trying to emulate his example, regardless of the mocking laughter from others, will reply to the third question, "He was my Prophet and role-model." But the foolish sinner whose role models were actors, pop-stars, the rich and famous, and who spent his life emulating them in life-style, appearance and attitude, will reply to the third question accordingly.

When the fourth question is asked, the man who replies "The Quran" will be the one who read it regularly and joyfully, who went to great lengths to understand its message, who mixed with people who could explain its contents, and who implemented all that he learned. But the person who will be unable to give the correct answer will be the one who had little time for the Quran, for the Masajid or for pious company; who found the recitation of the Quran tedious; who made no attempts to understand or implement it; and whose interests in life revolved around music, wealth and entertainment.

The period of Barzakh has been explained in vivid detail in the following lengthy hadith: *Al Baraa bin Azib said, "We went out with the Prophet (saw) to the funeral of an Ansari man and passed by a grave. It had not yet been filled and the Prophet (saw) sat down beside it. We too sat down around him quietly. He was holding a stick with which he was making marks in the dust. He then raised his head and said twice or thrice, "Seek refuge in Allah from the punishment of the grave." He then said, "When a believer is about to leave this world and go forward to the next world, angels with faces white as the sun come down to him from heaven with a shroud and perfume from heaven. They sit next to him but can be seen as far as the eye can see. Then the angel of death comes and sits near his head and says, "O good soul, come out to forgiveness and acceptance from Allah." His soul then flows out as a drop of water flows out from a water-pouch, and the angel seizes it. But the two angels do not allow it to remain in his grasp; they place it in the perfumed shroud, from which emanates a fragrance like the sweetest musk to be found on earth.*

They take it up to the heavens and each time they pass a group of angels, the angels ask, "Who is this good soul?"

The two angels reply, "It is so-and-so, son of so-and-so," using the best names by which he was known on earth.

They take it to the lowest heaven and ask that the gate be opened for him. This is done, and

from every heaven its angels escort him to the next heaven until it is brought to the seventh heaven. Allah, who is great and glorious says, "Record the book of My servant in Illiyun and take him back to earth, for I created mankind from the earth, I shall return them to it, and from it I shall bring them back on another day."

His soul is returned to his body and two angels come to him to question him. They sit him up and ask, "Who is your Lord?" and he replies, "My Lord is Allah."

They ask, "What is your religion?" and he replies, "My religion is Islam."

They ask, "Who is this man who was sent among you?" and he replies, "He is Allah's Messenger."

They ask, "What is your source of knowledge?" and he replies, "I have read Allah's Book, I have believed in it, and I have declared it to be true."

Then a voice says from heaven, "My servant has spoken the truth, so spread out the carpets of paradise for him, and open a gate into paradise for him."

Then some of the joy and fragrance of paradise come to him, his grave is made spacious for him, and a man of beautiful looks, elegant apparel and who smells wonderfully fragrant comes and says, "Rejoice in what pleases you, for this is the day that you have been promised."

He asks, "Who are you, for you are beautiful and you bring good?"

He replies, "I am your good deeds."

He then says, "O My Lord, bring the last hour, bring the last hour, so that I may return to my people and to my property."

But when a disbeliever is about to leave this world and proceed to the next world, angels with blackened faces come to him from paradise with hair-cloth. They sit near him but can be seen as far as the eye can see. Then the angel of death comes and sits at his head saying, "O wicked soul, come out to displeasure from Allah." Then his soul becomes dissipated in his body, and he draws it out like an iron filing being drawn out from moistened wool. He then seizes it, but the two angels do not allow it to remain in his grasp and immediately take it and place it in the coarse hair-cloth. From it then emanates a foul stench like that of a rotten corpse. They take it up to the heavens, and each time they pass a group of angels, the latter ask, "Who is this wicked soul?"

The two angels reply, "So-and-so, son of so-and-so," using the worst names by which he was called on earth.

When he is brought to the lowest heaven, a request is made that the gates be opened for him, but the request is denied.

(The Prophet (saw) then recited the following Quranic verse, "The gates of heaven will not be opened for them and they will not enter paradise until a camel can pass through the eyes of a needle.")

Allah, who is most great and glorious, says, "Record his book in Sijjin in the lowest earth," and his soul is then thrown down.

(The Prophet (saw) then recited the Quranic verse, "He who assigns partners with Allah is as if he has fallen down from heavens and been snatched by birds, or made to fall at a great distance by the wind.")

His soul is then restored to his body and two angels place him in a sitting position for the questioning. They ask, "Who is your Lord?" and he replies, "Alas, alas, I do not know."

They ask, "What is your religion?" and he replies, "Alas, alas, I do not know."

They ask, "Who is this man who was sent among you?" and he replies, "Alas, alas, I do not know."

They ask, "What is your source of knowledge?" and he replies, "Alas, alas, I do not know." Then a voice cries out from heaven, "He has lied, so spread out carpets from hell for him and open a gate for him into hell."

Then some of the heat and foul air of hell reach him and his grave is made narrow so that his ribs are squeezed together. Then a malodorous man with an ugly countenance and wearing filthy clothes comes and says to him, "Grieve because of what displeases you, for this is the day that you have been promised."

He asks, "Who are you, for your face is most ugly and you bring evil?"

The ugly man replies, "I am your wicked deeds."

The man then pleads, "My Lord, do not bring the last Hour."

Once the questioning of the grave is complete, the atmosphere in the grave will change according to the answers given by the deceased. If he was a true believer, his grave will seem to expand and fill with the fragrance and tranquility of paradise. If he was a disbeliever or a hypocrite, a door into hell will be opened from his grave and he will experience the heat and stench of damnation. His grave will close in on him and squeeze his chest so that he will cry out in pain. Animals and birds have been given the ability to hear the screaming of such unfortunate ones, which explains why graveyards are such quiet and desolate places, avoided by birds and animals. Once the Prophet (saw) and his Companions were passing by the graves of some disbelievers when the Prophet's mount shied and almost unseated him. At this the Prophet (saw) said, "These people were being tortured in their graves. Were it not that you would stop burying your dead from fear, I would ask Allah Almighty to permit you to hear the punishment that I am able to hear."

(Muslim)

The period of Barzakh will continue for each person until the Day of Judgement, regardless of the state of his body. The body may decompose into the soil, or drown at sea, or be cremated into ashes, but its soul will nevertheless endure the questioning of the grave, and the resultant pain or felicity.

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَرَهُمْ وَذُوْفُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ
(٥٠) ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ أَيْدِيهِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَمٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ (٥١)

If thou couldst see how the angels receive those who disbelieve, smiting their faces and their backs and (saying): Taste the punishment of burning! (50) This is for that which your own hands have sent before (to the Judgment), and (know) that Allah is not a tyrant to His slaves. (51)

(Surah al Anfal 8:50-51)

الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَبِيبُونَ يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (٣٢)

Those whom the angels cause to die (when they are) good. They say: Peace be unto you! Enter the Garden because of what ye used to do. (32)

(Surah an Nahl 16:32)



LESSON
8

Chapter 1

APOSTLES AFTER YUSUF: AL ASBAAT, SHU'AIB AND AYYUB

1. Al Asbaat

There are a number of references to Al Asbaat as being recipients of revelation in the Quran. (Al Baqara 2:140, Aal Imraan 3:84 and An Nisaa 4:163), but no further details are given. 'Asbaat' (sing. Sabt) means grandson or Jewish Tribes. The exegists of the Quran take it to mean the twelve tribes of Bani Israil through the twelve sons of Prophet Yaqub. Although Yusuf's ten elder brothers had undoubtedly been very cruel to him in his childhood, they eventually repented and asked for his forgiveness. The twelve brothers became the fathers of twelve Israeliite tribes, and each tribe may well have received revelation from Allah.

2. Prophet Shu'aib

Prophet Shu'aib was a descendant of Madyan, son of Ibrahim through his third wife Qatura. The offspring of Madyan settled near the Gulf of Aqabah on the east coast of the Red Sea. This was close to the main commercial route that linked Syria with Yemen and passed through the Hijaz (which included Makkah and Madinah). In keeping with the ancient Arab tradition of naming places after renowned residents, the new settlement became known as Madyan. These people were also known as As-hab Al Aika ('Dwellers of the woods') because of the dense woodlands in which they lived. However, some scholars say that As-hab Al Aika were a different tribe who had descended from Didan, a brother of Madyan, and lived on the same commercial route. According to this theory, Shu'aib was sent to the people of Madyan, but after their destruction he went to live among the As-hab Al Aika.

The Madyanites slowly deviated from the path of Allah and began to worship idols. On the economic front, their trade flourished because of their strategic location on the commercial route. But they excelled in betraying others by fraud and deception in trade. Prophet Shu'aib's discussions with them are narrated in these verses:

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَقُومُ أَعْبُدُوا أَللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا الْأَنْسَاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (٨٥) وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوَعِّدُونَ وَتَصْدُونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَامِنَ بِهِ وَتَبْغُونَهَا عِوْجًا وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا فَكَثُرْتُمْ وَأَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ الْمُفْسِدُينَ (٨٦) وَإِنْ كَانَ طَالِفَةً مِنْكُمْ عَامِنُوا بِالذِّي أَرْسَلْتُ بِهِ وَطَالِفَةً لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَكَمِينَ (٨٧) ◇ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ أُسْتَكِنُوا مِنْ قَوْمَهُ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ يَشْعَيْبَ وَالَّذِينَ عَامِنُوا مَعَكَ مِنْ قَرِيبَتِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُودُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أَوْلَوْ كُنَّا كَرِهِينَ (٨٨) قَدْ أَفْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عَدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّانَا اللَّهُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسَعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَلَمًا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبُّنَا أَفْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنَّ خَيْرَ الْفَتْحِينَ (٨٩) وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمَهُ لَنَّ أَنْتَعْثِمْ شُعَيْبًا إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَخَسِرُونَ (٩٠) فَلَا خَدَّهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ (٩١) الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا لَمْ يَقْنُوا فِيهَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَسِرِينَ (٩٢) فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَقُومُ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسْلَاتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَّحْتُكُمْ فَكَيْفَ عَاسَى عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَفَرِينَ (٩٣)

And unto Midian (We sent) their brother, Shu'eyb. He said: O my people! Serve Allah. Ye have no other God save Him. Lo! a clear proof hath come unto you from your Lord; so give full measure and full weight and wrong not mankind in their goods, and work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering thereof. That will be better for you, if ye are believers. (85) Lurk not on every road to threaten (wayfarers), and to turn away from Allah's path him who believeth in Him, and to seek to make it crooked. And remember, when ye were but few, how He did multiply you. And see the nature of the consequence for the corrupters! (86) And if there is a party of you which believeth in that wherewith I have been sent, and there is a party which believeth not, then have patience until Allah judge between us. He is the Best of all who deal in judgment. (87) The chieftains of his people, who were scornful, said: Surely we will drive thee out, O Shu'eyb, and those who believe with thee, from our township, unless ye return to our religion. He said: Even though we hate it? (88) We should have invented a lie against Allah if we returned to your religion after Allah hath rescued us from it. It is not for us to return to it unless Allah our Lord should (so) will. Our Lord comprehendeth all things in knowledge. In Allah do we put our trust. Our Lord! Decide with truth between us and our folk, for Thou art the best of those who make decision. (89) But the chieftains of his people, who were disbelieving, said: If ye follow Shu'eyb, then truly ye shall be the losers. (90) So the earthquake seized them and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling-place. (91) Those who denied Shu'eyb became as though they had not dwelt there. Those who denied Shu'eyb, they were the losers. (92) So he turned from them and said: O my people! I delivered my Lord's messages unto you and gave you good advice; then how can I sorrow for a people that rejected (truth)? (93)

(Surah Al A'raf 85-93)

﴿ وَإِلَى مَدِينَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَقُولُمْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْمِكَافَلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنَّ أَرِبَّكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنَّ أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمٌ مُحِيطٌ (٨٤) وَيَقُولُمْ أَوْفُوا الْمِكَافَلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْنُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ (٨٥) بَقِيَّتِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِظٍ (٨٦) قَالُوا يَشْعَبُ أَصْلَوْاتِكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَنْتَرِكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ عَبَابُونَا أَوْ أَنْ تَنْفَعُ فِي أَهْوَانِنَا مَا نَشَوْأُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الْرَّشِيدُ (٨٧) قَالَ يَقُولُمْ أَرْعَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيْتَهُ مِنْ رَبِّي وَرَزْقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أَرِيدُ أَنْ أَخْالِفُكُمْ إِلَى مَا أَنْهَكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنْ أَرِيدُ إِلَّا الْأَصْلَاحَ مَا أُسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوْكِلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ (٨٨) وَيَقُولُمْ لَا يَجْرِمُنَّكُمْ شِقَاوَى أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَلَحٍ وَمَا قَوْمُ نُوطٍ مِنْكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ (٨٩) وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبِّكُمْ ثُمَّ ثُوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ (٩٠) قَالُوا يَشْعَبُ مَا نَفَقَهُ كَثِيرًا مَمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ (٩١) قَالَ يَقُولُمْ أَرْهَطِي أَعْزُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَأَنْخَذْتُمُوهُ وَرَأَءُكُمْ ظَهْرِيًّا إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ (٩٢) وَيَقُولُمْ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَى مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَلِمْ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيَهُ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيَهُ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَذِبٌ وَأَرْتَقِبُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ (٩٣) وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْتَنَا شُعَيْبًا وَالَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مَنًا وَأَحَدَّتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَرِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ (٩٤) كَانَ لَمْ يَقُولُمْ فِيهَا أَلَا بُعْدًا لِمَدِينَ كَمَا بَعْدَتِ نَمُودُ (٩٥)﴾

And unto Midian (We sent) their brother Shu'eyb. He said: O my people! Serve Allah. Ye have no other Allah save Him! And give not short measure and short weight. Lo! I see you well-to-do, and lo! I fear for you the doom of a besetting Day. (84) O my people! Give full measure and full weight in justice, and wrong not people in respect of their goods. And do not evil in the earth, causing corruption. (85) That which Allah leaveth with you is better for you if ye are believers; and I am not a keeper over you. (86) They said: O Shu'eyb! Doth thy way of prayer command thee that we should forsake that which our fathers (used to) worship, or that we (should leave off) doing what we will with our own property. Lo! thou art the mild, the guide to right behaviour. (87) He said: O my people! Bethink you: if I am (acting) on a clear proof from my Lord and He sustaineth me with fair sustenance from Him (how can I concede aught to you)? I desire not to do behind your backs that which I ask you not to do. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able. My welfare is only in Allah. In Him I trust and unto Him I turn (repentant). (88) And, O my people! Let not the schism with me cause you to sin so that there befall you that which befell the folk of Noah and the folk of Hud, and the folk of Salih; and the folk of Lot are not far off from you. (89) Ask pardon of your Lord and then turn unto Him (repentant). Lo! my Lord is Merciful, Loving. (90) They said: O Shu'eyb! We understand not much of that thou tellest, and lo! we do behold thee weak among us. But for thy family, we should have stoned thee, for thou art not strong against us. (91) He said: O my people! Is my family more to be honoured by you than Allah? and ye put Him behind you, neglected! Lo! my Lord surroundeth what ye do. (92) And, O my people! Act according to your power, lo! I (too) am acting. Ye will soon know on whom there cometh a doom that will abase him, and who it is that lieth. And watch! Lo! I am a watcher with you. (93) And when Our commandment came to pass We saved Shu'eyb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us; and the (Awful) Cry seized those who did injustice, and morning found them prostrate in their dwellings, (94) As though they had not dwelt there. A far removal for Midian, even as Thamud had been removed afar! (95)

(Surah Hud 84-95)

وَإِنْ كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيَّكَةِ لَظَالِمِينَ (٧٨) فَأَنْتَقْمَنَا مِنْهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمَا لَيِامَامٍ مُّبِينٍ (٧٩)

And the dwellers in the wood indeed were evil-doers. (78) So we took vengeance on them; and lo! they both are on a high-road plain to see. (79)

(Surah Al Hijr 78-79)

كَذَبَ أَصْحَابُ لَيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (١٧٦) إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ شُعَيْبٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ (١٧٧) إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ (١٧٨) فَأَنْتُقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ (١٧٩) وَمَا أَسْلَكْمُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (١٨٠) ◇ أَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِينَ (١٨١) وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ (١٨٢) وَلَا تَبْخُسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّقُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ (١٨٣) وَأَتَقُوا الَّذِي خَلَقْتُمْ وَالْجِلْلَةَ الْأَوَّلَيْنَ (١٨٤) قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ (١٨٥) وَمَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّنَّا وَإِنْ نُظْنُكَ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (١٨٦) فَأَسْقَطَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ (١٨٧) قَالَ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونِ (١٨٨) فَكَذَبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمَ الظِّلَّةِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ عَظِيمٍ (١٨٩) إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَا يَةٌ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ (١٩٠) وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْغَرِيزُ الْرَّحِيمُ (١٩١)

The dwellers in the wood (of Midian) denied the messengers (of Allah), (176) When Shu'eyb said unto them: Will ye not ward off (evil)? (177) Lo! I am a faithful messenger unto you, (178) So keep your duty to Allah and obey me. (179) And I ask of you no wage for it; my wage is the concern only of the Lord of the Worlds. (180) Give full measure, and be not of those who give less (than the due). (181) And weigh with the true balance. (182) Wrong not mankind in their goods, and do not evil, making mischief, in the earth. (183) And keep your duty unto Him Who created you and the generations of the men of old. (184) They said: Thou art but one of the bewitched; (185) Thou art but a mortal like us, and lo! we deem thee of the liars. (186) Then make fragments of the heaven fall upon us, if thou art of the truthful. (187) He said: My Lord is best aware of what ye do. (188) But they denied him, so there came on them the retribution of the day of gloom. Lo! it was the retribution of an awful day. (189) Lo! herein is indeed a portent; yet most of them are not believers. (190) And lo! thy Lord! He is indeed the Mighty, the Merciful. (191)

(Surah Al Shu'arah 176-191)

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَقُومٌ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَأَرْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَلَا تَقْنَعُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُفْسِدِينَ (٣٦) فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخْذَنَاهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ (٣٧)

And unto Midian We sent Shu'eyb, their brother. He said: O my people! Serve Allah, and look forward to the Last Day, and do not evil, making mischief, in the earth. (36) But they denied him, and the dreadful earthquake took them, and morning found them prostrate in their dwelling place. (37)

(Surah Al ankabut 36-37)

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَقُومٌ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْقُصُونَ الْمِكَالَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرِكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيطٍ (٨٤)

And unto Midian (We sent) their brother Shu'eyb. He said: O my people! Serve Allah. Ye have no other Allah save Him! And give not short measure and short weight. Lo! I see you well-to-do, and lo! I fear for you the doom of a besetting Day. (84)

(Surah Hud 84)

The message of all the prophets to their people was one of pure Tawhid: worship Allah alone and do not associate partners with him. Once a people began to commit Shirk, other sins followed easily.

وَلِقَوْمٍ أَوْفُوا الْمِكَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا الْأَنْسَاسَ أَشْيَاءُهُمْ وَلَا تَقْنَعُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُفْسِدِينَ (٨٥)

O my people! Give full measure and full weight in justice, and wrong not people in respect of their goods. And do not evil in the earth, causing corruption. (85)

(Surah Hud 85)

The smooth running of this entire universe is due to a balance created by Allah in all natural elements and forces. Even a slight imbalance in the proportion of any of its components can cause havoc for life on earth. A similar balance (Meezan) is required in human behaviour. By upsetting this balance, the Madyanites were opening the door to injustice and chaos in their society. There is an incredible lesson in this verse for human beings on earth today. The destruction of forests, the killing of animals unnecessarily, the pollution of the atmosphere, the waste of natural resources, widespread wars, and the general rape of the earth are all causing the natural balance of this earth to be destroyed. Beautiful animals are becoming extinct, the greenhouse effect is changing our weather, the polar ice-caps are melting and triggering fears of widespread flooding, animals are becoming infected with strange new diseases, toxic wastes are entering the food chain, and all living creatures on our planet are suffering. It is the duty of human beings to take stock of the serious situation and to return to a balanced way of life.

بِقِيَّتِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ (٨٦)

That which Allah leaveth with you is better for you if ye are believers; and I am not a keeper over you. (86)

(Surah Hud 86)

Fraud and dishonesty may bring a few more coins to the trader's purse, but a smaller income acquired through honest means brings with it peace and blessings.

قَالُوا يَشْعَيْبُ أَصْلَوْتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَنْتَرِكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ عَابِرُونَا أَوْ أَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنَّتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ (٨٧)

They said: O Shu'eyb! Doth thy way of prayer command thee that we should forsake that which our fathers (used to) worship, or that we (should leave off) doing what we will with our own property. Lo! thou art the mild, the guide to right behaviour. (87)

(Surah Hud 87)

The people attacked Shu'aib's way of praying, which was directed exclusively at Allah and not to the gods of their forefathers. Prayer is the most potent, physical symbol of a Muslim's worship, and it is usually the first tenet of Islam to be mocked.

قَالَ يَقُومُ أَرْعَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَرَزْقَنِيْ مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا إِلَاصْلَاحَ مَا أُسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوَفَّقَنِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوْكِيدُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ (٨٨)

He said: O my people! Bethink you: if I am (acting) on a clear proof from my Lord and He sustaineth me with fair sustenance from Him (how can I concede aught to you)? I desire not to do behind your backs that which I ask you not to do. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able. My welfare is only in Allah. In Him I trust and unto Him I turn (repentant). (88)

(Surah Hud 88)

Shu'aib's arguments were clear, logical and precise.

- a) He was sure of his mission from Allah, his Lord, who provided him with physical and spiritual sustenance.
- b) He would not forbid his people from acts which he himself enjoyed.
- c) His mission was to show them the right way.
- d) He had total trust in Allah for success and strength.

وَلَقَوْمٍ لَا يَجِدُونَكُمْ شَقِيقًا أَن يُصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلَ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَلَحٍ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِنْكُمْ بِيَعْلَمِ (٨٩)

And, O my people! Let not the schism with me cause you to sin so that there befall you that which befell the folk of Noah and the folk of Hud, and the folk of Salih; and the folk of Lot are not far off from you. (89)

(Surah Hud 89)

Shu'aib reminded them of the fate of other tribes who had been annihilated by Allah for refusing to mend their vile ways.

وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ (٩٠)

Ask pardon of your Lord and then turn unto Him (repentant). Lo! my Lord is Merciful, Loving. (90)

(Surah Hud 90)

Allah Almighty is extraordinarily merciful. No matter how terrible the sin, it can be cleansed if the sinner turns to Allah in genuine remorse and repentance.

قَالُوا يَا شَعِيبُ مَا نَفَقَهُ كَثِيرًا مَمَّا تَفْوَنُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرَيْكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِغَرِيزٍ (٩١)

They said: O Shu'eyb! We understand not much of that thou tellest, and lo! we do behold thee weak among us. But for thy family, we should have stoned thee, for thou art not strong against us. (91)

(Surah Hud 91)

The people pretended not to understand Shu'aib, as if his teachings of worship, honesty and integrity were concepts alien to man. They mocked Shu'aib because he had only a small group of followers, as if power was the criterion by which to judge a person's teachings. They expressed their desire to punish him by stoning, but refrained from carrying out the threat from fear of reprisal by his tribe.

قَالَ يَقُولُمْ أَرْهَطِي أَعْزُ عَلَيْكُمْ مَنْ أَلِلَّهِ وَأَنْخَذْتُمُوهُ وَرَأَيْكُمْ ظَهْرِيًّا إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ (٩٢)

He said: O my people! Is my family more to be honoured by you than Allah? and ye put Hir behind you, neglected! Lo! my Lord surroundeth what ye do. (92)

(Surah Hud 92)

Shu'aib's people feared the wrath of his small tribe, but were oblivious to the Fury and Vengeance of Allah.

وَيَقُولُونَ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانِتُكُمْ إِنِّي عَمِلْتُ سَوْفَ تَقْلُمُونَ مَنْ يَاتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ
وَأَرْتَقُبُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ رَّقِيبٌ (٩٣)

And, O my people! Act according to your power, lo! I (too) am acting. Ye will soon know on whom there cometh a doom that will abase him, and who it is that lieth. And watch! Lo! I am a watcher with you. (93)

(Surah Hud 93)

The duty of a prophet is to persevere in warning and teaching his people, regardless of their hostility. Allah Almighty always gives the errant people plenty of time to listen and obey, but if they persist in denying the prophet, He will eventually destroy them.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَالَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَأَخْذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْخَةَ
فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيرِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ (٩٤) كَانَ لَمْ يَقْنُوْ فِيهَا أَلَا بُعْدًا لِّمَدِينَ كَمَا بِعْدَ ثَمُودَ (٩٥)

And when Our commandment came to pass We saved Shu'eyb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us; and the (Awful) Cry seized those who did injustice, and morning found them prostrate in their dwellings, (94) As though they had not dwelt there. A far removal for Midian, even as Thamud had been removed afar! (95)

(Surah Hud 94-95)

When the time for destruction came, the people of Madyan were seized by a 'Sayha', a tremendous Cry. Perhaps this was a huge thunderstorm followed by an earthquake which obliterated the community of Madyan.

In Surah Ash Shu'arah, a similar story to that of the Mayanites is recounted with Prophet Shu'aib as their teacher, but the people are addressed as As-hab Al Aika (People of the Wood). As mentioned earlier, the two names may apply to the same community, or Prophet Shu'aib may have gone to As-hab Al Aika after the destruction of Madyan. This Surah narrates that the people were destroyed by the "Day of Shadow," which is explained by exegists as a day of unusually dark and thick clouds. The punishment of the people began with a hot and dry season of scorching heat. When dark clouds finally appeared, they rushed into the open in anticipation of cool and refreshing rain. Instead, Allah's punishment rained down upon them and annihilated them.

Prophet Shu'aib lived in Madyan well into his old age. When Prophet Musa left Egypt as a young man to escape Pharaoh's soldiers, he found refuge in Madyan. There he served Prophet Shu'aib, who had no sons, for eight years and then married his daughter.

3. Prophet Ayyub

Prophet Ayyub was a descendant of Esau, son of Is-haq, and lived sometime between 1,000 BC and 700 BC in Idumia, with the Dead Sea to the north and the Gulf of Aqabah to the south. Al Raqim (Petra) may have been the capital of Idumia. Ayyub's life was an example of patience and total dependence in Allah at a time of great suffering and adversity. He was a wealthy man who had fourteen children (seven boys and seven girls), extensive land and animals. Reports say he had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen and 500 mules. But a test of difficulty, extreme suffering and severe loneliness was awaiting him. Allah Almighty tests His creation in different ways: some He tests by showering them with comforts and ease, and others He afflicts with hardship and sorrows.

After enjoying health, wealth and happiness for many years, Ayyub had everything taken away from him. His cattle, servants and farms were destroyed until nothing was left. All his children were killed, perhaps when their house collapsed on top of them. And then Ayyub fell dreadfully ill, his body becoming covered in horrible sores. Family and friends deserted him until he was left poor, very ill and alone, with the exception of his faithful wife who remained by his side. The Book of Job in the Bible gives a detailed account of Ayyub's suffering, but such Jewish sources must be treated as unreliable.

After many years of suffering, Ayyub's wife began to complain one day. Ayyub asked her: "How many years did I enjoy good health and riches?"

"Eight years," she replied.

"And how long have I been ill?" he asked further.

"Seven years," she replied.

"Should I not be ashamed of asking Allah to remove my distress when I could not serve him for all those years of comfort and happiness? By Allah, were I to recover, I would flog you a hundred times!"

وَأَذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِي الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصُبٍ وَعَذَابٍ (٤١)

And make mention (O Muhammad) of Our bondman Job, when he cried unto his Lord (saying): Lo! the devil doth afflict me with distress and torment. (41)

(Surah Saad 38:41)

Prophet Ayyub prayed to Allah to have mercy upon him. His choice of words was illuminating: "Satan has touched me with distress..."

Iblis was whispering constantly in his ear, desperate to force Ayyub to show some signs of ingratitude and impatience to Allah. But Ayyub remained steadfast, and complained only of the machinations of Iblis.

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِي الْضُّرُّ وَأَنَّتِي أَرْحَمُ الْأَرْحَمِينَ (٨٣) فَأَسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ
مِنْ ضُرٌّ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلُهُمْ مَعْهُمْ رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرَى لِلْعَبْدِينَ (٨٤)

And Job, when he cried unto his Lord, (saying): Lo! adversity afflicteth me, and Thou art Most Merciful of all who show mercy. (83) Then We heard his prayer and removed that adversity from which he suffered, and We gave him his household (that he had lost) and the like thereof along with them, a mercy from Our store, and a remembrance for the worshippers; (84)

(Surah Al Anbiyah 21:83-84)

أَرْكضْ بِرْجِلِكَ هَذَا مُقْسِلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ (٤٢) وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَعْهُمْ رَحْمَةٌ مِّنَنَا
وَذِكْرَى لِأَوْلَى الْأَلَبَبِ (٤٣) وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِعْفَنَا فَاضْرِبْ بِهِ وَلَا تَحْنَثْ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ
إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ (٤٤)

(And it was said unto him): Strike the ground with thy foot. This (spring) is a cool bath and a refreshing drink. (42) And We bestowed on him (again) his household and therewith the like thereof, a mercy from Us, and a memorial for men of understanding. (43) And (it was said thereof, a mercy from Us, and a memorial for men of understanding. (43) And (it was said unto him): Take in thine hand a branch and smite therewith, and break not thine oath. Lo! unto him): Take in thine hand a branch and smite therewith, and break not thine oath. Lo! we found him steadfast, how excellent a slave! Lo! he was ever turning in repentance (to his Lord). (44)

(Surah Saad 42-44)

After many years of suffering and pain, Ayyub was once again given health, wealth and a family. He was instructed to strike his foot on the ground, from where a spring of cool, refreshing water began to flow. Ayyub bathed in this water and emerged from it cured.

Ayyub's wife had been a pillar of support and patience throughout his illness. He wanted to treat her gently, but was under an obligation to fulfil his oath of whipping her a hundred times, made when she had been complaining. He prayed to Allah for guidance and was instructed to strike her once, but gently, with a bundle of a hundred reeds. His oath would be fulfilled without causing her pain.

The above incident is an example of the wisdom of Islamic Shari'ah Law. If a certain article of the Law cannot be enforced in its entirety for a valid reason, it should not be abandoned but replaced by a token action. For example, wudhu (ablution) is compulsory before prayer. If however, water is unavailable, it can be replaced by the token act of Tayammum (wiping one's hands on a dusty ground and then wiping the face with them). Similarly, a person who is too ill to get up for prayer must pray from his sick-bed. He can make slight movements of his hands and head to indicate the different movements of prayer, and thus fulfil the obligation to pray.

Prophet Ayyub's life returned to one of prosperity and happiness. He lived for 93 years and left 26 children behind. Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) told this amusing story: "Once when Ayyub was naked and taking a bath, a swarm of golden locusts arrived and he began to collect them in his clothes. His Lord called to him, 'O Ayyub! Have I not made you too rich to need what you see?' Ayyub replied 'Yes, O Lord. But I cannot shun your blessings!'"

(Bukhari)

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(Bukhari)

Chapter 2

HADITH: TRAVELLER'S PRAYER

Ibn Abbas said, “Allah has prescribed the prayer by the tongue of your Prophet as four rak’ahs when resident, two rak’ahs when travelling, and one rak’ah when danger is present.” (Muslim)

When a person is travelling, his lifestyle changes dramatically. He will live out of suitcases, he will constantly be packing and unpacking, and he will have worries and anxieties about the rest of the journey. His state of mind is summed up neatly in a hadith which reminds the Muslim of good manners in du’a, which are to remember the Prophet (saw) at the beginning, middle and end of his du’a. The Prophet said, “*Do not treat me as you treat your cup when travelling.*” The cup is usually the last thing remembered amidst the confusion of packing and travelling.

Allah, the Most Compassionate and Merciful, has lightened the burden for travellers by allowing them to shorten their prayers. Allah says,

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خَفْتُمْ أَنْ يَقْتَلُوكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَفَرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عُدُوًّا مُّبِينًا (١٠١)

And when ye go forth in the land, it is no sin for you to curtail (your) worship if ye fear that those who disbelieve may attack you. In truth the disbelievers are an open enemy to you. (101)

(Surah An Nisaa 101)

Ya’la b. Umayya said to Umar b. Khattab, “Allah made the shortened prayer conditional on fear of trouble. We are now secure and peaceful, so why should we shorten our prayer?” Umar replied, “Indeed I wondered the same thing so I asked the Messenger of Allah, who replied that, “It is an act of charity which Allah has given to you, so accept this charity.” (Muslim)

Jam'a and Taqseer

Jam'a is to combine two shortened prayers together. Zuhr and Asr are paired and can be combined at the time of either prayer, and Maghrib and Isha are also paired in the same way. Fajr remains unchanged.

Mu’adh b. Jabal said that on the expedition to Tabuk, the Prophet (saw) combined Zuhr and Asr prayers if the sun had passed the meridian before he resumed his journey. If the sun had not yet passed the meridian, the Prophet (saw) delayed Zuhr prayer until he halted for the Asr prayer. He acted in a similar way for the Maghrib and Isha prayers. If the sun set before he moved off, he combined the Maghrib and Isha prayers. If he moved off before sunset, he delayed Maghrib and combined it with Isha when he halted for it. (Abu Dawud)

Taqseer is to shorten the four rak'ah prayers to two rak'ahs. Zuhr, Asr and Isha are affected. Imran b. Husain said, *“I went on an expedition with the Prophet and was present with him at the Conquest of Makkah. He stayed in Makkah for eighteen days and prayed only two rak'ahs for each prayer. He said, ‘You who are resident in Makkah must pray four, but we are travellers.’”* (Abu Dawud)

A traveller will thus pray two rak'ahs for Zuhr and two rak'ahs for Asr in the afternoon, at the time of either prayer. The prayers are said consecutively and if they are in congregation, a new Iqamah is said for the second prayer.

In the evening, the traveller will pray three rak'ahs for Maghrib and two rak'ahs for Isha, followed by Witr.

Abdullah ibn Umar once said, *“Whenever the Prophet (saw) was in a hurry, he would delay the Maghrib prayer and then offer three rak'ahs, then make taslim (to finish the prayer). Then, with hardly a break, he pronounced the Iqamah and offered two rak'ahs for Isha. He would not offer any optional rak'ahs unless he got up in the middle of the night.”* (Bukhari)

Shortening the Prayer: Optional or Compulsory?

Al Imam Ash Shawkani has dealt with this question thoroughly. He writes that, “The people of knowledge differ as to whether Taqseer is compulsory or optional, and whether completion is better. The first is the Hanafi view. Al-Imam Al-Khattabi said, “The majority of the Salafi Ulema, the Faqihs (scholars) of different regions of Islam, are of the view that Taqseer is indispensable when travelling.” The second opinion is that of the Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali schools.”

After reviewing the arguments of the two camps, Ash Shawkani concludes, “From the proofs we have mentioned above, it is clear that the view that Taqsir is indispensable is the stronger view. The claim that completion of the prayer is preferable is challenged by the fact that the Prophet (saw) shortened the prayer in all his travels. It was against his character to do what was not preferable, and to abandon what was preferable.”

The minimum travelling distance for Taqseer.

There is a difference of opinion concerning the minimum distance after which prayer can be shortened. The literalist School is of the opinion that any journey longer than one mile qualifies for Taqseer. The Hanafi School defines it in terms of a walking- distance of three days. Less than that would not qualify for Taqseer. The Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali scholars define the minimum distance to be approximately 81 Kilometres.

After discussing the evidence behind these opinions, Imam Ash Shawkani writes, “What is definite is a minimum distance of three farsakh (15.150km) because the Hadith of Anas is unclear: three miles or farsakh? To be on the safe side, we say that three farsakh is the shortest distance we must travel before we can pray Taqseer.”

The starting point for Taqseer.

Calculations of distance in order to shorten prayer may begin only when the outskirts of one's hometown have been reached; they do not begin from one's home itself. The Prophet (saw) never shortened his prayers while still in Madinah.

The number of days a traveller can pray Taqseer at his destination.

There is some dispute concerning the number of days a traveller can pray Taqseer once he has arrived at his destination. Scholars have allowed the shortening of prayers for four, ten, twelve and even fifteen days. On the other hand, Aisha once said, "If you unpack your luggage, you may not shorten the prayer, even if it is for one day."

This suggests that anyone who unpacks his luggage is showing his intent to remain resident, albeit for a short while, and cannot be termed a traveller.

The majority opinion on the number of days for Taqseer is that if the person knows the exact length of his stay, he may pray Qasr as long as the maximum duration of his stay is four days. He must pray the full prayer if he is planning to stay longer than that. The four- day rule is derived from the Hajj, which takes a minimum of four days to complete.

Staying for an unknown length of time.

We have dealt with the issue of Taqseer when staying for a fixed number of days. But at times a person may not know the exact duration of his stay, perhaps during business travels, medical treatment, or if stranded due to bad weather.

Mu'adh b. Jabal and Imran b. Husain relate that the Prophet (saw) offered Qasr prayer for twenty days at Tabuk, and eighteen days in Makkah after its conquest. Umar spent a few months (between two and four) in Azerbaijan waiting for the ice to melt before he could return home, and he too prayed Qasr during this time.

Various schools of thought thus allow the person to pray Qasr for between fifteen to nineteen days. Imam Abu Hanifa and others were of the opinion that one can pray Qasr indefinitely when away from home. But the opinion closest to the spirit of the Sunnah is that a person should complete his prayer if he has un-packed and made himself comfortable. Students who leave home for a few years in order to study cannot be termed travellers, no matter how strong the homesickness! Qasr is intended for those who are travelling, and anyone who settles down like a resident is not a traveller. The Prophet (saw) prayed Qasr in Makkah and Tabuk for almost three weeks because he was leading military expeditions and thus unsure of the length of his task.

Chapter 3

BELIEF IN THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT (YAWM AL QIYAMAH).

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَعِبَنَ (٣٨) مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٣٩) إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَحْلِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (٤٠)

And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, in play. (38) We created them not save with truth; but most of them know not. (39) Assuredly the Day of Decision is the term for all of them, (40)

(Surah Ad Dukhan 44:38-40)

Our universe is a very complicated, vast and exciting place to inhabit. Seasons come and go, nature shows its immense beauty, power, creativity as well as destructiveness; plants of huge diversity, beauty, fragrance, nutritional value and healing properties enrich our surroundings; animals of land, sea and air astound us with their colours, sizes, speed, strength, intelligence and amazing resilience; the landscape of mountains, valleys, oceans, deserts and rainforests is breathtaking in its variety and grandeur. Everywhere we turn there is something new to discover and enjoy. And in the midst of all this glorious creation is Man, who masters, utilizes, uses and abuses this fantastic planet.

Those unfortunate beings who have no correct faith to guide them will spend their lives in the pursuit of wealth and carnal pleasures. Their motto is that life is for living, there is no second chance, so live it to the full. Many will use dishonest means, even criminal ones, to achieve their ambitions. And it is this mentality, this *raison d'être*, that is destroying not only mankind but this planet as well. In this greed to milk the planet of all its resources, rainforests are being destroyed, the air is being poisoned, oceans polluted and wildlife made extinct. Moral values, standards of decency and ethics are fast disappearing. The gap between the rich and poor nations continues to widen; in order to maintain their gluttonous lifestyles, the rich nations exploit, cheat and steal from the poor nations.

Fortunately there are many people, even today, who have been blessed with faith, clarity of vision, certainty of purpose and incredible compassion. Such noble characteristics are an inevitable result of opening one's heart to the Creator of this universe. Such people realize that this life is not the only existence and that we have to prepare ourselves for the eternal life to come. Man has been created for the specific purpose of worshipping Allah, thanking Him for the innumerable favours we enjoy, and living life in a manner that befits our status as human beings.

"I have not created Man and Jinn except that they should worship Me."
(Surah Ad Dhariyat)

Two of the most important Islamic teachings are those of justice and accountability. Man cannot steam-roll his way through life, destroying his fellow beings and environment in order to fulfil his own greedy ambitions. He has to be accountable for everything he says and does, not to ordinary courts, but to the Court of his Creator. Communities have always attempted to

prevent and punish evil through law-enforcement agencies, but they are themselves mere mortals who cannot watch everyone all the time. Behind closed doors, in the darkness of the night, through lies and dishonesty, criminals often have an easy time. But Allah Almighty is immortal and flawless, and He alone has the supreme power needed to hold every man and jinn to account.

The second issue is that of justice. This mortal world is full of drawbacks which make it difficult to achieve justice. Man has created the offices of police, courts and the judiciary in order to implement law and justice. But all these offices are run by ordinary mortals, none of whom have the capability to read people's minds, look into their hearts and see what is happening behind closed doors.

And so injustices are done repeatedly. Monstrous criminals walk away from the courts laughing because their lawyers used legal loopholes to their advantage, or because the jury believed their lies, or because of lack of evidence, or maybe even because the witnesses were terrorised into silence. In any case, justice is not done. Often people are penalised, sacked, publicly humiliated or even hanged for crimes they did not commit. Posthumous pardons will not bring them back from the dead or rebuild the lives of those destroyed by such miscarriages of justice.

And who is there to police the states, police the law-makers or police the police? When those in power are corrupt, it is money and nepotism that succeed, not justice. And when justice is seen to be done, it is still flawed and limited. Criminals destroy the lives of more people than their direct victims. Their actions affect the families, friends and colleagues of their victims, none of whom can be helped by the justice system. Even when criminals are incarcerated or executed, the lives they have affected will never be the same again.

Divine justice, on the other hand, is complete, absolute and flawless. If a man kills ten times, Allah alone can execute him and then give him life ten times as well. And Allah alone can add to this punishment the misery and pain of every single individual affected by the original murders. The Almighty alone has the power to hold each and every person to account for everything, from minor sins to major crimes. And He alone can give rewards for the smallest acts of good to the largest.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصُدُّرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتُ لَيْرُوا أَعْمَلَهُمْ (٦) فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (٧) وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ
مِنْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (٨)

That day mankind will issue forth in scattered groups to be shown their deeds. (6) And whoso doeth good an atom's weight will see it then, (7) And whoso doeth ill an atom's weight will see it then. (8)

(Surah Az Zilzal 6-8)

Beliefs such as our accountability to our Creator, and a Day of Justice, Recompense and Retribution serve to lift a man from the level of a greedy, self-serving beast to that of a noble and pure human. Such beliefs serve to flash red warning lights in front of a person when satan is urging him to evil. Disobedience to parents, lying, stealing, adultery, greed, selfishness and murder become anathema when a person is convinced of Yawm al Qiyamah.

The descriptions of the Day of Judgement in the Quran and Hadith are vivid and terrifying.

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوَرَتْ (١) وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ أَنْكَرَتْ (٢) وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيَرَتْ (٣) وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطْلَتْ (٤) وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ (٥) وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجْرَتْ (٦) وَإِذَا الْنُفُوسُ رُوَجَتْ (٧) وَإِذَا الْمَوْعِدَةُ سُلَيْتْ (٨) بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ (٩) وَإِذَا الْصُّحْفُ نُشِرَتْ (١٠) وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ (١١) وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِرَتْ (١٢) وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ (١٣) عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَا أَحْضَرَتْ (١٤)

When the sun is overthrown, (1) And when the stars fall, (2) And when the hills are moved, (3) And when the camels big with young are abandoned, (4) And when the wild beasts are herded together, (5) And when the seas rise, (6) And when souls are reunited, (7) And when the girl-child that was buried alive is asked (8) For what sin she was slain, (9) And when the pages are laid open, (10) And when the sky is torn away, (11) And when Hell is lighted, (12) And when the garden is brought nigh, (13) (Then) every soul will know what it hath made ready. (14)

(Surah At Takwir 81:1-14)

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ (١) وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَرَتْ (٢) وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِرَتْ (٣) وَإِذَا الْقُبُوْرُ بُعْثِرَتْ (٤) عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخْرَتْ (٥)

When the heaven is cleft asunder, (1) When the planets are dispersed, (2) When the seas are poured forth, (3) And the sepulchres are overturned, (4) A soul will know what it hath sent before (it) and what left behind. (5)

(Surah Al Infitar 82:1-5)

The Day of Judgement will be preceded by a number of terrifying trials during which most of the Muslims will be annihilated. The trials include the coming of the Mahdi, the descent of Isa ibn Maryam, Gog and Magog, and the Dajjal (the Antichrist). By the end of the world, wickedness and evil will be rampant, and the Trumpet will be blown on these people. The first blast of the Trumpet will cause every living creation - man, beast, jinn and bird- to fall down dead. A second blast of the Trumpet will be sounded, and every human being and jinn who was ever born on earth will rise from the ground. The entire surface of the earth will crack as men and women will rise from their graves, some from graves as old as Prophet Adam. This will be the Resurrection, when entire humanity will rise to face its Lord.

Abdullah b. Amr reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “.... The wicked will remain as unstable as birds and with the behaviour of beasts of prey, neither doing what is good nor rejecting what is evil. The devil will then appear and they will ask him for guidance. He will order them to worship idols. While they are doing so and enjoying abundant provisions and a pleasant life, the Trumpet will be blown ... and mankind will fall down dead. Allah will then send a rain-like dew by which He will cause the bodies of men to sprout from the ground. Then a second blast of the trumpet will be blown, and everyone will stand. Mankind will be summoned to its Lord and the angels will restrain them for the questioning. Command will be given to bring those who are to go to hell, and when the angels ask about the proportion of this, they will be told it is nine hundred and ninetynine people out of every thousand. That will be a day which will make the hair of children turn grey....” (Muslim)

The resurrection will be a time of tremendous fear when man will see reality for the first time and will finally realize the futility of chasing after worldly riches. Assembled in front of his Lord and flanked by the vast and uncompromising armies of angels, each person will be quaking from sheer terror.

Aisha (ra) said that Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*Mankind will be assembled on the day of Resurrection barefoot, naked and uncircumcised*". She asked him if men and women would stare at each other, and he replied, "*The matter will be too serious for them to look at each other, Aisha*".

(Agreed upon)

Al Miqdad said he heard Allah's Messenger (saw) say. "On the Day of Resurrection, the sun will come near created beings until it is about a mile from them, and mankind will sweat according to their deeds; the sweat will reach the ankles of some, the knees of others, the waists of others, and some will be mouth-deep in sweat."

(Muslim)

Each individual will be brought forward to Allah by the angels, to face the Questioning about his life on earth. His deeds will surround him, and he will tremble while remembering the manner in which he wasted his life on earth. The Book of Records, kept by the two angels who accompany each individual, will be presented for scrutiny and his deeds will be weighed on the Scales. Nothing will escape scrutiny, from the minutest acts of good to the worst acts of depravity. He will be questioned, but his tongue will not be permitted to speak. Instead, the limbs and organs of his body will speak; they will admit to everything he said, did, heard, saw and participated in. In a hadith narrated by Anas, the Prophet (saw) said that Allah almighty will say to man,

"You are sufficient as a witness against yourself, as are the Noble Scribes who kept the records.' His mouth will then be sealed and the members of his body will be told to speak. They will tell about his deeds, and when he is finally permitted to speak, he will say to his own limbs, 'May you perish and be cursed! It was in your defence that I was pleading.'"

(Muslim)

Ibn Mas'ud reported that the Prophet (saw) said, "*The son of Adam will not be permitted to move from his place on the day of Judgement until he has been questioned about five things:*

-how did he spend his life?

-how did he spend his youth in particular?

-from which source did he earn his livelihood?

-how did he spend his wealth?

-to what extent did he practise what he knew?

(Tirmidhi)

The day of Resurrection will be long and dreadful for most people, but it will be made easy for the true believers. Abu Sa'eed al Khudri narrated that the Prophet (saw) was once asked about the following Quranic verse: '*..a Day which is fifty thousand years long,' and how men will endure such a day.* He replied, "*By Him in whose hands is my soul. The day will be made*

easy for the believer, to the extent that it will be easier for him than the obligatory prayers that he used to perform in this world.”

(Baihaqi)

In the tremendous heat and atmosphere of terror, the people will spot Al Kauthar, which is the pond of paradise. This pond was given as a gift to Prophet Muhammad (saw) during his Mi'raj journey to the heavens, and he alone will have the right to offer water from it to his true and dedicated followers. Abdullah bin Amr reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “*To cross my pond is a month's journey, and its sides are equal. Its water is whiter than milk, its fragrance is sweeter than musk, and its jugs are like stars in the sky. He who drinks from it will never be thirsty again.*”

(Agreed upon)

Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “*My pond is bigger than the distance between Aila and Aden. It is whiter than snow, sweeter than honey mixed with milk, and its vessels are more numerous than the stars. I shall drive (undeserving) people away from it just as a man drives away other people's camels from his pond.*”

The companions asked the Prophet if he would recognize them on that day, and he replied, “Yes, you will have a mark not possessed by others. You will come to me with white blazes on your foreheads, and white marks on your hands and feet because of the traces of ablution.”

(Muslim)

Intercession will be permitted after permission has been granted by Allah almighty, but it will be limited to the best of creation: the prophets, the scholars of Islam and the martyrs. Uthman b. Affan reported that Allah's Messenger (saw) said, “*Three groups will make intercession on the day of Resurrection: the prophets, then the scholars, and then the martyrs.*”

(Ibn Majah)

After the questioning is complete, a Path (sirat) will be laid across hellfire, and each individual will have to cross the path. It will be a narrow, dark, slippery and thorny path, and each individual will cross it with the aid of the actions he did on earth. Some will cross it with lightning speed, others will stumble across in pain from lacerations by the spikes, yet others will falter after the first step and fall straight into the abyss of hell.

Hudhaifa reported that Allah's Messenger (saw) said, “*...Faith and ties of relationship will be stand to stand on the sides of the Path, right and left. The first among you will cross it like lightning, the next will cross it with the speed of wind, the next will cross it with the speed of birds...until men will come whose deeds are so weak that they will be able only to crawl. On both sides of the Path will be protruding long hooks, which will seize those about whom they receive the command; some will be lacerated but allowed to escape, while others will be flung headlong into hell. By Him in whose hand is my soul! The pit of jahannam is a journey down of seventy years.*”

(Muslim)

All relatives, friends and loved ones will be forgotten amidst the horrors of that Day. Aisha once asked the Prophet (saw) if he would remember his family on the day of Resurrection, and he replied, “*There are three places where no-one will remember anyone: at the Scale,*

until one knows whether his weight is light or heavy; at the examination of the Book, when command is given to read his record, until he learns whether he will receive his book in his left or right hand; and at the Path when it is placed across jahannam.” (Abu Dawud)

The day of Judgement should be feared by every wrongdoer, as it is a day of supreme terror and punishment; but it is also a day of pure justice and complete reward, when all the wrongs and injustices of this world will be put to right. May Allah Almighty make it easy for all true believers.



LESSON
9

Chapter 1

PROPHET MUSA (MOSES) AND HARUN (AARON)

It has been explained in an earlier discussion that Prophet Yusuf and his entire family settled to a new life in Egypt under the protection of the Egyptian king. Prophet Yaqub had twelve sons, and from these men descended the twelve tribes of the Israelites. Over the years the political landscape of Egypt changed dramatically; the ruling family began to fear the influence of the Hebrews on their pagan beliefs and so began to oppress and enslave them. By the time Prophet Musa was born, the Israelites had fallen from being royal officials to slave labourers. They now lived lives of poverty, persecution and misery. Musa was from the family of Lawi b. Yaqub and lived during the reign of Ramesis II, a mighty King of the Pharaonic dynasty (1292BC to 1225BC). The Pharaoh was worshipped as a god by the Egyptian pagans and thus wielded immense power.

The story of Prophet Musa has been mentioned repeatedly in the Quran because of the similarities between him and Prophet Muhammad (saw). Both men were founders of great dynasties. Both led their followers in astounding physical and psychological journeys: Musa led his huge nation in the exodus from Egypt to Palestine, an arduous journey to escape oppression and gain independence; Prophet Muhammad (saw) led his people from oppression in Makkah to independence in Madinah, and later led them in fantastic victories throughout the Arabian peninsula and beyond. Both men were prophets to chosen people; the Israelites were chosen by Allah to receive His message and impart it to the world, but they became disobedient, ungrateful and extremely arrogant. They convinced themselves that this special favour was a birthright which made them superior to others, instead of understanding that it was a divine favour awarded to them for spreading the religion of Allah. Considering themselves to be above the law and above reproach, the Israelites murdered their prophets, mocked divine commandments and rebelled against Allah. After centuries of such behaviour, Allah Almighty removed their special status and chose the Muslims to receive the final Message and become beacons of light for the entire world. The story of the fall from grace of the Israelites holds tremendous lessons for Muslims if they wish to avoid the mistakes of their predecessors. Learning of events in the life of his brother-prophet, Prophet Musa, also gave immense solace, encouragement and strength to Prophet Muhammad (saw) when he too faced hardship, rejection and sorrow.

1. Musa's Childhood

تِلْكَ عَائِتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ (٢) نَتَّلُوْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَبِيًّا مُوسَى وَفَرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُوْمِنُونَ (٣) إِنَّ فَرْعَوْنَ عَلَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شَيْعًا يَسْتَضْعِفُ طَبِيعَةً مِنْهُمْ يُذْبِحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَخْرِجُ نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (٤)

These are revelations of the Scripture that maketh plain. (2) We narrate unto thee (somewhat) of the story of Moses and Pharaoh with truth, for folk who believe. (3) Lo! Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made its people castes. A tribe among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. Lo! he was of those who work corruption. (4)

(Surah Al Qasas 28:2-4)

The Pharaoh (Fir'aun) was considered to be a symbol of the sun-god and so was worshipped by his people. Ramesis II was advised by his courtiers that his downfall would come at the hands of an Israelite, so he ordered that every alternate year, the new-born sons of the Hebrews should all be killed. Musa's older brother Harun was born in a year when boys were not put to the sword, so he survived. But Musa was born in a year of death, and his mother was distraught at the thought that her new baby would soon be killed. Allah Almighty inspired her to place Musa in a basket and allow him to float down the river. The river ran close by the royal palace and so the baby was found. The queen was childless and persuaded her husband to bring up the boy as their own. But the baby cried desperately and would not allow any of the royal nannies to comfort or suckle him. Musa's mother heard of this and presented herself at the palace as a wet-nurse. In her arms the baby was immediately content, and so Pharaoh employed her as Musa's nurse. Musa grew up in the palace as a prince, his adopted father unaware that this young man would be the architect of his destruction. To prepare Musa for the role of liberator of the Israelites, Allah Almighty granted him knowledge, courage and wisdom.

2. Musa kills an Egyptian.

As a young man, Musa was once walking through the city when he saw two men fighting, one of whom was an Egyptian and the other an Israelite. The Hebrew pleaded for help and Musa rushed to his aid. He struck the Egyptian a severe blow which made him fall, thus killing him. Musa was horrified and deeply repentant. He had planned only to injure, not to kill. He prayed earnestly for Allah's forgiveness, and this was granted to him. The next day Musa saw the same Israelite fighting someone else. When he saw Musa's reproachful stare, the man shouted, "Will you kill me the way you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" The secret was out and news of it spread. The penalty for killing an Egyptian was death, and a friend warned Musa that the palace was planning to execute him. Musa was forced to leave the country of his birth and childhood and fled alone to Madyan, a settlement on the Gulf of Aqabah.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) was also forced to leave his homeland and family because the situation in Makkah had become just too hostile and dangerous for him. He later returned to Makkah only briefly to conquer it, just as Musa later returned to Egypt only briefly to lead the Israelites out of slavery.

3. In Madyan

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْفَاءَ مَدِينَ قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَنْ يَهْدِنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ (٢٢) وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدِينَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ أَمْرَاتٍ تَذُودَانِ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّىٰ يُصْدِرَ الْرِّعَاءُ وَأَبْوُنَا شِيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ (٢٣) فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ إِلَى الظَّلَلِ فَقَالَ رَبِّي إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ (٢٤) فَجَاءَهُ أَحَدُهُمَا تَمَشِّي عَلَى أَسْتِحْيَاءٍ قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ أَجْرًا مَا سَقَيْتَ لَنَا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقَصَصَ قَالَ لَا تَخْفَنِي وَلَا تَنْجُوْتَ مِنْ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (٢٥) قَالَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا يَا أَبَتِ أَسْتَجِرْهُ إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَجَرَتِ الْقَوْمُ الْأَمِينُ (٢٦)

قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنْكِحَ إِحْدَى أَبْنَتِي هَتَّيْنِ عَلَى أَنْ تَأْجُرَنِي ثَمَنَى حِجَاجٍ فَإِنْ أَتَمْمَتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَشْقَى عَلَيْكَ سَتَجْدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (٢٧) قَالَ ذَلِكَ بِيَنِّي وَبِيَنِّكَ أَيْمَانَ الْأَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلَا عُذْوَانَ عَلَى وَاللَّهِ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ (٢٨)

And when he turned his face toward Midian, he said: Peradventure my Lord will guide me in the right road. (22) And when he came unto the water of Midian he found there a whole tribe of men, watering. And he found apart from them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: What aileth you? The two said: We cannot give (our flocks) to drink till the shepherds return from the water; and our father is a very old man. (23) So he watered (their flock) for them. Then he turned aside into the shade, and said: My Lord! I am needy of whatever good Thou sendest down for me. (24) Then there came unto him one of the two women, walking shyly. She said: Lo! my father biddeth thee, that he may reward thee with a payment for that thou didst water (the flock) for us. Then, when he came unto him and told him the (whole) story, he said: Fear not! Thou hast escaped from the wrongdoing folk. (25) One of the two women said: O my father! Hire him! For the best (man) that thou canst hire is the strong, the trustworthy. (26) He said: Lo! I fain would marry thee to one of these two daughters of mine on condition that thou hirdest thyself to me for (the term of) eight pilgrimages. Then if thou completest ten it will be of thine own accord, for I would not make it hard for thee. Allah willing, thou wilt find me of the righteous. (27) He said: That (is settled) between thee and me. Whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there will be no injustice to me, and Allah is Surety over what we say. (28)

(Surah Al Qasas 28:22-28)

The mission of Prophet Shu'aib in Madyan has been discussed in an earlier lesson. By the time Musa arrived in Madyan, Prophet Shu'aib was an elderly man whose household and farming tasks were undertaken by his two young daughters. Musa arrived at Madyan and headed straight for a well to quench his thirst after his long and arduous journey. He saw two young ladies with sheep, standing modestly at a distance, waiting for the shepherds who were watering their flock to move away. Musa took pity on the young women and stepped forward to help. When Shu'aib heard of the incident, he invited the stranger to his home and offered him work as his shepherd. Later he offered Musa the hand of his daughter in marriage in return for service of 8-10 years.

4. Musa Is Given A Divine Mission

وَهَلْ أَنْتَكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى (٩) إِذْ رَءَاهَا نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ أَمْكُثُوا إِنِّي عَانِسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلَّنِي عَاتِيْكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبِيسٍ أَوْ أَجْدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى (١٠) فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِي يَمْوَسَى (١١) إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَأَخْلُعُ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوْيٍ (١٢) وَأَنَا أَخْتَرُكَ فَأَسْتَمِعُ لِمَا يُوْحَى (١٣) إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَأَعْبُدُنِي وَأَقِمُ الْصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي (١٤) إِنَّ لِسَاعَةَ عَاتِيَةً أَكَادُ أَخْفِيَهَا تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَى (١٥) فَلَا يَصُدُّنِكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَأَتَبْعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرَدَّى (١٦) وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَمْوَسَى (١٧) قَالَ هِيَ عَصَى أَتَوْكَوْا عَلَيْهَا وَأَهْشَنُ بِهَا عَلَى غَمِّيَ وَلَى فِيهَا مَأْرُبُ أَخْرَى

(١٨) قَالَ الْفِتْنَةَا يَلْمُوسَى (١٩) فَلَقَنَهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَى (٢٠) قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخْفَ سَتْعِدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأَوْلَى (٢١) وَأَضْمَمْ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بِيَضَاءَ مِنْ عَيْرِ سُوَءٍ عَيْنَةً أُخْرَى (٢٢) لِنُرِيكَ مِنْ عَيْنَتَنَا الْكُبْرَى (٢٣) أَدْهَبَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى (٢٤)

Hath there come unto thee the story of Moses? (9) When he saw a fire and said unto his folk: Wait! Lo! I see a fire afar off. Peradventure I may bring you a brand therefrom or may find guidance at the fire. (10) And when he reached it, he was called by name: O Moses! (11) Lo! I, even I, am thy Lord, So take off thy shoes, for lo! thou art in the holy valley of Tuwa. (12) And I have chosen thee, so hearken unto that which is inspired. (13) Lo! I, even I, am Allah, There is no God save Me. So serve Me and establish worship for My remembrance. (14) Lo! the Hour is surely coming. But I will to keep it hidden, that every soul may be rewarded for that which it striveth (to achieve). (15) Therefor, let not him turn thee aside from (the thought of) it who believeth not therein but followeth his own desire, lest thou perish. (16) And what is that in thy right hand, O Moses? (17) He said: This is my staff whereon I lean, and wherewith I beat down branches for my sheep, and wherein I find other uses. (18) He said: Cast it down, O Moses! (19) So he cast it down, and lo! it was a serpent, gliding. (20) He said: Grasp it and fear not. We shall return it to its former state. (21) And thrust thy hand within thine armpit, it will come forth white without hurt. (That will be) another token. (22) That We may show thee (some) of Our greater portents, (23) Go thou unto Pharaoh! Lo! he hath transgressed (the bounds). (24)

(Surah Ta Ha 20: 9-24)

After completing the term of service in Madyan, Musa decided to return to Egypt with his wife and family. Travelling through the desert one day, he saw a fire near Mount Sinai in the valley of Tuwa. Leaving his encampment, Musa approached the fire. From the fire Allah Almighty spoke to him, telling him he had been chosen to be a Prophet. Musa was then ordered to return to Egypt and invite Pharaoh and his people to Tawhid: the worship of Allah alone. His second task was to lead the Israelites out of misery and slavery in Egypt to freedom in Palestine.

فَأَتَيْنَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (١٦) أَنْ أَرْسِلَ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ (١٧)

And come together unto Pharaoh and say: Lo! we bear a message of the Lord of the Worlds, (16) (Saying): Let the Children of Israel go with us. (17)
(Surah Al Shu'ara 26:16-17)

Allah Almighty also gave Musa some specific teachings in the valley of Tuwa:

1. There is none to be worshipped except Allah.
2. Allah Almighty is to be worshipped and obeyed in all aspects of life.
3. Prayer is a physical symbol of man's loyalty to his Creator, and must be established.
4. Allah Almighty will resurrect all souls on the day of Judgement to pass judgement on their lives on earth.

Pharaoh was a powerful and tyrannical king, and Musa would appear before him a criminal who had killed an Egyptian and then escaped the country. To help him in his task, Allah awarded Musa two special miracles: when he issued the command, his shepherd's staff would turn into a huge snake, and when he placed his hand under his armpit, it would come out glowing brightly. With these two signs, Musa was ordained a Messenger of Allah and commissioned to preach to Pharaoh.

There is always great wisdom in preaching first to the heads and elders of a community. Once those in power and authority embrace Islam, it becomes easy and even natural for the ordinary masses to follow suit. This however, does not mean that the common people should not be invited to the truth, because the numbers of the masses will always be a great asset to any da'wah movement.

5. Musa's Plea For An Assistant

فَالَّرَبِّ أَشْرَحْ لِي صَدَرِي (٢٥) وَبَيْسِرْ لِي أَمْرِي (٢٦) وَأَحْلَلْ عَقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي (٢٧) يَفْقَهُوا
قَوْلِي (٢٨) وَأَجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِنْ أَهْلِي (٢٩) هَرُونَ أَخِي (٣٠) أَشَدَّدْ بِهِ أَزِيرِي (٣١)
وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي (٣٢) كَيْ نُسْبِحَ كَثِيرًا (٣٣) وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا (٣٤) إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا
(٣٥) قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُولَكَ يَمْوُسَى (٣٦)

(Moses) said: My Lord! relieve my mind (25) And ease my task for me; (26) And loose a knot from my tongue, (27) That they may understand my saying. (28) Appoint for me a henchman from my folk, (29) Aaron, my brother. (30) Confirm my strength with him (31) And let him share my task, (32) That we may glorify Thee much (33) And much remember Thee. (34) Lo! Thou art ever Seeing us. (35) He said: Thou art granted thy request, O Moses. (36)
(Surah Ta Ha 20:25-36)

Musa had a speech impediment which made it difficult for him to speak eloquently. He asked the Almighty to assist him with the company of his brother Harun who was an eloquent speaker. Musa was well aware of the huge responsibility entrusted to him so he also prayed for inner strength and divine help. Musa was unique in the family of prophets in that his brother joined in his prophetic mission.

6. In The Court of Fir'aun

قَالَ اللَّمْ نُرِبِّكَ فِينَا وَلِيَدُ وَلِبِثَتْ فِينَا مِنْ عُمْرِكَ سِنِينَ (١٨) وَفَعَلْتَ فَعَلْتَكَ الَّتِي فَعَلْتَ وَأَنْتَ مِنَ
الْكَافِرِينَ (١٩) قَالَ فَعَلْتَهَا إِذَا وَأَنَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (٢٠) فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خَفْتُكُمْ فَوْهَبَ لِي رَبِّي
حُكْمًا وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٢١) وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمْنَهَا عَلَىَّ أَنْ عَبَدْتَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ (٢٢) قَالَ
فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢٣) قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْتَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ
(٢٤) قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَمِعُونَ (٢٥) قَالَ رَبِّكُمْ وَرَبِّ عَابِرِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ (٢٦) قَالَ إِنَّ
رَسُولَكُمُ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمْجُونُونَ (٢٧) قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْتَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْقِلُونَ (٢٨) قَالَ لِمَنِ اتَّخَذْتَ إِلَهًا غَيْرِي لَأَجْعَلَنَكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُونِينَ (٢٩) قَالَ أَوْلَوْ جِنْتَكَ

بِشَيْءٍ مُّبِينٍ (٣٠) قَالَ فَأَتَ بِهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْصَّادِقِينَ (٣١) فَلَلَّقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعَبَانٌ
مُّبِينٍ (٣٢) وَنَزَعَ يَدُهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ (٣٣)

(Pharaoh) said (unto Moses): Did we not rear thee among us as a child? And thou didst dwell many years of thy life among us, (18) And thou didst that thy deed which thou didst, and thou wast one of the ingrates. (19) He said: I did it then, when I was of those who are astray. (20) Then I fled from you when I feared you, and my Lord vouchsafed me a command and appointed me (of the number) of those sent (by Him). (21) And this is the past favour wherewith thou reproachest me: that thou hast enslaved the Children of Israel. (22) Pharaoh said: And what is the Lord of the Worlds? (23) (Moses) said: Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, if ye had but sure belief. (24) (Pharaoh) said unto those around him: Hear ye not? (25) He said: Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers. (26) (Pharaoh) said: Lo! your messenger who hath been sent unto you is indeed a madman! (27) He said: Lord of the East and the West and all that is between them, if ye did but understand. (28) (Pharaoh) said: If thou choosest a god other than me, I assuredly shall place thee among the prisoners. (29) He said: Even though I show thee something plain? (30) (Pharaoh) said: Produce it then, if thou art of the truthful! (31) Then he flung down his staff and it became a serpent manifest, (32) And he drew forth his hand and lo! it was white to the beholders. (33)

(Surah Ash Shu'ara 26:18-33)

Fir'aun was full of scorn when he heard Musa's message, reminding him that he was brought up in the palace as a prince and that he was also a murderer. Musa admitted to the killing, which had been an awful accident and for which he had received divine forgiveness, but he questioned how Fir'aun could justify the enslavement of an entire nation. And because Pharaoh was considered to be the incarnation of the sun-god, Musa negated this belief fiercely:

1. Allah is the sole Creator of the heavens, the earth and all that is between them.
2. He is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers since the beginning of creation.
3. He is the Lord of the East, the West and all that lies between them.

Thus Musa drew attention to the power of Allah and to the weakness and insignificance of Fir'aun. To add further credibility to his claim to prophethood, Musa displayed the two miracles bestowed on him by Allah. The conversation between the two men is discussed further in Surah Ta Ha.

قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يَأْمُوسَى (٤٩) قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى (٥٠) قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونُ الْأُولَى (٥١) قَالَ عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَا يَضُلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى (٥٢) الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَسَلَكَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْ نَّبَاتٍ

شَيْءٍ (٥٣) كُلُوا وَأْرْعُوا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنِّي فِي ذَلِكَ لَأَيَّتُ لَأُولَئِكُنَّ الَّذِينَ (٤٤) ☦ مِنْهَا خَلَقْتُكُمْ وَفِيهَا
نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ ثَارَةً أُخْرَى (٥٥) وَلَقَدْ أَرَيْتَهُ عَالِيَّتَنَا كُلُّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَى (٥٦)

(Pharaoh) said: Who then is the Lord of you twain, O Moses? (49) He said: Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its nature, then guided it aright. (50) He said: What then is the state of the generations of old? (51) He said: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord neither erreth nor forgetteth, (52) Who hath appointed the earth as a bed and hath threaded roads for you therein and hath sent down water from the sky and thereby We have brought forth divers kinds of vegetation, (53) (Saying): Eat ye and feed your cattle. Lo! herein verily are portents for men of thought. (54) Thereof We created you, and thereunto We return you, and thence We bring you forth a second time. (55) And We verily did show him all Our tokens, but he denied them and refused. (56)

(Surah Ta Ha 20:49-56)

Fir'aun was astounded that there could be a God beside himself. In a mocking tone he asked *questions about the nature of this Lord*, and Musa replied with great wisdom. Allah has created everything, he explained, and then he guided it as well. It is one of the great features of millions of species of bird, animal, fish and insect that inhabit this world that Allah has guided each and everyone through their instincts. Who has taught the ant to hoard for a rainy day? Who has inspired the bee to construct the hive, to make honey and to organise the colony so well? Who has given the sun, moon, earth and all the planets a strict route to follow, the slightest deviation from which would cause terrible destruction in the solar system? Praise be to Allah, who alone created and guided everything. And because Allah is the sole Creator and Provider, it follows that He alone should be obeyed and worshipped.

7 Encounter With The Magicians

قالَ لِلْمَلِائِكَةِ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسْحَرٌ عَلَيْمٌ (٤٤) يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجُكُمْ مِّنْ أَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرٍ فَمَادِيَا
تَأْمُرُونَ (٤٥) قَالُوا أَرْجِهُ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَبْعِثُ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَشَرِينَ (٤٦) يَأْتُوكُمْ بِكُلِّ سَحَارٍ عَلَيْمٍ
(٤٧) فَجَمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتٍ يَوْمٌ مَعْلُومٍ (٤٨) وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُجْتَمِعُونَ (٤٩) لَعَلَّنَا نَتَبَعُ
السَّحَرَةَ إِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الْغَلَبِينَ (٤٠) فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفَرْعَوْنَ إِنَّنَا لَأَجْرَاءُ إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ
الْغَلَبِينَ (٤١) قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنْكُمْ إِذَا لَمْنَ الْمُقْرَبِينَ (٤٢) قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى أَقْوَا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْقُونَ
(٤٣) فَالْقَوْا حِبَالَهُمْ وَعَصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا بِعْزَةِ فِرْعَوْنِ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغَلَبُونَ (٤٤) فَالْقَوْيَ مُوسَى
عَصَاهُ إِذَا هِيَ تَقْفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ (٤٥) فَالْقَوْيَ السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ (٤٦) قَالُوا عَامَنَا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
(٤٧) رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَرُونَ (٤٨) قَالَ عَامَنَّتُ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ عَادَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلِمْكُمْ
السَّحَرُ فَلَسْوَفَ تَعْلَمُونَ لَا قَطْعَنَ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خَلْفٍ وَلَا صَبَّنَكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (٤٩) قَالُوا لَا
ضَيْرٌ إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ (٥٠) إِنَّا نَطَمْعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لَنَا رَبُّنَا حَطَّيَنَا أَنْ كُنَّا أَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
(٥١)

(Pharaoh) said unto the chiefs about him: Lo! this is verily a knowing wizard, (34) Who would drive you out of your land by his magic. Now what counsel ye? (35) They said: Put him off, (him) and his brother, and send into the cities summoners (36) Who shall bring unto

thee every knowing wizard. (37) So the wizards were gathered together at a set time on a day appointed. (38) And it was said unto the people: Are ye (also) gathering? (39) (They said): Aye, so that we may follow the wizards if they are the winners. (40) And when the wizards came they said unto Pharaoh: Will there surely be a reward for us if we are the winners? (41) He said: Aye, and ye will then surely be of those brought near (to me). (42) Moses said unto them: Throw what ye are going to throw! (43) Then they threw down their cords and their staves and said: By Pharaoh's might, lo! we verily are the winners. (44) Then Moses threw his staff and lo! it swallowed that which they did falsely show. (45) And the wizards were flung prostrate, (46) Crying: We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, (47) The Lord of Moses and Aaron. (48) (Pharaoh) said: Ye put your faith in him before I give you leave. Lo! he doubtless is your chief who taught you magic! But verily ye shall come to know. Verily I will cut off your hands and your feet alternately, and verily I will crucify you every one. (49) They said: It is no hurt, for lo! unto our Lord we shall return. (50) Lo! we ardently hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins because we are the first of the believers. (51)

(Surah Ash Shu'ara 26:34-51)

Fir'aun was bamboozled by the logic and sagacity of Musa's arguments, but his arrogance forbade him from admitting so. Instead, he tried to arouse public anger against Musa, claiming that Musa and Harun were planning to expel the Egyptians from their own land. A day of debate was arranged in which the best magicians of the country were summoned to court to defeat Musa. The date chosen was one of national celebrations, probably the day the River Nile overflowed its banks. The magicians were enticed into competition by huge rewards and promises of favours by the palace.

When the contest began, the magicians threw down their sticks which gave the illusion of moving like snakes. In response Musa threw down his staff, which turned into a live snake and gobbled up their bits of rope. The magicians could see the difference between their own tricks and illusions, and Musa's amazing miracle, and they all stepped forward to embrace his faith. Outraged and humiliated by this unexpected turn of events, Fir'aun threatened to have them all tortured and killed, but faith in Allah gave the magicians new courage. The same men who had been longing for financial rewards from Fir'aun now confronted him without fear:

قَالُواْ لَنْ نُؤْثِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءُنَا مِنْ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا فَأَقْضِي مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (٧٢) إِنَّا عَامَنَا بِرَبِّنَا لِيغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطَّائِنَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ
وَأَبْقَى (٧٣)

They said: We choose thee not above the clear proofs that have come unto us, and above Him Who created us. So decree what thou wilt decree. Thou wilt end for us only this life of the world. (72) Lo! we believe in our Lord, that He may forgive us our sins and the magic unto which thou didst force us. Allah is better and more lasting. (73)

(Surah Ta Ha 20:72-73)

8. Believers among Bani Israil

فَمَا ءامَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةُ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ حَوْفٍ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَائِيهِمْ أَنْ يَفْتَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسَرِّفِينَ (٨٣) وَقَالَ مُوسَى يَقُولُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ ءاْمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ (٨٤) فَقَالُوا عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (٨٥) وَنَجْنَبْنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكُفَّارِينَ (٨٦) وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْ مُوسَى وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبُوءَ لِقَوْمِكَمَا بِمَصْرَ بُيُوتًا وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٨٧) وَقَالَ مُوسَى رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ عَاتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأْهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا لِيُضْلِلُوا عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا أَطْمَسْ عَلَىٰ أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَشَدَّ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّىٰ يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ (٨٨) قَالَ قَدْ أَجَبْتَ دُعَوْتُكُمَا فَأَسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَبَعَّنَ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٨٩)

But none believed in Moses, save some scions of his people, (and they were) in fear of Pharaoh and their chiefs, that he would persecute them. Lo! Pharaoh was verily a tyrant in the land, and lo! he verily was of the wanton. (83) And Moses said: O my people! If ye have believed in Allah then put trust in Him, if ye have indeed surrendered (unto Him)! (84) They said: In Allah we put trust. Our Lord! Oh, make us not a lure for the wrongdoing folk; (85) And, of Thy mercy, save us from the folk that disbelieve. (86) And We inspired Moses and his brother, (saying): Appoint houses for your people in Egypt and make your houses oratories, and establish worship. And give good news to the believers. (87) And Moses said: Our Lord! Lo! Thou hast given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and riches in the life of the world, Our Lord! that they may lead men astray from Thy way. Our Lord! Destroy their riches and harden their hearts so that they believe not till they see the painful doom. (88) He said: Your prayer is heard. Do ye twain keep to the straight path, and follow not the road of those who have no knowledge. (89)

(Surah Yunus: 10: 83-89)

Musa had been sent to liberate the children of Israel, but in fact, only a majority of them had the courage to accept Musa's faith. Although Bani Israil had inherited pure tawhid from previous prophets such as Yaqub and Yusuf, they had forgotten this faith during the passage of years. It was their duty to rush to embrace Musa's call to Allah, but few did. Those who did so were first ordered to establish prayer.

It is a fact that whenever a prophet of Allah has announced his mission to his people, he has met with hostility and rejection by the vast majority of them. Musa's call to Islam also fell upon deaf ears among the Israelites and the Egyptians. But Musa cautioned his few followers that a true Muslim depends entirely on Allah. Together they prayed to Allah to not allow their small number to become an easy target for Fir'aun and his courtiers. Prophet Muhammad (saw) also made a similar du'a to Allah Almighty on the eve of the historic Battle of Badr. He and his tiny group of followers were about to face a tremendous army that was a size three times their own. He thus spent the entire night in tears and prayer: if this small group were to be defeated the next day, Islam would be wiped off the face of this earth. The prayers of both Prophets were answered: Musa's small group of followers were kept safe from the machinations of their enemies, and Prophet Muhammad's tiny army was given victory at Badr.

Bani Israil seemed to have forgotten the concept of Salah, so they were instructed to establish congregational prayer in houses allocated specifically for this purpose.

During his long stay in Egypt, Musa prayed to Allah to destroy Fir'aun and his people. By this time, the Prophet had despaired that Fir'aun would ever change, and his prayer was accepted.

9. Fir'aun Argues Further

وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يَقُومُ الَّيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَرُ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِي أَفَلَا تُبَصِّرُونَ (٥١) أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مَهِينٌ وَلَا يَكُادُ يُبَيِّنُ (٥٢) فَلَوْلَا أَلْقَى عَيْنِهِ أَسْوَرَةٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنَيْنَ (٥٣) فَاسْتَخَفَ قَوْمَهُ فَأَطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ (٥٤)

And Pharaoh caused a proclamation to be made among his people saying: *O my people! Is not mine the sovereignty of Egypt and these rivers flowing under me? Can ye not then discern? (51) I am surely better than this fellow, who is despicable and can hardly make (his meaning) plain! (52) Why, then, have armlets of gold not been set upon him, or angels sent along with him? (53) Thus he persuaded his people to make light (of Moses), and they obeyed him. Lo! they were a wanton folk. (54)*
(Surah Az Zukhruf 43: 51-54)

Fir'aun continued to dispute with Musa, putting forward arguments which he believed would prove his claims to divinity. His argument was three-fold:

1. As ruler of the country, he was perfectly entitled to divinity.

2. Musa was a member of a humiliated and enslaved people. Furthermore, because of his speech impediment, he could barely speak clearly. How could such a man be on a divine mission?

3. If Musa truly was a Prophet, he should have been escorted by columns of angels and adorned with expensive jewellery. A shallow and worldly man like Fir'aun was prepared to respect only wealth, prestige and power. Superficial though his argument was, it was received warmly by his people, and so they too shared in their master's ignominious death.

10. Fir'aun's Arrogance And Self-Aggrandizement

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي فَأَوْقِدْ لِي يَاهْمَنْ عَلَى الْطَّيْبِنْ فَاجْعَلْ لَى صَرْحًا لَّعْنَى أَطْلِعُ إِلَى إِلَهٍ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظْنُهُ مِنَ الْكَذَّابِينَ (٣٨) وَأَسْتَكْبَرَ هُوَ وَجُنُودُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُونُهُ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجِعُونَ (٣٩)

And Pharaoh said: O chiefs! I know not that ye have a god other than me, so kindle for me (a fire), O Haman, to bake the mud; and set up for me a lofty tower in order that I may survey the God of Moses; and lo! I deem him of the liars. (38) And he and his hosts were haughty in the land without right, and deemed that they would never be brought back to Us. (39)
(Surah Al Qasas 28:38-39)

Fir'aun was too full of belief in his own power and abilities to pay heed to Musa's teachings. He wished to belittle the miracles he had seen, so he asked his chief minister, Haamaan, to build a tall tower to see if he could spot Musa's God. This was not a serious attempt to discover Allah but an attempt to mock and humiliate Musa.

Such attempts to deride Islam and deny the existence of Allah have been made throughout the ages. One example was the launching of the first space-shuttle, when plenty of comedians asked why none of the astronauts had seen God in their travels. What they failed to realize was that man's adventures in space represented only a microcosm of the colossal universe that lay still undiscovered by man. God is better seen and recognized through His numerous signs which fill every inch of this universe.

Chapter 2

HADITH: PRAYER IN JAMA'AH (CONGREGATION)

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle (saw) said. "The reward of the prayer offered in congregation is twenty five times greater than that of the prayer offered in one's house or in the market (alone). When the person performs ablution properly and then proceeds to the Masjid with the sole intention of praying, for every step taken towards the Masjid he is upgraded one degree and one sin is removed. When he offers his prayers, the angels continue to ask for Allah's forgiveness for him as long as he remains at his Musallah. They say, 'O Allah, bestow Your blessings upon him, be Merciful and kind to him.' And one is regarded to be in prayer even if one is waiting for the prayer."

Narrated Abu Musa: The Prophet (saw) said, "The people who get the most reward for the prayer are those who are farthest away (from the Masjid), and then those who are nearer and so on. Similarly, the one who waits to pray with the Imam has greater reward than the one who prays and goes to bed."

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "If the people knew the reward for saying the Adhan and for standing in the first row of the congregational prayer, but found no other way to get it except by drawing lots, they would do so. And if they knew the reward of offering the Zuhra prayer early (in its stated time), they would race for it. And if they knew the reward for the Isha and Fajr prayers in congregation, they would attend them even if they had to crawl."

Discussion

Man is a social animal, and needs by his very nature a social group in which he can live and thrive. Allah Almighty has thus ordained that we live within a community, and abide by the social norms that He has ordained. He has also ordained that man should marry and procreate, thus strengthening ties of kinship and allowing the human race to continue. For Muslims there are no cloisters, convents, celibacy or vows of silence. They have been ordered to interact with their neighbours, to help one another to do good and avoid evil, and to spread the beautiful message of Islam to those unfortunate enough not to have embraced it. Islam has taught the etiquettes of living within a social system and has repeatedly stressed the importance of behaving well towards neighbours, relatives, the poor, orphans, the oppressed and travellers.

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئاً وَبِالْأَوَّلِيَّاتِ إِحْسَنُوا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبُ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالاً فَخُورًا (٣٦)

And serve Allah. Ascribe no thing as partner unto Him. (Show) kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and unto the neighbour who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbour who is not of kin, and the fellow-traveller and the wayfarer and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess. Lo! Allah loveth not such as are proud and boastful, (36)

(Surah An Nisaa 4:36)

A man who perfects his relationship with Allah through prayer, fasting etc., but neglects or abuses the community around him, has failed in his faith. Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (saw) said, *“One who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement must not cause hardship and inconvenience to his neighbour; and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day must respect his guest; and he who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement must speak well or remain silent.”*

(Agreed upon)

Ibn Umar and Aisha reported that the Prophet (saw) said, *“Angel Jibreel kept exhorting me regarding obligations to neighbours, so much so that I imagined that the neighbour might be included in the list of heirs.”*

(Agreed upon)

Abu Dharr related that the Prophet (saw) said to him, *“O Abu Dharr! When you prepare soup, put a little more water in it, and see if your neighbour needs some.”*

(Muslim)

Prayer in congregation is a dual act, of importance to the individual as well as to the community. On an individual level, it helps the person concentrate in prayer, removes hypocrisy and improves zeal to do good acts. If a man is feeling lazy or is busy with worldly affairs, the sight of other Muslims rushing to pray in congregation at the Masjid will give him the strength to join them. Prayer in congregation is the litmus test by which the Muslim can evaluate the strength of his own faith. If he enjoys praying in the Masjid and is happy to leave his other activities in order to rush to the Jama'ah prayer, then he has surely savoured true faith. But if going to the Masjid is a burden for him, if he makes excuses not to go, and even (God forbid) taunts those who rush to the congregational prayer five times a day, then he needs to examine his faith closely as he is showing signs of hypocrisy.

Abu Huraira reported that Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *“If anyone goes out in the morning or in the evening to the Masjid, Allah will prepare for him his food in Paradise as often as he goes out in the morning or evening.”*

(Agreed Upon)

Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (saw) said, *“There are seven whom Allah will cover with His shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His:*

a just Imam;

a young man who grows up worshipping Allah;

a man whose heart is attached to the Masjid from the time he leaves it to the time he returns to it;

two men who love one another for Allah's sake, meeting and separating for Allah;

a man who remembers Allah in solitude, his eyes pouring forth tears;

a man who, when seduced by a woman of rank and beauty, says, 'I fear Allah';

and a man who gives charity, concealing it so that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives.” (Agreed upon)

Prayer in congregation also confers many social benefits. It strengthens ties of brotherhood and community spirit. Those weaker in faith or with less knowledge of Islamic precepts can be encouraged and taught by those with more knowledge. If someone is unwell or facing other hardships such as financial problems, it is the community with which he prays that should be foremost in coming to his aid.

The Prophet (saw) stressed the huge rewards awaiting those who pray in Jama'ah, as well as the severe penalties for those who neglect it.

Abu Huraira narrated that Allah's Apostle said "By Him in Whose Hand is my soul! I was about to issue orders for collecting fire-wood (fuel). Then I would have ordered someone to pronounce the Adhan for the prayer and would have asked someone to lead the prayer. Then I would have gone from behind and burnt the houses of men who did not present themselves for the prayer. By Him in Whose Hands is my soul! If anyone of them had known that he would get a bone covered with good meat or the meat found between the two ribs, he would surely have turned up for the 'Isha prayer."

(Bukhari)

Ibn 'Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Salat in congregation is twenty-seven times more meritorious than a Salat performed individually."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "A man's Salat in congregation is twenty-five times more rewarding than his Salat at home or in his shop, and that is because when he performs his Wudu' properly and proceeds towards the mosque with the purpose of performing Salat in congregation, he does not take a step without being raised a degree (in rank) for it and having a sin remitted for it, till he enters the mosque. When he is performing Salat, the angels continue to invoke Blessings of Allah on him as long as he is in his place of worship in a state of Wudu'. They say: 'O Allah! Have mercy on him! O Allah! Forgive him.' He is deemed to be engaged in Salat as long as he waits for it."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that a blind man came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said: "O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the mosque." He was seeking his permission to perform Salat in his house. The Prophet granted him permission. When the man turned away, he called him back, and said, "Do you hear the Adhan (call to prayer)?" He replied in the affirmative. The Messenger of Allah (saw) then directed him to respond To it.

(Muslim)

Abdullah bin Umm Maktum, the Muezzin reported: I said to the Messenger of Allah (saw): "There are many poisonous insects and wild beasts in Madinah, and I am blind. Please grant me permission to perform Salat at home." The Prophet enquired whether he could hear the call: Hayya 'alas-Salah; Hayya 'alal-Falah (Come to the prayer, come to the salvation). When he replied in affirmative, the Messenger of Allah (saw) directed him to come (to mosque) for prayer."

(Abu Dawud)

The importance attached to congregational prayer is for healthy, sane and adult males. Islam is a practical religion and accepts that congregational prayer may be difficult in certain circumstances. In times of fear or illness the Muslim is excused. And it is reported that when the weather was very cold, the early Muslims were advised to pray at home.

Ibn Umar once called the adhan for prayer on a cold, windy night, then added, 'Pray in your dwellings'. Then he said, "When it was a cold, rainy night, Allah's Messenger used to command the muezzin to say, 'Pray in your dwellings.'"

(Agreed upon)

Muslims are advised to live within Muslim communities, to remain united, to encourage each other to do good deeds and to teach each other the faith. Love and friendship for the sake of Islam are prized. Animals in the wild graze together for protection and avoid straying from the herd. Just as a tiger or a wolf will avoid attacking a tightly-packed herd of animals but will instead pounce on the lone animal, so satan encourages hatred and enmity in order that he may attack the isolated Muslim.

Abu Dardaa reported that the Prophet of Allah (saw) said, "*If there are three men in a village or in the desert, among whom prayer is not said in congregation, the devil has got mastery over them. So observe prayer in congregation, for the wolf eats only the straggling animal.*" (Ahmad, Abu Dawud)

Avoiding prayer in congregation is a sign of confirmed hypocrisy.

Uthman bin `Affan reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) saying: "*One who performs Isha' prayer in congregation is as if he has performed Salat for half of the night. And one who performs the Fajr prayer in congregation is as if he has performed Salat the whole night.*"

(Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*If they knew the merits of Salat after nightfall ('Isha') and the morning (Fajr) Salat, they would come to them even if they had to crawl to do so.*"

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*No Salat is more burdensome to the hypocrites than the Fajr (dawn) prayer and the 'Isha' (night) prayer; and if they knew their merits, they would come to them even if they had to crawl to do so.*"

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "*If anyone would like to meet Allah tomorrow as a Muslim, he should persevere in observing these five prayers whenever the call for them is made, for Allah has chosen for your Prophet the way of right guidance. And the [five prayers in congregation] are part of this right guidance. If you were to pray them in your houses, as this man who stays behind in his house, you would be leaving a sunnah of your Prophet. If you leave the sunnah of your Prophet, you will go astray. Verily, I have seen a time when no one stayed away from them [the congregational prayers] except for the hypocrites who were well*

known for their hypocrisy. A man would be brought, supported by two people [due to his weakness], until he was placed in a row."

(Muslim)

The Masjid has a central role to play in the life of the community. It is a place for learning about Islam, for meeting one's neighbours, for educating children, for celebrations such as marriage and aqiqah, for funerals, and for the general spiritual needs of the community. It is a place where the Muslim can forget his hectic worldly life and concentrate on nurturing his soul. It is the duty of Imams of masajid to ensure they provide services that are needed locally, such as marital counseling and religious advice. And it is the duty of the local Muslim community to attend the Masjid regularly and support their Imams in their pivotal role. Attending the congregational prayer is the first step in this direction.

Chapter 3

A DESCRIPTION OF PARADISE

The Quran and Hadith mention paradise (jannah) and hell (jahannam) explicitly and in great detail, while also maintaining that neither the wonders of paradise nor the horrors of hell can ever be fully described. The human brain is simply not capable of comprehending the sheer delights and luxuries of heaven, or the terrible torture of hell which will be available for eternity. The descriptions of paradise are actually a mere taste of what it actually contains, explained in simple language so that the believer may have an inkling of that which awaits him. Paradise was created for the true believers, those men and women who say the shahadah and then dedicate their lives to putting it into practice.

مَثْلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَقْوِنَ فِيهَا أَنْهَرٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ عَاسِنِ وَأَنْهَرٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَرٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةُ الْشَّرَبِيْنَ وَأَنْهَرٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفَّى وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ النَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَلِدٌ فِي الْأَنَارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطْعٌ أَمْعَاءُهُمْ (١٥)

A similitude of the Garden which those who keep their duty (to Allah) are promised: Therein are rivers of water unpolluted, and rivers of milk whereof the flavour changeth not, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of clear-run honey; therein for them is every kind of fruit, with pardon from their Lord. (Are those who enjoy all this) like those who are immortal in the Fire and are given boiling water to drink so that it teareth their bowels? (15)

(Surah Muhammad 47:15)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوا مِنْ أَنْهَرٍ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَرُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْتَهَى إِلَيْهِمْ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوَى لَهُمْ (١٢)

Lo! Allah will cause those who believe and do good works to enter Gardens underneath which rivers flow; while those who disbelieve take their comfort in this life and eat even as the cattle eat, and the Fire is their habitation. (12)

(Surah Muhammad 47:12)

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَاسِنَ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا (٥) عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفَجِّيرًا (٦) يُوْفُونَ بِاللَّذَّرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا (٧) وَيُطْعَمُونَ الْطَّعَامَ عَلَى حِلْيَةٍ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا (٨) إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا (٩)

Lo! the righteous shall drink of a cup whereof the mixture is of water of Kafur, (5) A spring wherefrom the slaves of Allah drink, making it gush forth abundantly, (6) (Because) they perform the vow and fear a day whereof the evil is wide-spreading, (7) And feed with food the needy wretch, the orphan and the prisoner, for love of Him, (8) (Saying): We feed you, for the sake of Allah only. We wish for no reward nor thanks from you; (9)

(Surah Ad Dahr 76:5-9)

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّلَحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلُّمَا رُزْقُوا
مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَاتُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقُنا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَبِّهًًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ
وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ (٢٥)

And give glad tidings (O Muhammad) unto those who believe and do good works; that their gardens are Gardens underneath which rivers flow; as often as they are regaled with food of the fruits thereof, they say: this is what was given us aforetime; and it is given to them in resemblance. There for them are pure companions; there for ever they abide. (25)
(Surah Al Baqarah 2:25)

True belief is rarely accompanied by wealth and fame; more often than not, it accompanies poverty and isolation. This is for two reasons: firstly, it has been seen throughout Islamic history that the enemies of Allah have unceasingly plotted to weaken and impoverish the Muslim nations. To this day, Muslim countries and individuals are the targets of war, economic sanctions, false propaganda, hatred and xenophobia. Secondly, there are true believers who have been blessed by Allah with wealth and are capable of fulfilling their wildest dreams and worldly fantasies. But true believers will always choose to reject the materialistic and hollow life, aware that they owe it to their poor brothers and sisters to help them. They spend night and day on helping the poor and suffering. They will also spend on Jihad, by fighting for Islam themselves and by equipping those who go for Jihad. And they realize that luxuries and comfortable lives draw the person close to shaytan and far from the remembrance of Allah. They know that the martyrs who die at the hands of the enemies of Islam reach paradise even before the Day of Judgment.

Abdullah ibn Masud was once asked about the Quranic verse, “And do not regard those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. No, they are alive with their Lord and being provided for.” He replied that he had once asked the Prophet about it, who replied, “The souls are inside green birds, roaming freely in Paradise where they please. They take shelter in lanterns suspended from the Throne.

Their Lord asks them, ‘Do you wish for anything?’ and they say, ‘What shall we wish for when we can roam freely in paradise?’

He asks them three times, and when they see that they will be asked again, they reply, ‘Our Lord. We would like you to put our souls back in our bodies so that we may fight and die in your cause again.’

When Allah sees that they are not in need of anything, they are not asked again.”
(Muslim)

One of the joys of the day of Judgement will be to enter paradise with one's family, parents, spouse and children.

جَنَّاتٍ عَدَنِ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ عَبَادِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذَرِيَّتِهِمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ (٢٣)

Gardens of Eden which they enter, along with all who do right of their fathers and their halpmeets and their seed. The angels enter unto them from every gate, (23)
(Surah Ar Ra'd 13:23)

وَالسَّبِقُونَ السَّبِقُونَ (١٠)

And the foremost in the race, the foremost in the race: (10)
(Surah Al Waqiah 56:10)

Paradise is for all believers, male and female, and no favours will be made for one sex over another.

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجَزَّى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَلَحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ
يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٤٠)

Whoso doeth an ill-deed, he will be repaid the like thereof, while whoso doeth right, whether male or female, and is a believer, (all) such will enter the Garden, where they will be nourished without stint. (40)

(Surah Ghafir 40:40)

The delights of paradise will be for its male and female residents, equally. The only difference mentioned is that men will have two wives from the beautiful maidens of jannah, as well as their own earthly wives if they too are destined for paradise. The spouses for women are not mentioned explicitly, possibly because talking about women's sexual desires was always considered impolite in Islamic society. But the general tone of the Quran is clear that men and women will have equal and similar rewards in paradise, just as they will have equal and similar punishment in hell.

Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "The first group of people to enter Paradise will be glittering like the full moon. Those who enter it next will be like the heart of a single man, for there will be no enmity or envy among them. Each one will have two wives, each so beautiful, pure and fair that the marrow of the bones of her legs will be seen through the flesh. They will be glorifying Allah in the morning and in the evening. They will never fall ill, blow their noses or spit. Their utensils will be of gold and silver, and their combs will be of gold. They will use aloewood, and their sweat will be musk."

(Bukhari)

The Gates of Paradise

Sahl b. Sa'd reported that the Prophet (saw) said, "Paradise has eight gates, one of which is called Ar Rayyan. Those who kept the fasts regularly will enter through it."

(Bukhari)

These gates will be vast, heavily ornate, made of gold, silver and musk, and guarded by angels.

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمِرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتَحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَرَنَتْهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طَبَّتْمُ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَلِدِينَ (٧٣)

And those who keep their duty to their Lord are driven unto the Garden in troops till, when they reach it, and the gates thereof are opened, and the warders thereof say unto them: Peace be unto you! Ye are good, so enter ye (the Garden of delight), to dwell therein; (73)
(Surah Az Zumar 39:73)

The Rivers of Paradise

مَثْلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَرٌ مِّنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ عَاسِنٍ وَأَنْهَرٌ مِّنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَرٌ مِّنْ حَمْزٍ لَذَّةٌ لِلشَّرَبِينَ وَأَنْهَرٌ مِّنْ عَسْلٍ مُّصَفَّىٰ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ النَّثَرَاتِ وَمَعْفَرَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَمَنٌ هُوَ خَلِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ (١٥)

A similitude of the Garden which those who keep their duty (to Allah) are promised: There are rivers of water unpolluted, and rivers of milk whereof the flavour changeth not, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of clear-run honey; therein for the most part is every kind of fruit, with pardon from their Lord. (Are those who enjoy all this) like those who are immortal in the Fire and are given boiling water to drink so that it teareth the bowels? (15)

(Surah Al Muhammad 47:15)

يُسَقَّونَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْتُومٍ (٢٥) خِتَّامُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَيَتَنَافَسُ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ (٢٦) وَمِزَاجٌ مِنْ شَنِيمٍ (٢٧) عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقْرَبُونَ (٢٨)

They are given to drink of a pure wine, sealed, (25) Whose seal is musk - for this let (all) those strive who strive for bliss - (26) And mixed with water of Tasnim, (27) A spring whence those brought near to Allah drink. (28)

(Surah Al Mutaffifeen 83:25-28)

The Trees and Gardens of Paradise

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ (٢٧) فِي سِدْرٍ مَخْضُودٍ (٢٨) وَظِلٌّ مَمْدُودٌ (٣٠) وَمَاءٌ مَسْكُوبٌ (٣١) وَفِكَهٌ كَثِيرٌ (٣٢) لَا مَقْطُوعَةٌ وَلَا مَفْنُوعَةٌ (٣٣)

And those on the right hand; what of those on the right hand? (27) Among thornless lotus trees (28) And clustered plantains, (29) And spreading shade, (30) And water gushing, (31) And fruit in plenty (32) Neither out of reach nor yet forbidden, (33)
(Surah Al Waqiah 56:27-33)

مُتَكَبِّنَ عَلَىٰ فُرُشٍ بَطَانَهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَّى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانِ (٥٤)

Reclining upon couches lined with silk brocade, the fruit of both the gardens near to hand. (54)

(Surah Ar Rahman 55:54)

Abu Saeed al Khudri reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “*In Paradise there is a tree, under the shadow of which a rider of a fine and swift-footed horse can travel for a hundred years without being able to cross it. There will be the pleasure of Allah for the inhabitants of Paradise, and He will never be annoyed with them.*”

(Muslim)

Palaces, Tents and Thrones of Gold

Abu Bakr b. Abu Musa bin Qays narrated on the authority of his father that the Prophet (saw) said, “*There will be a tent made of a pearl, the height of which will be sixty miles. In each corner will be a family of believers, out of sight of each other.*”

(Muslim)

فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَرْفُوعَةٌ (١٣) وَأَكْوَابٌ مَوْضُوعَةٌ (١٤) وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ (١٥) وَزَرَابِيٌّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ (١٦)

Wherein are couches raised (13) And goblets set at hand (14) And cushions ranged (15) And silken carpets spread. (16)

(Surah Al Ghashiyah 88:13-16)

Abu Musa al Ash'ari narrated that the Prophet (saw) said, “*Two gardens, in which the vessels and everything else is silver. And two gardens in which the vessels and everything else is made of gold. And there is nothing to stoip the people seeing their Lord except the veil of majesty concealing His Face.*”

(Agreed upon)

The size of Paradise is massive beyond human comprehension; it will take years to cross a single tree on the back of a swift horse. The soil is made of pure musk, and the palaces, apartments, domes and tents glitter with gold, pearls and other precious stones.

Time will no longer be of importance, as people will never age, become weak or ill. The inhabitants of Paradise will thus have no time-limit on their enjoyment, and will take years to enjoy each of the countless blessings on offer.

The Drinks of Paradise

وَأَمْدَنَنَاهُمْ بِقَاهِهٌ وَلَحْمٌ مَمَّا يَشْتَهِونَ (٢٢) يَتَنَزَّلُونَ فِيهَا كَأسًا لَا لَعْقُو فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْثِيمٌ (٢٣)
وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَانِهِمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ (٢٤) ☺

And We provide them with fruit and meat such as they desire. (22) There they pass from hand to hand a cup wherein is neither vanity nor cause of sin. (23) And there go round, waiting on them menservants of their own, as they were hidden pearls. (24)

(Surah At Tur 52:22-24)

وَيُسَقَّونَ فِيهَا كَأساً كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنجِبِيلًا (١٧) عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسِبِيلًا (١٨) ④ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخْلَدُونَ إِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ حَسِيبَتِهِمْ لَوْلُوا مَنْثُورًا (١٩) وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ نَمَّ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيْمًا وَمُلْكًا كَبِيرًا (٢٠)

There are they watered with a cup whereof the mixture is of Zanjabil, (17) The water of a spring therein, named Salsabil. (18) There, serve them youths of ever lasting youths, whom, when thou seest, thou wouldst take for scattered pearls. (19) When thou seest, thou wilt see there bliss and high estate. (20)

(Surah Al Insan 76:17-20)

Friday Gathering in Paradise

Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “In Paradise there is a street to which its inhabitants will come every Friday. The North wind will blow and will scatter fragrance on their faces and on their clothes. This will add to their beauty and loveliness. They will then return to their families after having a new lustre added to their beauty, and their families will say to them, ‘By Allah, you have increased in beauty and loveliness since you left us.’ They will reply, ‘By Allah, you too have increased in beauty and loveliness.’”

(Muslim)

The End of Illness and Fatigue

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَعُيُونٍ (٤٥) أَدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ عَامِينَ (٤٦) وَنَرَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُزٍ مُتَقْبِلِينَ (٤٧) لَا يَمْسُهُمْ فِيهَا نَصْبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُحْرَجِينَ (٤٨)

Lo! those who ward off (evil) are among gardens and watersprings. (45) (And it is said unto them): Enter them in peace, secure. (46) And We remove whatever rancour may be in their breasts. As brethren, face to face, (they rest) on couches raised. (47) Toil cometh not unto them there, nor will they be expelled from thence. (48)

(Surah Al Hijr 15:45-48)

Abu Saeed al Khudri narrated that the Prophet (saw) said, “There will be an announcer in Paradise who will proclaim, ‘Verily, there is awaiting for you eternal health. You will never fall ill, you will live forever and you will never die. You will remain young and never grow old. You will always live luxuriously and will never become poor. This has been said in the words of Allah, the exalted and glorious, “This is the Paradise you have inherited for what you used to do.”

(Muslim)

The Death of Death

Abu Saeed reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “Death will be brought on the Day of Resurrection in the form of a white ram. The people of Paradise will be asked if they recognize it, and they will raise their necks to look at it and reply, ‘Yes, it is death.’ Then command will be given to slaughter it and it will be said, ‘O people of Paradise, there everlasting life for you and no death.’ It will then be said to the people of Hell, ‘O People of Hellfire, there is everlasting life for you and no death.’”

(Muslim)

The Greatest Reward

Suhayb ibn Sinan reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “*When the people of Paradise enter it, and when the people of Hell enter hell, a voice will call out to them, ‘O people of Paradise, Allah has made a promise to you which He wishes to fulfil.’ They will say, ‘What is it? Has Allah not whitened our faces, admitted us to Paradise and saved us from the Fire?’*

Then the veil will be lifted and they will see Him. By Allah, Allah has not given them anything more dear and precious to them than that they should see Him.”

(Sahih al Jami)

Paradise Surrounded by Difficulties

For many Muslims, Islam is less about the Quran and Sunnah, and more about obeying customs and traditions which actually oppose the teachings of Allah and His Messenger. To enter jannah, the believer will find himself at odds with most of society: it will be his duty to fight injustice, oppression and lies; he will have to oppose bid’ahs (innovations in religion) introduced in the guise of Islam; he will have to reject ancient customs which conflict with Islam and struggle to implement the Sunnah of his beloved Messenger; he will have to reject the mindless consumerism and competition in materialism that has diseased society; he will choose simplicity in his own life and spiritual contentment; and he will make time to acquire knowledge of Islam and then implement it.

Allah Almighty has surrounded Hell with worldly desires and comforts, while Paradise is surrounded by difficulties and struggles. The Prophet (saw) once said, “*Paradise is surrounded by adversities, and Hell is surrounded by carnal appetites.”*

(Sahih al Jami)

In another narration, he (saw) said “*Every member of my Ummah will enter Paradise except the one who refuses. Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise. And whoever disobeys me has refused to enter Paradise.”*

(Bukhari)

Abu Seed al Khudri reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “*Paradise and Hell fire disputed together and Hell said, ‘In me are the mighty and haughty.’ Paradise said, ‘In me are the weak and poor.’ So Allah judged between them and said, ‘You are paradise, My Mercy. Through you I show Mercy to those I wish. And you are Hellfire, My Punishment. Through you I punish those I wish, and it is incumbent upon Me that each of you shall have its full.’*

(Agreed upon)



LESSON
10

Chapter 1

PROPHET MUSA (MOSES): THE GREAT ESCAPE.

A- Another Plan to Destroy the Israelites

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرْنِي أَفْشِلْ مُوسَى وَلَيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظَهِّرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ (٢٦)

And Pharaoh said: Suffer me to kill Moses, and let him cry unto his Lord. Lo! I fear that he will alter your religion or that he will cause confusion in the land. (26)
(Surah Al Ghafir 40:26)

The amazing encounter between Musa and the magicians, and the subsequent conversion of the latter to the faith of the former, had turned the tide against Fir'aun. The ball was in his court, and he knew he had to think fast if he was to save face and re-establish authority. He had earlier accused Musa and Harun of planning to expel the Egyptians from their own land, and now fresh accusations were needed to justify his plan to kill Musa. Fir'aun thus accused Musa of changing the religion of the Egyptians and of creating mischief in the land.

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمٍ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَدْرُ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَيَدْرَكُ وَعَالَهُنَّاقَ قَالَ سَنُقْتَنَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَسَنُتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا فَوْقُهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ (١٢٧) قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ أَسْتَعِينُوْا بِاللَّهِ وَأَصْبِرُوْا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُنْتَقِيْنَ (١٢٨) قَالُوا أُوذِنَا مِنْ فَهِلْ أَنْ تَأْتِنَا وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَنَّتْنَا قَالَ عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهَلِّكَ عَذَّوْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٢٩)

And the chiefs of Firon's people said: Do you leave Musa and his people to make mischief in the land and to forsake you and your gods? He said: We will slay their sons and spare their women, and surely we are masters over them. Musa said to his people: Ask help from Allah and be patient; surely the land is Allah's; He causes such of His servants to inherit it as He pleases, and the end is for those who guard (against evil). They said: We have been persecuted before you came to us and since you have come to us. He said: It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, then He will see how you act. (Al A'raf 7: 127-129)

For a second time, Fir'aun gave the order to kill the male offspring of the Israelites. He also increased the oppression of the Israelites by increasing their workload. They used to make bricks from straw- binder, and he ordered them to continue producing the same daily quota of bricks while also gathering the straw- binder needed. Tired and weary, the Israelites began to blame Musa for their suffering, but he ordered them to be patient and to hope for victory from Allah.

In view of Fir'aun's threat to begin the slaughter of Israelite children once again, Musa asked his people to arm themselves with two spiritual weapons: seeking the help of Allah through prayer, and patience.

B- A Believer Defends Musa

وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ (٢٧) وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ صَادِقًا يُصِيبُكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَابٌ (٢٨) يَا قَوْمَ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ يَتَصْرِّفُ مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَى وَمَا أَهْدِيْكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرِّشَادِ (٢٩) وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ (٣٠) مِثْلَ دَأْبِ قَوْمٍ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَنَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعَبَادِ (٣١) وَيَا قَوْمَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (٣٢) يَوْمَ تُوْلَوْنَ مُذَبِّرِينَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلَ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ (٣٣) وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلِ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زَلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا كَذَلِكَ يُضْلِلُ اللَّهُ مِنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتَابٌ (٣٤) الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُغَيِّرُ سُلْطَانِ أَتَاهُمْ كَبُرُّ مَقْتَنَى عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قُلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَارٍ (٣٥)

And a believing man of Fir'aun's (Pharaoh) family, who hid his faith said: "Would you kill a man because he says: My Lord is Allah, and he has come to you with clear signs (proofs) from your Lord? And if he is a liar, upon him will be (the sin of) his lie; but if he is telling the truth, then some of that (calamity) wherewith he threatens you will befall on you." Verily, Allah guides not one who is a Musrif (a polytheist, or a murderer who shed blood without a right, or those who commit great sins, oppressor, transgressor), a liar! (28) "O my people! Yours is the kingdom this day, you are uppermost in the land. But who will save us from the Torment of Allah, should it befall us?" Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "I show you only that which I see (correct), and I guide you only to the path of right policy!" (29) And he who believed said: "O my people! Verily, I fear for you a fate like that day (of disaster) of the Confederates (of old)! (30) "Like the fate of the people of Nuh (Noah), and 'Ad, and Thamud and those who came after them. And Allah wills no injustice for (His) slaves. (31) "And, O my people! Verily! I fear for you the Day when there will be mutual calling (between the people of Hell and of Paradise)." (32) A Day when you will turn your backs and flee having no protector from Allah, And whomsoever Allah sends astray, for him there is no guide. (33) And indeed Yusuf (Joseph) did come to you, in times gone by, with clear signs, but you ceased not to doubt in that which he did bring to you, till when he died you said: "No Messenger will Allah send after him." Thus Allah leaves astray him who is a Musrif (a polytheist, oppressor, a criminal, sinner who commit great sins) and a Murtab (one who doubts Allah's Warning and His Oneness). (34) Those who dispute about the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah, without any authority that has come to them, it is greatly hateful and disgusting to Allah and to those who believe. Thus does Allah seal up the heart of every arrogant, tyrant. (So they cannot guide themselves to the Right Path). (35) (Al Mu'min 40:28-35)

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ (٣٨) يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ
وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ (٣٩) مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ
ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٤٠) وَيَا قَوْمَ مَا لَيْ
أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجَاهَةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ (٤١) تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ
عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَارِ (٤٢) لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ مَرَدَنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ (٤٣) فَسَتَذَكَّرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ
لَكُمْ وَأَفْوِضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ (٤٤)

And the man who believed said: "O my people! Follow me, I will guide you to the way of right conduct [i.e. guide you to Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism with which Musa (Moses) has been sent]. (38)"O my people! Truly, this life of the world is nothing but a (quick passing) enjoyment, and verily, the Hereafter that is the home that will remain forever." (39) "Whosoever does an evil deed, will not be requited except the like thereof, and whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female and is a true believer (in the Oneness of Allah), such will enter Paradise, where they will be provided therein (with all things in abundance) without limit. (40)"And O my people! How is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire! (41) "You invite me to disbelieve in Allah (and in His Oneness), and to join partners in worship with Him; of which I have no knowledge, and I invite you to the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving! (42) "No doubt you call me to (worship) one who cannot grant (me) my request (or respond to my invocation) in this world or in the Hereafter. And our return will be to Allah, and Al-Musrifun (i.e. polytheists and arrogants, those who commit great sins, the transgressors of Allah's set limits)! They shall be the dwellers of the Fire! (43) "And you will remember what I am telling you, and my affair I leave it to Allah. Verily, Allah is the All-Seer of (His) slaves." (44)

(Al Mu'min 40:38-44)

The verses above quote a courtier who was brave enough to stand up in court, address Pharaoh and defend Musa. It seems that this was the same man who, years previously, had warned Musa of the king's plan to kill him in revenge for the accidental murder of an Egyptian. This Egyptian courtier had kept his belief in Allah a secret, but now he pledged his allegiance out loud in disgust at another assassination plan.

The courtier warned Fir'aun of Allah's severe punishment which made ancient tribes vanish off the face of the earth because of their repeated refusal to obey Allah. He reminded them of the Resurrection when people will call each other for help, but it will be in vain. He reminded them of Yusuf who had been a famous Minister to an Egyptian King as well as a Prophet. The Egyptians had ignored his teachings as well, confident on his death that no new prophet would appear later. The courtier stressed the fleetingness of this life and the permanence of the Hereafter. He emphasised the importance of twinning faith with good actions in order to gain paradise. And he ended his discourse by exclaiming at the foolishness of those who were attempting to drag him into hell by forcing him to idolatory, while Musa was calling to paradise through belief in Allah.

فَوَقَاهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّنَاتٍ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِالْفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ (45)

So Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted (against him), while an evil torment encompassed Fir'aun's (Pharaoh) people. (45)
 (Al Mu'min 40:45)

It seems that Allah saved this brave courtier while Pharaoh and his companions suffered a dreadful end.

C- The Nine Plagues

Musa was asking Fir'aun to allow the Israelites to go with him; although his intention was to take them to Palestine, it is probable that he did not disclose this intention to Fir'aun. According to the Bible, Musa asked permission to take the Israelites into the wilderness for three days in order to offer sacrifices for a religious celebration. He knew the king would never allow the Israelites to leave permanently as they were cheap and useful labour, but the king still refused to give permission. Over the next few years the Egyptians were punished by a series of nine plagues; during each plague, Pharaoh and his subjects would beg Musa to pray for an end to the punishment, promising to let the Israelites go in exchange. But once the punishment was stopped, they would quickly renegade on their promise. The plagues destroyed the lives and properties of the Egyptians, while leaving the Israelites unscathed.

وَلَقَدْ عَانَنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ عَائِلَتٍ بَيْنَتِ فَسَلْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي لَأَظْنُكُ
 يَمْوَسَى مَسْحُورًا (١٠١)

And verily We gave unto Moses nine tokens, clear proofs (of Allah's Sovereignty). Do but ask the Children of Israel how he came unto them, then Pharaoh said unto him: Lo! I deem thee one bewitched, O Moses. (101)

(Surah Al Israa 17:101)

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا عَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسَّنِينَ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ النَّمَرَاتِ لِعَاهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ (١٣٠) فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمُ
 الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطْيِرُوا بِمُوسَى وَمَنْ مَعَهُ إِلَّا إِنَّمَا طَيْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 وَلِكُنَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (١٣١) وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ عَآيَةٍ لِتُسْحِرَنَا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُ
 بِمُؤْمِنِينَ (١٣٢) فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقَمَلَ وَالضَّفَادَعَ وَالْأَلْدَمَ عَائِلَتٍ مُّفَصَّلَتٍ
 فَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ (١٣٣) وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَى أَدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
 بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَنْكَ لَنَ كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ (١٣٤) فَلَمَّا
 كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الرِّجْزَ إِلَى أَجَلٍ هُمْ بَلِغُوهُ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ (١٣٥)

And we straitened Pharaoh's folk with famine and dearth of fruits, that peradventure they might heed. (130) But whenever good befell them, they said: This is ours; and whenever evil smote them they ascribed it to the evil auspices of Moses and those with him. Surely their auspice was only with Allah. But most of them knew not. (131) And they said: Whatever portent thou bringest wherewith to bewitch us, we shall not put faith in thee. (132) So We set against them the flood and the locusts and the vermin and the frogs and the blood -

succession of clear signs. But they were arrogant and became a guilty folk. (133) And when the terror fell on them they cried: O Moses! Pray for us unto thy Lord, because He hath a covenant with thee. If thou removest the terror from us we verily will trust thee and will let the Children of Israel go with thee. (134) But when We did remove from them the terror for a term which they must reach, behold! they broke their covenant. (135)
(Surah Al A'raf 7:130-135)

Although the Quran mentions nine signs, it gives little detail concerning them. The Bible discusses them in detail in Exodus, chapters 7-12, so a short description is given below in the light of this Biblical account.

1. BLOOD

At the command of Allah, Musa took his rod and struck some water with it. Immediately all the water in Egypt, whether in rivers, streams or ponds, turned to blood. For seven days the Egyptians had nothing to drink or wash with except this blood.

2. FROGS

Musa struck the air with his rod and an army of frogs began to invade Egypt. Not a single place was safe as the frogs thickly covered the ground.

3. LICE

Musa hit the air again with his rod and the dust particles everywhere turned to lice.

4. FLIES

The lice was followed by swarms of flies, which filled the land and air.

5. MURRAINS

An awful disease spread among the cattle owned by the Egyptians, killing them all.

6. BOILS

The Egyptians and their few remaining beasts became covered in hideous boils that no remedy could heal.

7. HAILSTONES

The entire land of Egypt endured storms of hail, thunder and heavy rain that destroyed all their fields and crops.

8. LOCUSTS

Thick swarms of locust filled the land, devouring all the food. The Egyptians were left starving as fruit and crop were quickly eaten.

9. DARKNESS

Thick darkness blanketed Egypt for three days and three nights. The Egyptians were forced into inactivity as the darkness was too complete to pierce.

Although these dreadful plagues came in succession, there must have been a time of normality between them to allow the Egyptians to recover and to give them a chance to repent. Exhausted by their ordeal, Pharaoh finally gave permission to the Israelites to leave.

D- The Crossing Of The Sea

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنَّ أَسْرَيْ بِعَبَادِي إِنْكُمْ مُتَّبِعُونَ (٥٢) فَأَرْسَلَ فِرْعَوْنَ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَشِرِينَ (٥٣) إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَشِرِذَمَةٌ قَلِيلُونَ (٥٤) وَإِنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَائِظُونَ (٥٥) وَإِنَا لَجَمِيعٌ حَذَرُونَ (٥٦) فَأَخْرَجْنَاهُمْ مِنْ جَنَّتِ وَعِيُونِ (٥٧) وَكُنُوزٍ وَمَقَامَ كَرِيمٍ (٥٨) كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا بَيْتَ إِسْرَائِيلَ (٥٩)

And We inspired Moses, saying: Take away My slaves by night, for ye will be pursued. (52) Then Pharaoh sent into the cities summoners, (53) (Who said): Lo! these indeed are but a little troop, (54) And lo! they are offenders against us. (55) And lo! we are a ready host. (56) Thus did We take them away from gardens and watersprings, (57) And treasures and a fair estate. (58) Thus (were those things taken from them) and We caused the Children of Israel to inherit them. (59)
(Surah Ash Shu'ara 26:52-59)

In order to make the Egyptians believe they were leaving temporarily, the Israelites borrowed some gold and jewellery from the Egyptians. The huge Exodus took place at night and thousands of Israelites marched on foot southward. It would have been easy for them to follow the caravan route along the Mediterranean coast to Can'aan (Palestine), but Mu knew that this route was under constant surveillance by the Egyptians. He thus took the difficult route southward to Sinai, passing through the Gulf of Suez.

Pharaoh had given the Israelites permission to leave, possibly because he expected them to return soon from their festivities. He soon realized that his cheap labour force was returning and assembled his soldiers to pursue them. Was Pharaoh the same King Rameses who had nurtured Musa as a baby in his palace, or was it his son Merneptah who succeeded him to the throne. Egyptologists incline to the latter theory. With a massive army of chariots, cavalry and soldiers, Pharaoh followed the route of the Israelites until they sighted them in the Red Sea. The Israelites were naturally horrified at the turn of events, with an ocean ahead and their captors behind. Musa calmed them down and under the instructions of Allah struck the water. In one of the most spectacular miracles mentioned in the Quran, the water of the sea parted. A dry path appeared in the middle with two walls of water standing on either side, tall and solid as mountains.

One can only imagine the breath-taking scene as the Israelites watched it unfold before their eyes. Their huge party entered the path and crossed safely to the other side. If the reader imagines this amazing event, the only conclusion to draw will be that the people who witnessed it would never again disobey Allah. How could they, when He had provided such spectacular help. Yet, as we shall see later, the Israelites were quick to forget and disobey.

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وَجَوَرُنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَعْيَا وَعَدُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْفَرَقُ
قَالَ عَامِنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَذْنِي عَامِنْتُ بِهِ بَتُّوْا إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (٩٠) عَالَانَ وَقَدْ
عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (٩١) فَلَيَقُومَ نَتْجِيَّكَ بِبَدْنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ عَالِيَّةٌ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ عَائِلَتَنَا لَغَفِلُونَ (٩٢)

And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh with his hosts pursued them in rebellion and transgression, till, when the (fate of) drowning overtook him, he exclaimed: I believe that there is no God save Him in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender (unto Him). (90) What! Now! When hitherto thou hast rebelled and been of the wrong-doers? (91) But this day We save thee in thy body that thou mayst be a portent for those after thee. Lo! most of mankind are heedless of Our portents. (92)

(Surah Yunus 10:90-92)

Pharaoh and his army watched in astonishment as their prey crossed the sea, and they quickly followed. Once all the Israelites had crossed to safety and the Egyptians were well along the path, Allah Almighty ordered the waters to return to normal. The two mountains of water collapsed on top of the army, drowning every man and beast. The soldiers had lived lives of luxury in palaces and gardens, but Allah brought them out of their fabulous dwellings to die a horrible and lonely death.

There is some difference of opinion concerning the exact place of this incident, but according to modern research it was somewhere between the top end of the Gulf of Suez and the Bitter Lake, as they were both connected to each other at the time. The area was a sea of reeds and the waterway to the Bitter Lake could be forded at several points.

As the water closed in on him and death stared him in the face, Firaun shouted out that he believed in the Lord of the Israelites. But a *shahadah* taken at the point of death, when the person can see the angels of death approaching, is not accepted. It is too late to pronounce faith at the last hour. Allah Almighty rejected his declaration of faith, and also made him a sign for all future generations by promising to save his body from being destroyed. His body was rescued and mummified, and later put on display in Cairo Museum. It can be viewed to this day, a fulfillment of Allah's promise to make him a sign for later generations.

النَّارُ يُعَرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوا وَعَشِيَّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا عَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ (٤٦)

The Fire; they are exposed to it morning and evening; and on the day when the Hour upriseth (it is said): Cause Pharaoh's folk to enter the most awful doom. (46)
(Surah Al Mu'min 40:46)

The punishment of Pharaoh and his people did not end in the Gulf of Suez. Allah Almighty has described how these people are exposed to the fires of hell every morning and afternoon while they endure their life of Barzakh. On the day of Judgement they will enter hell forever.

15. Events after the crossing of the Red Sea.

i) Temptation to idol worship

وَجَوَزْنَا بَيْنَ إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَّهُمْ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَى أَجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ (١٣٨) إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مُنْتَرُّ مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَطَلٌ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (١٣٩) قَالَ أَغَيَّرَ اللَّهُ أَبْغِيْكُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُوَ فَضَلَّكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ (١٤٠)

And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, and they came unto a people who were given up to idols which they had. They said: O Moses! Make for us a god even as they have gods. He said: Lo! ye are a folk who know not. (138) Lo! as for these, their way will be destroyed and all that they are doing is in vain. (139) He said: Shall I seek for you a god other than Allah when He hath favoured you above (all) creatures? (140)
(Surah Al A'raf 7:138-140)

Safe in the Sinai peninsula, the Israelites marched further south. During their journey they came across a settlement of Egyptians on the opposite side of the Gulf of Suez, in an area where copper mines once existed. Like the people of Pharaoh, these settlers also worshipped idols of stone and had built a temple to honour these idols. The Israelites were used to seeing the statues and temples of their Egyptian masters, and made the terrible request to Musa for a similar idol to worship. Such was the extent of their ingratitude! Allah Almighty had liberated them from cruel and oppressive bondage in Egypt, and now they were free to begin a new life in Palestine. They had watched as Allah had inflicted the terrible plagues on the Egyptians, and they had watched Pharaoh drown before their eyes. But instead of bowing down to Allah in complete faith and humility, they began to hanker after the statues of their dead captors.

This incident reflects a characteristic of human nature, which is to love and cherish customs that have been observed and handed down for generations. It takes time for a person to cut himself off from such customs and practices, especially those involving shirk. Nevertheless, Musa made it clear that shirk was a fruitless practice which would be of no benefit to them on the day of Resurrection.

A similar incident took place in the time of our Messenger, Muhammad (saw). Abu Waqid al Laithi narrated, “We went out with the Messenger of Allah (saw) on a campaign against Hunayn, at a time when we had only recently left pagan religion for Islam. It was the practice of unbelievers to hang their arms and armour on a tree called Dhat Anwat for luck and blessings. When we passed a similar tree, we asked the Prophet: ‘Will you establish another Dhat Anwat for us, just like theirs?’ He replied, ‘Allahu Akbar! You have spoken exactly as Banu Israil said to Musa: (Make for us a god just like their god.) Certainly you are an ignorant people. Must you follow the same pattern as those that went before you?’”

Shirk is the greatest sin, and the Messenger of Allah did not wish to see any remnants of it in his people. After the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet ordered that every single idol, large or small, be smashed completely. If left untouched, they would have been a reminder to the new Muslims of past pagan practices, possibly encouraging nostalgia for them. It is therefore the duty of Muslims to remove all signs of shirk and idol worship from their communities.

ii) Favours of Allah on Banu Israil

وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ أَنْتَنِي عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطًا أَمَّا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى إِذْ أَسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ أَنِ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَابَ الْحَجَرَ فَأَنْبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ أَنْتَنِي عَشْرَةَ عَيْنَاتْ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أَنَسِ مَشْرَبَهُمْ وَظَلَّنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلَوَى كُلُّوْ مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفَسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ (١٦٠)

We divided them into twelve tribes, nations; and We inspired Moses, when his people asked him for water, saying: Smite with thy staff the rock! And there gushed forth therefrom twelve springs, so that each tribe knew their drinking-place. And we caused the white cloud to overshadow them and sent down for them the manna and the quails (saying): Eat of the good things wherewith we have provided you. They wronged Us not, but they were wont to wrong themselves. (160)

(Surah Al A'raf 7:160)

In the scorching heat and barren ground of the Sinai desert, food and water would have been a problem for a single traveller, let alone for an entire nation. But once again, Allah Almighty rescued Musa's people. As the Israelites were the descendants of the twelve sons of Yaqub (also known as Israil), Musa had grouped his followers into twelve tribes accordingly. Food and water was provided by Allah Almighty miraculously:

- The people were very short of water, so Musa was commanded to hit a rock with his stick. To everyone's utter amazement, twelve springs of water gushed out from the rock, a spring for each tribe. According to the Bible, this incident took place at Horeb near Mount Sinai.
- Sinai is known for its intensely hot climate, with little shelter from the sun. Allah Almighty sent clouds to shelter and cool the Israelites in these difficult conditions.
- Food was scarce in the desert, so Allah sent Manna and Salwa for them. Salwa were flocks of quail which began to fly low in the desert, providing easy hunting and delicious meals. Manna was a sweet substance which began to flow from the trees. According to modern research, it may have been a honey-like substance found on the Tamarisk (al Tarfa), a tree common in the Sinai. It falls to the ground when the tree is attacked by a particular plant louse.

iii) The covenant with Allah

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيقَاتِكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الْطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا عَاتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَادْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعْنَكُمْ تَتَقَوَّنَ (٦٤) ثُمَّ تَوْلِيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ (٦٤)

And (remember, O Children of Israel) when We made a covenant with you and caused the mount to tower above you, (saying): Hold fast that which We have given you, and remember that which is therein, that ye may ward off (evil). (63) Then, even after that, ye turned away, and if it had not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy ye had been among the losers. (64)

(Surah al Baqarah 2:63-64)

After a long and arduous journey, the Israelites set up camp at the foot of Mount Sinai, which is also known as Tur Sinin and Jabal Musa. This mountain witnessed a number of important events in history, one of which was the signing of the Covenant. Musa was first given the Ten Commandments, and three days later his people were ordered to assemble at the foot of the mountain to make a covenant with Allah that they would hold fast to the Commandments. It was a spectacular scene of majesty and beauty, and a time of solemn vows. The air resounded with the sound of thunder, the sky glittered with lightning, and the mountain towered up over the Israelites, all witness to the historic agreement being made. Allah Almighty did not show Himself to the people as that would have destroyed their senses and bodies, so He raised the huge mountain above them as a symbol of His might and power. One would expect that after such a memorable incident, the Israelites would have clung to the covenant, but as later events will show, they were quick to break it.

iv) Forty days on Mount Sinai

وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوسَى تَلَاثَيْنَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَّنَاهَا بِعَشْرِ فَتَمْ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَرُونَ أَخْلُقْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَبَعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (١٤٢) وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ تَرَنِي وَلَكِنْ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنْ أَسْتَقِرَ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَنِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكَّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَقَ قَالَ سُبْحَنَكَ تَبَتُّ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (١٤٣) قَالَ يَمُوسَى إِنِّي أَصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلْمَي فَخُذْ مَا عَاتَيْتُكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّكَرِينَ (١٤٤) وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَاحِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَمْرَ قَوْمَكَ يَاخْذُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُورِيْكُمْ دَارُ الْفَسِقِينَ (١٤٥) سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ عَائِتَى الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِعِنْدِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ عَيْةً لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَخَذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَخَذُوهُ سَبِيلًا دَالِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِيَأْتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ (١٤٦) وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِيَأْتِنَا وَلِقَاءَ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَ أَعْمَلُهُمْ هَلْ يُجَزِّوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (١٤٧)

And when We did appoint for Moses thirty nights (of solitude), and added to them ten, and he completed the whole time appointed by his Lord of forty nights; and Moses said unto his brother, Aaron: Take my place among the people. Do right, and follow not the way of mischief-makers. (142) And when Moses came to Our appointed tryst and his Lord had spoken unto him, he said: My Lord! Show me (Thy Self), that I may gaze upon Thee. He said: Thou wilt not see Me, but gaze upon the mountain! If it stand still in its place, then thou wilt see Me. And when his Lord revealed (His) glory to the mountain He sent it crashing down. And Moses fell down senseless. And when he woke he said: Glory unto Thee! I turn unto Thee repentant, and I am the first of (true) believers. (143) He said: O Moses! I have preferred thee above mankind by My messages and by My speaking (unto thee). So hold that which I have given thee, and be among the thankful. (144) And We wrote for him, upon the tablets, the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation of all things, then (bade him): Hold it fast; and command thy people (saying): Take the better (course made clear) therein. I shall show thee the abode of evil-livers. (145) I shall turn away from My revelations those who magnify themselves wrongfully in the earth, and if they see each token believe it not, and

if they see the way of righteousness choose it nor for (their) way, and if they see the way of error choose it for (their) way. That is because they deny Our revelations and are used to disregard them. (146) Those who deny Our revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter, their works are fruitless. Are they requited aught save what they used to do? (147)
(Surah Al A'raf 7:142-147)

Musa was asked to prepare himself for another meeting with Allah, by devoting thirty days and nights to seclusion on the mountain. Anxious to meet his Lord, Prophet Musa left his brother Harun as his deputy among the Israelites and hurried to the mountain before the appointed time. He was then told to stay an extra ten days as a lesson to his impatience. Before meeting Allah Almighty, Musa had to prepare himself spiritually for forty days. According to authentic narrations, he fasted during this period.

Fasting is a unique spiritual and physical exercise that raises a man from his earthly state to that of angels, preparing him to receive Allah's words. Prophet Isa observed a similar 40-day period of exclusion and fasting before he received prophethood and the Injil (New Testament). Prophet Muhammad (saw) would also fast in his days of seclusion in Cave Hira before he too received revelation.

Musa was anxious to see his Lord face-to-face, but it is impossible for mere mortals to see Allah in this world. Musa was given only a brief glimpse of the Glory of Allah, which was enough to shatter the summit of the mountain and to knock Musa unconscious to the ground. Musa was once again reminded of his noble mission and given the Tablets, including the Law (Shariah). This was a detailed account of prohibitions and commandments related to all matters of personal life.

(verse 145): The remnants of past, wicked people were shown as a warning of the dreadful end awaiting those who reject Allah's laws.

(Verse:146): It is Allah Almighty's eternal practice that those who are arrogant and reject Allah's laws will never receive help in finding the Truth. Their insolence and conceit will always lead to an awful end.

Carrying the Tablets, Musa returned to his people. To his consternation, he found his people worshipping the statue of a golden calf. This incident and the remaining events will be discussed in the next lesson, Insha Allah.

Chapter 2

ZAKAH - CHARITY

Ibn Abbas narrated that when the Messenger of Allah sent Muadh to Yemen as govenor, he said to him, *“You will reach a community of the people of the Book, and the first thing you should call to is that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they accept this, then instruct them that Allah has ordained five prayers on them during the day and night. When they begin observing it, instruct them that Allah has made Zakah obligatory for them, which should be collected from the wealthy among them and distributed to their needy. When they submit to this, collect it from them and avoid the temptation of selecting the best of their wealth. And fear the dua of the oppressed, as there is no curtain between it and Allah.”*

(Bukhari)

Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet(saw) said, *“It would please me greatly to have gold the size of Mount Uhud, yet to have nothing left three days later except one dinar, which I would set aside for repaying a debt.”*

(Agreed upon)

Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (saw) said, *“There are seven that Allah will shade on the Day when there will be no shade except from Him:*

a just Imam;

a man who spent his youth in the worship of Allah Almighty;

a man whose heart is attached to the masjid;

two men who love each other for the sake of Allah Almighty, meeting and departing because of it;

a man who is solicited by a woman of beauty and noble lineage, but who says to her, ‘I fear Allah Almighty’;

a man who gives charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given;

and a man who does dhikr of Allah in privacy so that his eyes fill with tears.”

(Agreed Upon)

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (saw) said, *“On each day that the servant of Allah awakens from his rest, two angels descend and one of them says, ‘O Allah, give an abundant replacement to the one who gives in charity.’ The second angel says, ‘O Allah, destroy the one who refuses to spend in charity.’”*

(Agreed upon)

Abu Musa al Ashari reported that the Messenger of Allah said, *“Charity is due from every Muslim.” The Companions asked, “What about the one who cannot find anything to give?” He replied, “He should aid the needy and the distressed.” They asked, “And what if he is not able to do so?” He replied, “Then let him do good deeds and refrain from evil, as that will serve as a charity for him.”*

(Agreed upon)

Anas b. Malik said, "Abu Talha was one of the richest Ansari men in Madinah, and the property most beloved to him was a garden called Bayhura opposite the Masjid of the Prophet. The Prophet (saw) would go to the garden to drink its pleasant water. When the Quranic verse ('You will never attain righteousness until you spend from that which you love') was revealed, Abu Talha went to the Prophet (saw) and said, "The property most dear to me is Bayhura, so I present it in charity in the way of Allah Almighty, and I hope in return for piety and reward from Allah the Exalted. Dispose of it as you wish, O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (saw) said, "This is indeed valuable property which will earn a great reward. I have heard what you say about it, and I advise that you divide it among your close relatives." So Abu Talha divided it among his relatives and cousins."

(Agreed upon)

Ibn Hajar, the great scholar of Hadith says in his introduction to the 'Sound collections of the Hadith of Al Bukhari' that zakah literally means 'to grow' and is used linguistically to describe plants and wealth. It also has a second meaning, which is 'to purify.' Both meanings are incorporated in the Islamic concept of Charity, as we shall see in this article.

The growth of charity.

Wealth is said to grow when given in charity because the reward given for it by Allah Almighty will be far greater than the original donation. The Prophet (saw) once said that "Charity given from a property will never decrease it..."

(Tirmidhi)

Charity is described as a loan to Allah Almighty, who keeps the loan and adds so much to it that on the day of Judgement, the person will find that the small amount of wealth he gave has now become a mountain of gold. In this regard, Allah Almighty asks His creation,

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسْنًا فَيُضَعِّفُهُ اللَّهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرًا وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُونَ (٢٤٥)

Who is it that will lend unto Allah a goodly loan, so that He may give it increase manifold? Allah straiteneth and enlargeth. Unto Him ye will return. (245)

(Surah Al Baqarah 2: 245)

Even the humble date will be worth a great deal on the Scales if the intention behind their donation was pure. Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "If one of you gives even a date in charity from lawfully-earned wealth, Allah will take it with His right hand and nurture and cultivate it the way you nurture your foals or young camels. He will do so until the charity is the size of a mountain or even larger."

(Agreed upon)

Adi. b. Hatim reported that, "The Messenger of Allah (saw) mentioned the Fire, sought refuge from it, and averted his face three times. He then said, "Save yourselves from the Fire, even if it be with half a date. And if you do not possess even that much, then with a good word."

(Agreed upon)

This is not to say that charity should be composed of the smallest possessions that one has, such as dates. The context of the above Hadith is that the Companions of the Prophet (saw) were generally very poor with barely enough food for their families, let alone to give to others as well. The Prophet (saw) encouraged them all to give in charity generously, depending on their individual circumstances; the rich gave gardens and gold, while the poor shared their simple food.

Purification of Wealth.

Zakah purifies one's wealth from impurities by removing the sin of any unlawful earnings, and purifies the person's intention and character by removing greed and love for this world. The more a person gives in charity, the more he fights the temptations of this world. The righteous are always the most generous in giving charity. Conversely, those in whose hearts love for this world supersedes everything else will find it difficult to part with their wealth, regardless of the size of their fortune. Giving in Zakah is a litmus test of a person's sincerity, faith and devotion. Prayer, for example, is a tremendous physical and spiritual exercise, but costs nothing in monetary terms. Fasting is an abstention which improves a person's ability to control his desires, but it costs nothing. Hajj is a financial undertaking, but the person spends on himself rather than on others. The immense physical, spiritual and moral values of all these Islamic tenets can never be under-estimated, but they do not trigger the same psychological resistance in human beings that giving charity triggers. The nature of man inclines toward greed and the accumulation of wealth, a fact that is exploited fiercely by Satan. He makes extravagance look tempting, charity a burden, and frightens man with the fear of poverty. The person runs from the very thought of giving charity; if he does give, it will be in a miserly manner, giving only the bare minimum.

Wealth is very dear to mankind and few will agree to part with it, even at the point of death. Most people, for example, are happy with the services provided by their governments, such as health, education, police and transport. Yet taxation remains a sore point for many people, who decry the exorbitant levels they have to pay. Despite the benefits of taxation to the infrastructure of a country, its citizens will always complain.

﴿ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هُلُوقًا (١٩) إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا (٢٠) وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنْوِعًا (٢١) إِلَّا الْمُصْلِينَ (٢٢) ﴾

Lo! man was created anxious, (19) Fretful when evil befalleth him (20) And, when good befalleth him, grudging; (21) Save worshippers. (22)
(Surah Al Ma'arij 70:19-22)

The Quran and Hadith encourage man to break this emotional attachment to wealth, and they encourage him to respond to the needs of the people around them. This dual goal is achieved through positive and negative conditioning. On the positive side, the texts remind man that everything in the universe belongs to Allah and whatever wealth a man possesses is a trust given to him by his Creator. He may spend it on himself and on his dependants, but he must also give generously to those in need. He is also reminded of the great rewards promised to those who give in charity. On the negative note, excruciating punishment is promised to the misers. Examples are given of selfish communities who, among other sins, refused to give in

charity, and so were destroyed by the Wrath of their Lord. One such example is that of the People of the Garden mentioned in Surah Al Qalam; they tried to stop charitable actions, and the result was a swift punishment.

إِنَّا بَلَوَنَّهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لِيَصْرِمُنَّا مُصْبِحِينَ (١٧) وَلَا يَسْتَثِنُونَ (١٨)
 فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَافِثٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ (١٩) فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيرِيمَ (٢٠) فَنَنَادُوا مُصْبِحِينَ
 (٢١) أَنِ اغْدُوا عَلَى حَرَثِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَرِمِينَ (٢٢) فَأَنْطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَفَّتُونَ (٢٣) أَنْ لَا
 يَدْخُلُنَّهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِسْكِينٌ (٢٤) وَغَدُوا عَلَى حَرَذٍ قَلَرِينَ (٢٥) فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا
 لَضَالُّونَ (٢٦)

Lo! We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden when they vowed they would pluck its fruit next morning, (17) And made no exception (for the Will of Allah); (18) Then a visitation came upon from thy Lord it while they slept (19) And in the morning it was as if plucked. (20) And they cried out one unto another in the morning, (21) Saying: Run unto your field if ye would pluck (the fruit). (22) So they went off, saying one unto another in low tones: (23) No needy man shall enter it to-day against you. (24) They went betimes, strong in (this) purpose. (25) But when they saw it, they said: Lo! we are in error! (26)

(Surah al Qalam 68: 17-26)

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوا إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَطْلَانِ
 وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الْذَّهَبَ وَالْأَفْضَلَةَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
 بِعِذَابِ الْيَمِينِ (٣٤) يَوْمَ يُحْمَى عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتَكُوَى بِهَا جَبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا
 مَا كَنَزْتُمْ لَا تَنْسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ (٣٥) ﴾

O ye who believe! Lo! many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah. They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom, (34) On the day when it will (all) be heated in the fire of hell, and their foreheads and their flanks and their backs will be branded therewith (and it will be said unto them): Here is that which ye hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what ye used to hoard. (35)

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “No owner of wealth who does not pay Zakah will be spared, for his treasures will be heated in the Fire of hell and then melted into plates. His flanks and forehead will be branded with them until Allah pronounces judgement on His servants during a day that will last fifty thousand years. He will be shown his path, leading either to heaven or to hell. A man who owned camels but did not pay Zakah on them will not be spared either; he will be laid down flat on a sandy and soft plain and his camels will run heavily over him, one after another, until Allah pronounces judgement....” (Agreed upon)

Abu Hurayrah also reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Whoever is made wealthy by Allah but does not pay Zakah on his wealth, will find that his wealth will turn into a bald and poisonous male snake with two black spots over his eyes. The snake will twine itself around his neck, bite his cheeks and say, ‘I am your treasure, I am your wealth.’ (Agreed upon)

The rights of orphans, beggars, travellers and the destitute.

In Islam, Zakah is not an income tax on the earnings of a person but a percentage to be given from his savings; in other words, to be given from surplus funds. The savings must have been in his possession for one year for Zakah to become obligatory on them. Zakah is the cement that binds a community together; it has an important social function, which is to create bonds between the rich and the poor. Muslims have a social responsibility to take care of less fortunate members of their communities. It is an obligation for them to feed and clothe the poor, champion their rights and fight for justice for all. If the poor or the weak are abandoned by those in authority, the consequence will be social unrest and conflict.

كَلَّا بِلَّا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتَيْمَ (١٧) وَلَا تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ (١٨)

Nay, but ye (for your part) honour not the orphan (17) And urge not on the feeding of the poor. (18)

(Surah Al Fajr 89: 17-18)

عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ (٤١) مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرَ (٤٢) قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصْلِّيْنَ (٤٣) وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعَمُ (٤٤) الْمِسْكِينَ (٤٤)

Concerning the guilty: (41) What hath brought you to this burning? (42) They will answer: We were not of those who prayed (43) Nor did we feed the wretched. (44)

(Surah Al Mudathir 74: 41-44)

Charity is neither an optional action left to the individual's discretion, nor is it a voluntary contribution. Indeed, Islam has uniquely ordained that charity is a right that the poor have upon the rich. In the verses below, the word 'Haqq' (Right) is used to describe charity.

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلْسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ (١٩)

And in their wealth the beggar and the outcast had due share. (19)
(Surah Adh Dhariyat 51: 19)

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ (٢٤) لِّلْسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ (٢٥)

And in whose wealth there is a right acknowledged (24) For the beggar and the destitute (25)
(Surah Al Ma'arij 70: 24-25)

The Islamic concept of Zakah stems from a desire for the re-distribution of wealth. Wealth should not remain in the hands of a few stupendously rich individuals or a few grossly rich countries, while everyone else starves and suffers. Such unfair distribution of wealth creates anger and a sense of aggrievement within the poorer communities, which is not a healthy state of affairs for any society. Our modern world is one in which such unfair distribution of wealth is to be found; a world of the have's and the have-not's. The year 2005 may well be remembered for the efforts of some to redress this imbalance in wealth by encouraging not

just individuals but rich states to give more in charity. This was the year of Live8, a series of massive pop-concerts aimed at highlighting the plight of the starving millions in Africa. The 'Make poverty history' campaign started by veteran campaigner Bob Geldof was a political move to pressurize the leaders of the G8 (the eight most powerful countries of the world) to cancel debts owed by developing countries, for richer countries to spend at least 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to help poorer countries, and for reforms in trade rules to allow poor countries to trade on an even platform.

Some of the statistics from this year were truly shameful:

- 1 The world's three richest people controlled more wealth than all 600 million people in the world's poorest countries.
- 2 Every day, 30,000 children were dying as a result of extreme poverty.
- 3 Every day, 50,000 people would die as a result of hunger and preventable illness.

Advisors to the U.N calculated during this period that the whole of Africa needed \$30 billion to escape from poverty, a sum that was easily affordable if the USA would commit only 0.7 per cent of its GNP in aid. Campaigners were asking for less than one per cent of the wealth of rich nations to eradicate poverty, so imagine what the result would be if they applied the Islamic ruling of giving two and a half per cent of their wealth. The effect on eradicating world poverty would be instantaneous. As Syyedina Ali, the fourth Caliph of Islam, is reported to have said, "If each and every Muslim gives Zakah, no-one will go hungry."

A timeless tradition.

Zakah was not a novel concept introduced by Islam, but had been an important component of the message preached by all previous prophets of God. It was included in the covenant agreed by the Israelites on Mount Sinai, and it was mentioned by Isa when he spoke from the cradle.

وَوَهَبَنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً وَكُلُّاً جَعَلَنَا صَالِحِينَ (٧٢) وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيَّاتَهُ الْزَّكُوَةَ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَبْدِينَ (٧٣)

And We bestowed upon him Isaac, and Jacob as a grandson. Each of them We made righteous. (72) And We made them chiefs who guide by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds and the right establishment of worship and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone). (73)

(Surah al Anbiya 21: 72-73)

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا (٤) وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ
بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكُوَةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا (٥)

And make mention in the Scripture of Ishmael. Lo! he was a keeper of his promise, and he was a messenger (of Allah), a prophet. (54) He enjoined upon his people worship and almsgiving, and was acceptable in the sight of his Lord. (55)

(Surah Maryam 19: 54-55)

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ عَاتَنِي الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا (٣٠)

He spake: Lo! I am the slave of Allah. He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet, (30)

(Surah Maryam 19: 30)

When Zakah became obligatory.

The Quran began to mention Zakah from the early days of revelation, maintaining a constant link between prayer and charity. Exhortations to give in charity are given in over thirty Quranic verses. Zakah was a voluntary act of charity in the early Makkan period. Abu Bakr As Siddique was a famous example of a man who used all his wealth to further the mission of Islam. He would buy and set free the slaves who were being persecuted and even tortured for their Islam. Zakah became obligatory in the second year of the Hijrah when the Prophet (saw) was settled in Madinah.

Items on which Zakah is obligatory.

﴿ يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءامَنُوا إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهَبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَطْلَنِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الْذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُم بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (٣٤) ﴾

O ye who believe! Lo! many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah. They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom, (34)

(Surah At Tawbah 9: 34)

﴿ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرَ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أُكْلَهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَانَ مُتَشَابِهٌ وَغَيْرُ مُتَشَابِهٌ كُلُّوْ مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَعَانُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ (١٤١) ﴾

He it is Who produceth gardens trellised and untrellised, and the date-palm, and crops of divers flavour, and the olive and the pomegranate, like and unlike. Eat ye of the fruit thereof when it fruiteth, and pay the due thereof upon the harvest day, and be not prodigal. Lo! Allah loveth not the prodigals. (141)

(Surah Al An'am 6: 141)

﴿ يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءامَنُوا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبَتِمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجَنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَنِيمُوا أَلْخَيْثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِإِخْدِيَهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُعْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِّ حَمِيدٌ (٢٦٧) ﴾

O ye who believe! Spend of the good things which ye have earned, and of that which We bring forth from the earth for you, and seek not the bad (with intent) to spend thereof (in charity) when ye would not take it for yourselves save with disdain; and know that Allah is Absolute, Owner of Praise. (267)

(Surah Al Baqarah 2: 267)

The Quranic commandments regarding Zakah are very general, leaving the specific details to Hadith. The items on which Zakah must be paid are:

- 3 Money (gold and silver)
- 4 Animals (camels, cows and sheep)
- 5 Agricultural produce (corn, wheat and barley)
- 6 Fruit, dates and raisins.

Imam Al Bukhari gives detailed ahadith on this subject under the chapter "Earnings and Trade." Zakah is payable on these items once its **Nisab** has been reached; Nisab is the minimum value or weight of one's holdings, and must fulfil two conditions:

- a) It is not paid on current expenses but is paid on wealth remaining after necessities such as food, clothing, transport and housing have been paid.
- b) The Nisab amount must have been in the person's possession for one complete Islamic year, without any decrease being made in it. If there is a decrease so that the value falls below the minimum value, then the year will begin again from the day it returns to the minimum value.

Nisab for gold, silver and cash.

According to a hadith narrated by Ali and collected by Imam Ahmad, the Nisab for gold is 20 dinars, which is equivalent to 7.5 tolas (85 grams) in weight. The Zakah due from this is 2.5 per cent, which would be half a dinar.

The Nisab for silver is 200 dirhams. The Zakah due from this is paid at 2.5 per cent, which would be five dirhams (40 dirhams of silver is equivalent to one ounce).

A person who owns the Nisab for gold or silver must pay Zakah on the whole amount provided it has been in his possession for a complete year. Ahadith mention gold and silver as these formed the means of financial transaction in the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Modern currencies and precious metals are also liable to zakah at a rate of 2.5 per cent. The Nisab for currency is equivalent to the weight of 75g. of gold.

Merchandise.

Zakah is payable on merchandise such as clothes, grain, electrical goods, cars and carpets if they are for sale, and if the capital spent on them exceeds the value of 85 grams of gold. Zakah is not payable if the merchandise is not for sale. The Prophet (saw) once said about Khalid bin Walid, "*As for Khalid, he kept his shields and armour for the cause of Allah.*" In other words, Khalid's valuable armour was not subject to Zakah because it was not for sale.

Agriculture.

Salim b. Abdullah narrated from his father that the Prophet (saw) said, "*On a land irrigated by rain or by natural water channels, one tenth of the yield is compulsory as Zakah.*" This and other hadith indicate that ten per cent of the crop is given as Zakah if the land is irrigated naturally, without toil. If the land is irrigated by artificial means and thus requires extra work, the Zakah payable is 5 per cent. The Nisab for harvest is 1,700 pounds in weight.

Animals.

Zakah is payable on animals such as the camel, cow, sheep and goat, provided the following conditions are met:

- 7 The animals graze freely most of the year.
- 8 They are kept for breeding and milking.
- 9 They have been in their master's ownership for a full year.

The Nisab for this category is equivalent to the value of five camels.

The Recipients of Zakah.

﴿إِنَّمَا الْصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَمَلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤْلَفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَرِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنَى السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (٦٠)﴾

The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarer; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise. (60)
(Surah at Tawbah 9: 60)

﴿فَلَا أَفْتَحَ الْعَقَبَةَ (١١) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ (١٢) فَكُرْرَبَةٌ (١٣) أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْعَةٍ (١٤) يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ (١٥) أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ (١٦)﴾

But he hath not attempted the Ascent - (11) Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Ascent (12) (It is) to free a slave, (13) And to feed in the day of hunger. (14) An orphan near of (15) Or some poor wretch in misery, (16)
(Surah al Balad 90: 11-16)

The Messenger of Allah (saw) once said, "The one who gives Zakah to his relatives will get double reward; one for fulfilling the rights of relatives and one for paying Zakah." (Bukhari)

There are eight categories for the recipients of Zakah:

- 10 The poor – Al Fuqaraa.
- 11 The needy – Al Masakin. These are individuals not poor enough to beg but who do not have enough of life's basic necessities.
- 12 Collectors of Zakah.
- 13 Reconciliation of hearts. Zakah may be given to those whose faith is new or weak as new converts to the faith, or to those struggling financially.
- 14 Freeing war captives and slaves. Islam fought the institution of slavery from its earliest days and allowed Zakah to be used to ransom them.
- 15 Those in debt.
- 16 In the cause of Allah – this is understood to mean Jihad. Zakah can be given to mujahideen who leave their homes and families to defend Islam and the Muslims.

17 Travellers. Funds can be given to travellers who are stranded in foreign countries and unable to achieve the objective of their journey.

Zakah should be distributed, first and foremost, to the poor of the community in which it is collected. However, if the local community is managing well while other communities are suffering, perhaps because of natural disasters, then zakah funds may be channelled to them.

Sadaqatul Fitr.

*“Abdullah b. Umar said that the Prophet (saw) commanded the payment of one sa’ a * of dates or one sa’ a of barley from each and every Muslim, whether slave or free, male or female, young or old. He ordered that this be paid before the people went out for the Eid prayer.”*

(Bukhari)

18 One sa’ a equals 2,175 grams approximately.

Sadaqatul Fitr is an obligatory charity enjoined upon every Muslim and is timed to coincide with the end of Ramadan. It ensures that the poor of the community enjoy the festivities of Eid, including new clothes and food, with everyone else. This charity is paid by the head of the household on behalf of each and every member of the family, including the baby born on the last night of Ramadan.

Chapter 3 THE HORRORS OF HELL.

Belief in the existence of Hell and the terrible and very real punishment awaiting those who will spend eternity in it is a basic tenet of the Islamic faith. The fire of Hell is mentioned repeatedly in the Quran in graphic and gruesome detail. The inhabitants of hell will endure the most awful torture within its pit, a torture so awful that words can do it little justice. Just as Paradise awaits those who spend their lives in the pursuit of winning the pleasure of Allah, so Hell awaits those who squander their lives and wealth in the pursuit of selfish enjoyment. The path of Islam is a middle path that favours no extremism. For example, the philosophical trend of traditional Christianity taught that the physical body needed to be weakened, even beaten, in order to free and strengthen the soul. In contrast, modern 'enlightened' philosophy holds that the soul is non-existent, that the Hereafter is a myth, and that the physical body in this world is all-important. All efforts of individuals and society must therefore be directed to giving the human body all possible pleasures and ease, as this life is the one and only life. "You only live once" and "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die" have become the slogans of modern society. Hence in modern, consumer society, individuals are brainwashed to chase the pleasures of the flesh and to spend their lives chasing wealth, making wealth and spending wealth. The spiritual reality of man has been all-but forgotten. One of the first casualties of this rush for physical comforts has been in the area of sexual conduct: in its obsession to fulfil all its obsessions and desires, society has agreed, contrary to all religious teachings, that all its sexual fantasies must be fulfilled and all traditional taboos broken.

The Islamic paradigm is unique as it teaches a balance between the needs of the body and the needs of the soul. The Muslim is taught that he may enjoy the pleasures of this life within clear boundaries, without indulging in excess, and without breaking the rules set by his Lord. But he is also reminded repeatedly that this world is short and transient, and so to become obsessed with it is sheer folly. The real life is the after-life, which will be eternal, and the condition of which will depend entirely on the life lived previously on earth. A pious and God-fearing life in this world will mean Paradise in the next world, and a selfish and ungrateful life in this world will mean Hell in the next world. It therefore makes sense to dedicate one's earthly life to winning paradise.

The Quran repeatedly warns mankind of the existence of hell and the need to save oneself and one's family from it.

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوْا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شَدِيدٌ
لَا يَعْصُمُنَّ اللَّهُ مَا أَمْرَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ مَا يُوْمَرُونَ (٦)

O ye who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire whereof the fuel is men and stones, over which are set angels strong, severe, who resist not Allah in that which He commandeth them, but do that which they are commanded. (6)

(Surah At Tahreem 66:6)

The Quran uses a number of words for hell, such as Jahannam, Al Hutamah (the Crusher), Sa'eer, Ladha, Al Hawiyah (the Pit), Al Jaheem and Saqar. The size of hell is gargantuan because it will have to hold the vast majority of humans and jinns on the day of Judgement. Its depth is such that it would take a stone seventy years to fall to its bottom.

Abu Huraira reported, “*While we were in the company of the Messenger of Allah, we heard a terrible sound. The Messenger of Allah asked us, “Do you know what that sound was?” When we answered, “Allah and his Messenger know best,” he said, “That was a stone that was thrown into hell seventy years ago and has been constantly falling until it now hit the bottom.”*

(Muslim)

Ibn Mas'ud reported that the Messenger of Allah said, “*Hell will be brought on that Day. It will have seventy thousand reins which will be pulled by seventy thousand angels on each rein.*”

(Muslim)

The frightening message from Hadith literature is that the vast majority of mankind will enter hell even though many of them were convinced they were destined for heaven.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (saw) said, “The first man to be called on the day of Judgement will be Adam, who will be shown his descendants. And it will be said to them, ‘This is your father Adam.’

Adam will say in response, ‘Labbayk we sa'dayk.’ Then Allah will say to him, ‘Bring out from your descendants the inhabitants of Fire.’ He will say, ‘O Lord, how many shall I bring?’

Allah will answer, ‘From every hundred, bring out ninety nine.’”

The Companions then asked the Prophet, ‘O Messenger of Allah, if ninety nine out of every hundred are brought out, then how many of us will remain?’

The Prophet answered, ‘My nation among other nations is like a white hair on a black bull.’
(Al Bukhari)

The severity of the punishment of Hell is graphically illustrated by the following ahadith,

Ibn Abbas reported that the Mesenger of Allah said, “Of the inmates of fire, the one with the easiest punishment will be Abu Talib. He will be wearing a pair of shoes that will force his brain to boil.”

(Al Bukhari)

Nu'man bin Basheer reported that the Messenger of Allah said, “Verily, the easiest punishment for the inmates of fire will be for the one who is given sandals and straps of fire. His brain will boil from them as a cooking-pot boils. He will think that no-one is suffering more than him, but in fact he will have the easiest punishment.”

(Agreed upon)

If an ordinary human being was to be thrown into this fire, his frail body would turn to cinders before he had even reached his seat in the fire. In order that the inhabitants of hell therefore endure its ferocity to the full, and that the surface area of their bodies being exposed to the fire be increased, their bodies will be enlarged to grotesque proportions before they enter Hell.

Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet of Allah (saw) said, “*Indeed the thickness of the disbeliever’s skin will be the length of forty-two giant arms, his molar tooth will be like mount Uhud, and his seat in hell fire will be the distance between Makkah and Madinah.*”
(At Tirmidhi and Al Hakim)

Abu Hurayra reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*The molar tooth of an unbeliever or the canine tooth of an unbeliever will be like mount Uhud, and the thickness of his skin will be equal to a three-night’s journey.*”

(Muslim)

The fire of this earth is so fierce that no sane man would place even his little finger into it, yet we are told that the fire of hell is seventy times hotter than the fire of earth.

Abu Hurayra narrated that when the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Your earthly fire is only one of the seventy portions of Hell,*” someone said, “*Would the ordinary fire not have been sufficient for burning the wrong-doers?*”
Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*The fire of hell has sixty nine more portions than earthly fire, and each one of them is as hot as earthly fire.*”
(Al Bukhari)

Just as heaven is surrounded by tall gates and walls with angels on duty to greet the arrivals, so hell is surrounded by gates, walls and angels. But the similarity must end there. The gates of heaven are made of gold silver and musk, so that they glitter brightly and spread their fragrance to all who approach them. The angels who stand at the gates will smile at the newcomers, congratulate them on their success, send greetings of peace on them, and invite them in respectfully. Those who enter paradise will be surrounded by light, beauty, fragrance, opulence, hospitality, music, comradeship and much more. One cannot imagine a greater contrast between the Quranic description of heaven and the description of Hell.

The gates of hell will be menacing and ugly, and a foul stench of burning flesh will pervade the atmosphere. Once the disbelievers have been herded through the towering gates, they will be locked and long columns will hang over the doors, ensuring that there can be no escape.

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوَقَّدَةُ (٦) الَّتِي تَطْلُعُ عَلَى الْأَفْدَةِ (٧) إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ (٨) فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ (٩)

(*It is*) the fire of Allah, kindled, (6) Which leapeth up over the hearts (of men). (7) Lo! it is closed in on them (8) In outstretched columns. (9)

(Surah Al-Humaza 104:6-9)

The angels that guard hell will stand at the mouth of the pit to ensure that no-one escapes. They will be holding maces of iron with which they will beat the inmates of hell.

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوا أَنفُسُكُمْ وَأَهْلِكُمْ نَارًا وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ
لَا يَعْصُمُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمْرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُوْمِرُونَ (٦)

O ye who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire whereof the fuel is men and stones, over which are set angels strong, severe, who resist not Allah in that which He commandeth them, but do that which they are commanded. (6)

(Surah At Tahreem 66:6)

وَنَادَوْا يَمَالِكَ لِيَقْضِي عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَكِثُونَ (٧٧)

And they cry: O master! Let thy Lord make an end of us. He saith: Lo! here ye must remain. (77)

(Surah Az Zukhruf 43:77)

وَلَهُمْ مَقْامٌ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ (٢١) كُلُّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ عَمِّ أَعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ
الْحَرِيقِ (٢٢)

And for them are hooked rods of iron. (21) Whenever, in their anguish, they would go forth from thence they are driven back therein and (it is said unto them): Taste the doom of burning. (22)

(Surah Al Hajj 22:21-22)

The angels will put chains and fetters around the necks and feet of the disbelievers to bind them together, to humiliate them as prisoners, and to drag them into hell on their faces.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَدِّلُونَ فِي عَآيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنَّى يُصْرَفُونَ (٦٩) الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا
أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ (٧٠) إِذَا أَغْلَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلَسِلُ يُسْخَبُونَ (٧١) فِي
الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ (٧٢)

Hast thou not seen those who wrangle concerning the revelations of Allah, how they are turned away? (69) Those who deny the Scripture and that wherewith We send Our messengers. But they will come to know, (70) When carcans are about their necks and chains. They are dragged (71) Through boiling waters; then they are thrust into the Fire. (72)
(Surah Ghafir 40: 69-72)

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَسْتُضْعِفُوا لِلَّذِينَ أَسْتَكْبَرُوا بْنَ مَكْرُ الْيَلِ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذْ تَأْمُرُونَا أَنْ نَنْفَرِ بِاللَّهِ وَنَجْعَلَ
لَهُ أَنَدَادًا وَأَسْرُوْا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَغْلَلَ فِي أَعْنَاقِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ يُجَزَّوُنَ
إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٣٣)

Those who were despised say unto those who were proud: Nay but (it was your) scheming night and day, when ye commanded us to disbelieve in Allah and set up rivals unto Him. And they are filled with remorse when they behold the doom; and We place carcans on the necks of those who disbelieved. Are they requited aught save what they did? (33)

Surah Sabaa 34:33

As mentioned earlier, the size of the people of hell will be increased as will the thickness of their skin to provide more surface area for burning. Once their skin has burned through, it will be replaced with fresh skin in a never-ending cycle.

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (١٤) كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَنِ لَمَحْجُوبُونَ (١٥) ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَهَنَّمَ (١٦) ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ (١٧)

Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts. (14) Nay, but surely on that day they will be covered from (the mercy of) their Lord. (15) Then lo! they verily will burn in hell, (16) And it will be said (unto them): This is that which ye used to deny. (17)

(Surah Al Mutaffifeen 83: 14-17)

The severity of the fire will make the intestines of its inhabitants drop out of their bodies. They will run around in agony, dragging their gargantuan entrails with them, hoping to find some reprieve.

Abu Zayd Usamah bin Zayd bin Harithah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, “On the day of Judgement, a man will be brought and thrown into hell. As a result of this, his intestines will come out of his body and he will run around in circles holding his intestines, like a donkey running a mill. His companions in hell will ask him, “O so-and-so, What is this? Did you not ask people to do good and avoid evil?” He will reply, “That is true. But I told others to do good and did not do it myself, and I forbade them to do evil but did it myself.”

(Agreed upon)

The people of hell will scream and sob in agony and self-recrimination. They will remember their lives of disobedience and arrogance, and will beg for a second chance to return to earth to do good deeds. But there will be no second chance for anyone.

وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِخُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَلِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ أَوْلَمْ نُعَمَّرُكُمْ مَا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ الْنَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ (٣٧)

And they cry for help there, (saying): Our Lord! Release us; we will do right, not (the wrong) that we used to do. Did not We grant you a life long enough for him who reflected to reflect therein? And the warner came unto you. Now taste (the flavour of your deeds), for evil-doers have no helper. (37)

Surah Fatir 35:37

Their weeping and lamenting will be so loud that it will drown out other sounds.

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبٌ جَهَنَّمَ أَنْتُمْ لَهَا وَأَرْدُونَ (٩٨) لَوْ كَانَ هَؤُلَاءِ عَالِهَةٌ مَا وَرَدُوا هَا وَكُلُّ فِيهَا حَلَدُونَ (٩٩) لَهُمْ فِيهَا رَفِيرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَسْمَعُونَ (١٠٠)

Lo! ye (idolaters) and that which ye worship beside Allah are fuel of hell. Thereunto ye will come. (98) If these had been Gods they would not have come thither, but all will abide therein. (99) Therein wailing is their portion, and therein they hear not. (100)
(Surah Al Anbiya 21: 98-100)

In the terrible heat and suffering of hell, its inhabitants will cry out for food and water. They will be given the fruit of the Zaqqum tree, which is a tree that grows from the bottom of hell and has fruit that resembles the heads of devils. This food and the boiling pus they will be given to drink will scrape their insides just as their outer bodies are burning.

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الْزَّقُومَ (٤٣) طَعَامُ الْأَلَّاثِيمِ (٤٤) كَالْمُهْلِ يَعْلَى فِي الْبُطُونِ (٤٥) كَغَلِي الْحَمِيمِ (٤٦)

Lo! the tree of Zaqqum, (43) The food of the sinner! (44) Like molten brass, it seetheth in their bellies (45) As the seething of boiling water. (46)
(Surah Ad Dukhan 44: 43-46)

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْأَضَالُونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ (٥١) لَا يَكُونُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِنْ زَقُومٍ (٥٢) فَمَا لِيُؤْنَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ (٥٣) فَشَرِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ (٥٤) فَشَرِبُونَ شُرْبَ الْهَمِيمِ (٥٥) هَذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْدِينِ (٥٦)

Then lo! ye, the erring, the deniers, (51) Ye verily will eat of a tree called Zaqqum (52) And will fill your bellies therewith; (53) And thereon ye will drink of boiling water, (54) Drinking even as the camel drinketh. (55) This will be their welcome on the Day of Judgment. (56)
(Surah Al Waqiah 56: 51-56)

Women have been singled out for specific mention by the Quran and Hadith for a number of weak characteristics that are often found among them. These include a propensity to gossip, backbiting, mocking others, relishing the misfortunes of others, and showing ingratitude to their husbands. They will constitute the majority of the inhabitants of hell because of these tendencies. Imran b. Husayn narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,

“I looked into paradise and I saw that the majority of its inhabitants were the poor, and I looked into hell and I saw that the majority of its inhabitants were women.”
(Bukhari)

Ibn Abbas narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “I looked into hell and the majority of its inmates were women who were ungrateful. “Someone asked him, “Did they disbelieve in Allah?” He replied, “No, they were ungrateful to their husbands and were ungrateful for the favours done for them. If a man was always good to such a woman but one day something displeased her, she would say, ‘I have never had any good from you, never.’”
(Bukhari)

There will be no death in the after-life, so that the horrors of hell or the pleasures of paradise will be there for eternity, never to end. We pray to Allah Almighty to save us from hell and all those actions that lead towards it.
