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أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

In The Name Of Allah The Most Compassionate Very Merciful
All Praise Due To Allah And Peace And Blessings Be Upon His Beloved Messenger

Tafseer of Surah Fatiha

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

I seek refuge in Allah from devil the rejected

There are a few important points we need to understand about this sentence which is termed as “Isti’aadhah or Ta’awwudh”:

- Why do we read it at the beginning of Quran recitation?
- What is its Tafseer or commentary?
- What are the advantages of reading it?
- What are some Shariah rulings concerning this sentence?

In Surah Nahl, verse 98, the Almighty declares:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾

Then when you recite Quran, ask refuge of Allah from the devil (Satan) the rejected one.

From this Divine command we come to realise that when we start to recite the Holy Quran, we should seek the Divine protection of the Almighty from Satan the rejected or the one who has been expelled. We also understand and realize that this has been the practice of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and has also continued to be the practice of every generation of Muslims. Hence, we can therefore say that reading this is also an act of Sunnah. In like manner, as the physical Wudu is the means of eliminating all apparent impurities from our body, in the same way, reading Ta’awwudh would eliminate all mental and spiritual impurities from our inner being. It can also be compared to a type of permission for entering the August Divine Court of the Almighty. As the physical Wudu makes us fit to recite Salah, the reading of the Ta’awwudh makes our inner being fit to enter the court of the Almighty. We can therefore say that reading the Ta’awwudh is a type of permission which you are requesting from the Almighty to begin reciting His Divine Book. As you are commanded to wear proper clothes when you are performing any Ibaadah, in like manner, reading the Ta’awwudh would allow your inner being to adorn a proper spiritual cloth so that you may enable yourself to read the Holy Quran.

The commentary of the Ta’awwudh:

It is said that the word Ta’awwudh is derived from the root word “Awdhun” “عوذ”. It is said that this root word has two meanings. The first is, “to plead” and the second is “to seek protection”. In other words, when you read this, you are proclaiming that you are pleading to Allah, seeking His protection, and at the same time, you are surrendering yourself to the Almighty.

As for the word “shaytaan”, there are 2 opinions on this. The first view is that it has been derived from the word “shatnun” شطن and the second view is that it is derived from the word “shaytun” شيط. The meaning of the first root word signifies

something which has been repelled or expelled. This is quite obvious, simply because the shaytaan was someone who was very close to the Divine Court of the Almighty and thereafter he was expelled.

The meaning of the root word shaytun is something which is destroyed or something which has been ruined. This is quite obvious in the actions of the shaytaan, in that, by disobeying the Almighty, he would be destroyed and all his previous acts of worship would be ruined. These are some of the reasons why he has been called shaytaan.

The word rajeem has being derived from the word marjoom مرجوم and the word marjoom has further been derived from the word rajmun, which means something that has been evicted or something being thrown out and crushed. The word “evicted” in this context would mean something which is cursed. In the above sense, shaytaan has been described as marjoom because firstly, he used to live with the Angels and was then evicted from there. Secondly, whenever he wishes to enter the Heaven, he is beaten with falling stars. In the third sense, he is someone who is continually cursed by the Almighty and all of creation. In this regard, the Almighty has declared in Surah Hajr, verse 35 that:

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٣٥﴾

And verily there is curse upon you till the Day of Judgment.

The scholastic commentary of this verse:

From this verse we come to understand that we have to face many trials and tribulations in this world and we certainly do not have the power to be able to face all of them, hence we have to seek help wherever we can. When a weak person seeks help, it is obvious that he needs to seek the help of someone who is more powerful and take shelter in the protection of this powerful being. The act of seeking help is also depended on the might which faces you. It is obvious that the more powerful your enemy, the stronger should the person be whose help

you are seeking. When you have a simple problem, you can seek the help of an ordinary sergeant or constable; however, if the problem is more serious, you sometimes need to seek the help of a captain or someone much more stronger in position. Sometimes, the problem is so serious that you may even need to seek the help of the President himself.

What can we say about the might and power of the satan when he has been termed as a clear enemy in his power to mislead and misguide. When a person begins to read the Quran, he has been advised to seek the protection of the Almighty so that he can be protected from all evil schemes and plots of the satan, both internally and externally.

A Spiritual commentary of this verse:

Among the Sufis, some opine that anything which stops us from the Zikr of the Almighty is to be condemned as something satanic. Whether this thing is a Jinn or a human or whether it is even a habit which you might possess or any act which you might commit that gets in the way. If these things stop you from making the Zikr of the Almighty then it is satanic in essence.

There is an interesting story of Hazrat Omar – may Allah be pleased with him – who wanted to mount a donkey, and the donkey kept on jumping without allowing him to climb on it. Finally, he remarked that this obstacle was nothing but the shaytaan.

The Sufis say that all our bad habits; such as jealousy, back biting etc. are evil and satanic habits which surround us on a daily basis and hence, we should seek the protection of the Almighty from these evils.

The actual essence of reading the Ta'awwudh is so that we are able to read this text properly, allowing ourselves to practise what is good and noble and refraining from what is evil and bad.

Important point:

It must also be understood that if we seek the protection of a pious saint or Prophet, this does not, in any way, contradict the concept of Ta'awwudh. If one seeks the spiritual protection of a Prophet or saint, it does not mean that he is seeking the protection of someone other than the Almighty.

Let us give you an example. We have been told to seek sustenance, yet we know the true provider of sustenance is the Almighty. However, in the world, people have to go to rich and well-off people to seek employment and occupation so that they can earn a livelihood and acquire sustenance. In this case, it does not mean that people are seeking sustenance from someone else other than the Almighty. It must also be borne in mind that all the means are the ways which the Almighty has created so that we can earn sustenance. Therefore, if a person starts a shop or sets up a factory or starts a job with the intention of earning sustenance, it does not mean that he considers someone else is the real provider of sustenance. No, he still considers the Almighty as the real provider of sustenance. However, he considers all these other means as a way of acquiring sustenance. In like manner, when a person seeks the help of any Prophet or saint, he understands that the real Helper is the Almighty. However, the Almighty has created the Prophets and saints as means to acquire His Divine help. Therefore, when we seek the help of Prophets and saints, we are actually seeking the help of the Almighty and using these means which the Almighty has given to us. If we take a look at the world, before we approach a court, we need to seek a lawyer, in like manner, when we need to approach the Almighty; we need to seek someone to intervene on our behalf.

Spiritual points within the Ta'awwudh

There are few important points to be borne in mind pertaining to the reading of this statement:

- ✓ When someone recites the Ta'awwudh, he is leaving the world and turning towards the Almighty and this is the first step of his spiritual journey.

- ✓ When a person reads this, he affirms that he is helpless and weak, and accepts the Divine Power of the Almighty. This is the first step towards understanding one's carnal self.
- ✓ When a person reads this, he is imploring His Lord and affirming that he seeks entrance into the Divine Court and also affirms that he is being stopped by the satan from entering. By reading this, he seeks the protection of the Almighty and awaits Divine permission to enter.
- ✓ It is a known fact that only those people who are clean, are allowed to touch the Holy Quran. Therefore, only a clean tongue and a clean heart should approach it and the Ta'awwudh is a means of achieving this cleanliness and purity.
- ✓ It has been stated that the heart of a true believer is the place where the divine light resides and if we wish to allow this divine light to reside within our heart, we need to cleanse it so that the guest can enter the heart of a true believer and reside inside.
- ✓ We have been told that only the purest of words are accepted in the court of the Almighty. There is no doubt that there is nothing purer than the Holy Quran. However, if a dirty heart reads it, then it would never be accepted. Therefore, when we read the Ta'awwudh, we are seeking the help of the Almighty from the filth which is spread by the satan so that our hearts may become pure and we are able to read the Quran in a pure sense.

The benefits of reading Ta'awwudh

It is said that nearly all of the Prophets have recited the Ta'awwudh in some way or other. Nabi Nuh – peace be upon him – is reported to have declared:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۖ وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي

أَكُنُ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

Submitted he, 'O my Lord' I beg Your refuge from asking You that of which I have no knowledge. And if you forgive me not and have not mercy on me, then I shall be loser.

Nabi Yusuf – peace be upon him – declared once:

وَرَوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ

مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

And she, in whose house he was, allured him lest he may control his self, and bolted all the doors, and she said, 'Comes, I say to you.' He said, 'Allah be my refuge that Aziz is my lord that is to say nourisher, he has kept me very well.

No doubt, the unjust never prosper.

and to his brothers, he replied:

قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَجَدْنَا مَتَّعَيْنَا عِنْدَآ ۖ إِنَّا إِذَا الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

He said, 'Be refuge of Allah that we should take any other but him with whom we found our goods, then we shall surely be unjust.

Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – is reported to have declared to his nation:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً ۖ قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُؤًا ۖ

قَالَ أَعُودُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

And when Moses said to his people, "Allah commands you to slaughter a cow".

They said, "you make us a laughing stock". He said, "refuge of Allah, that I be among the ignorants".

The last 2 Quls are also a glaring example of seeking the protection of the Almighty from satan the rejected. The Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – also continued to advise his followers to be punctual in reciting the Ta'awwudh. From this we have come to realize that all the Prophets in their respective times have always read the Ta'awwudh in the times of difficulty.

There are many examples in this regard found in Ahadith. There was once a person who suffered from extreme anger to such an extent that he frothed from his mouth. When it was brought to the attention of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, he advised that the person should recite Ta’awwudh, as it would eliminate this condition. From this, we have come to realize that the recital of Ta’awwudh eliminates anger.

The Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – has also advised that if one reads Ta’awwudh ten times every day, the Almighty appoints an Angel upon that person who protects him against the satan.

In Tafseer Ruhul Bayan, under the explanation of this verse, Sayyiduna Hasan - may Allah be pleased with him – has advised that if one reads Ta’awwudh with absolute sincerity, the Almighty creates a barrier between that person and the satan which can be measured as three hundred years journey.

Shariah rulings pertaining to Ta’awwudh:

It is considered as Sunnah to recite the Ta’awwudh before the recitation of the Quran.

The Muqtadis (people who read Salah in congregation behind an Imam) should not read the Ta’awwudh or the Bismillah because this is to be done by the Imam, which is only applicable to those who follow the Hanafi school of thought.

It is not Sunnah for a teacher to recite the Ta’awwudh before teaching because he is not reciting but rather teaching.

During the Eid Salah, the Imam would only read Ta’awwudh when it is time for him to recite the Surah Fatiha and another surah.

Some are of the opinion that it is Sunnah to recite Ta’awwudh after the recitation of the Quran. However, the proper manner or that which is an established Sunnah, is that one should read Ta’awwudh prior to commencing the Quran recitation.



Allah with Whose Name (I begin) the Most Beneficent, Most Merciful.

There are a few points we need to bear in mind pertaining to the Bismillah. They are:

- What is the connection between this statement and Ta'awwudh?
- What are the pertinent points in this statement?
- What are the benefits and advantages when one reads this statement?
- What are the jurisprudence issues which are related to this statement?

Connection between Biismillah and Ta'awwudh

There are two connections which are applicable between this and the taooz. When a person reads the Taooz, he has severed all connections with everything and is only declaring his ultimate connection with the Almighty. When he reads the Bismillah, he is declaring his complete trust and attention towards the Almighty and is now turning towards the Almighty. From this we come to realize that turning one's complete attention towards the Almighty should be the foremost intention of a believer, hence, the Taooz appears before the Tasmiyah.

Secondly, in the Taooz, the person has the intention of refraining from all bad and evil deeds and when he reads the Tasmiyah, he is in a state of imploring the Almighty to give him the strength to perform good and noble acts.

Therefore, the Taooz can be described as prevention while the Tasmiyah can be described as a cure and everyone knows that prevention comes before cure. This

is the reason that the Muslim has been advised to read the Taooz before the tasmiyah.

Pertinent points in this declaration

There are two important points to bear in mind:

- ✓ The first pertains to the actual declaration of the Tasmiyah and
- ✓ The second pertains to the words which are found in the Tasmiyah.

The first point:

It is said that prior to Islam, the idol worshippers always took the name of their idols before performing any task or deed. They used to declare, "بسم اللات والعزى" "In the name of Lat and Uzzah". The Muslims on the other hands have been advised to take the name of the Almighty before every action of theirs so as to make their actions contrary to the actions of the disbelievers. From this, we come to know of an important point which is that the actions of a true believer should always be contrary to the actions of a disbeliever. We also come to know that to have true love and affection for them is something which is not recommended in Islam!

Second point:

We are also taught that if the beginning of any act is good, the net result would also be good. When a child is born, we are taught that we should pronounce the Azaan in the ears of the child so that his or her life would be prosperous and noble. It is seen that the shop keeper also never gives credit to the first customer who enters his shop. He only accepts cash from the very first customer so that his entire day would be prosperous for his business. In like manner, a Muslim has been advised to take the Name of the Almighty before every good action of his so that he would be able to achieve a good result.

Third point:

When we look at any valuable which is owned by the government, we see that it possesses a special seal or stamp. In this way, a thief is afraid to steal that specific property because he knows that he would be accused of a type of treason. In like manner, a Muslim has been advised to read the Tasmiyah before any act so that this becomes a seal and stamp and cannot be stolen from the ever watchful eyes of the Shaytaan. In the hadith shareef it is declared that the Satan becomes a part of any deed or act which the Tasmiyah has not been read. This deed of a Muslim becomes protected once he reads the Tasmiyah and the Satan is powerless against it. This would be further explained in the point which explains the benefits and advantages of the Tasmiyah.

Fourth point:

Muslims have been taught that they would be with those whose remembrance they used to perform in this world. It is hoped that when the Muslim recites the Tasmiyah, he would be under the Divine Mercy of the Almighty in both worlds. There is an interesting story which is mentioned in the Hadith shareef. Once the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – requested Sayyiduna Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – to prepare a seal on which was written لا اله الا الله. However, when Sayyiduna Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – took this to the person who makes the seal, he requested him to write on it, لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله when he finally returned to the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – asked him, “Why is there this extra (sentence)?”. The great companion replied, “O Prophet of Allah! I had added your name because I did not want there to be separation between you and the Creator”. (In other words, I did not want a situation where the Name of the Lord is taken and your name is not taken). What is strange is that oddly enough on that same seal there also appeared the name of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him. The great companion kept on insisting that he had certainly not instructed anyone to record his name. While this conversation was taking place,

Sayyiduna Jibraeel Ameen appeared and declared to the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, “O Prophet of Allah! I had placed the name of Abu Bakr on the seal. Since Abu Bakr was not pleased to have your name be separated from the Name of the Almighty, in like manner, the Almighty was not pleased to have the name of Abu Bakr separated from your name!” we therefore take this incident as an excuse to make Dua in the Court of the Almighty that we continue to remember the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – so that we would be in his company for all time.

Fifth point:

It is said that all actions which are performed for worldly sake is a dangerous poison and something which would ultimately lead a person away from the Zikr of the Almighty. The remedy for this is to take the Name of the Almighty in our actions. When we take His Name before every action of ours then we would not become oblivious of the Almighty.

Sixth point:

We see that in the world, when a beggar approaches the house of any rich person, before he begs, he first praises the rich person. When the rich person notices this, he immediately understands that the person is asking for something. When the beggar describes the rich person as a person who is generous and noble etc, ultimately he is saying, “Please give me something”. In like manner, when a Muslim implores the Almighty, he does not ask directly, he first praises the Almighty. In other words, he saying, “O Allah! Only you can help me.”

Seventh point:

A Muslim should always remember to have humility, humbleness and modesty and always remember the Divine Power, Divine Grace and Divine independence of the Almighty so that no matter how major a task a Muslim performs, he should not for once think that it was only through his independent effort that he had completed this task. A true Muslim is that person who always believes that

whatever he has achieved, he has done so through the Divine Grace of the Almighty. This can only be possible for a Muslim who remembers the Almighty before all his tasks and efforts. When a Muslim recites the Tasmiyah, he remembers the Almighty and when this happens; he realizes that it was not him but rather the Almighty who had given him the ultimate strength to complete this major task and duty.

Various words of Tasmiyah:

When we look at this sentence, we will notice that in writing the Tasmiyah, the “alif” before the word “Ism” has been removed. On the other hand, when we look at the verse “Iqra” we will see that although the letter “Alif” is not pronounced, yet it is still present. What is the wisdom behind this?

The first wisdom

It must be remembered that in the world of the souls, the first letter pronounced by mankind was the letter “Ba”. You would remember that when the Almighty had asked all the souls, “am I not your Lord?” all the souls replied in one voice “Balaa” “Yes, why not”. It is for this reason that the Tasmiyah starts with the letter “Ba” so that mankind would be able to remember that answer and always bear in mind that it had once proclaimed the Divine Presence of the Almighty.

Second wisdom

Among the Divine Names of the Almighty one would also find the word, “Baari or Baarun”. Therefore, when a believer pronounces the letter “ba” in the Tasmiyah, he is also mentioning many Divine Attributes of the Almighty.

Third wisdom

In the laws of Arabic grammar, we will find that the letter “Ba” is mostly used to join another letter. When a person starts to recite the Quran, the letter “ba” in the Tasmiya which he pronounces, intends for him to meet the Almighty. The letter “Alif” is used mostly to separate two words, therefore, the Almighty has

not used this letter as the first letter in the Tasmiyah but rather the letter “ba” so that the slave meets the Creator.

Fourth wisdom:

The letter “ba” is bent in appearance while the letter “alif” stands upright. This is also applicable when pronouncing these letters. In this manner, the Tasmiyah creates humility and modesty in a Muslim.

There is also something else within Arabic grammar which should be remembered. A noun in Arabic is not reliant on a verb to prove itself while the verb is something which requires a noun to prove its existence. If we look at the example of Zaid beating someone, it would mean that if Zaid is present, then the act of beating would take place. If Zaid is absent, the act of beating would also cease to exist. In the same manner, when we look at the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, we will see that the entire universe is reliant on him and he is only reliant on the Almighty. In the same way, a noun can exist without a verb but not vice versa. We can therefore conclude that if the entire universe is reliant on the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, it means therefore that if he was not present, the entire universe would not come into existence. In other words, everything has been created from the Noor of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and therefore, the entire creation is reliant on him. He could be described as the “noun” while all of creation can be described as the “verb”. None of what we have mentioned is in any way contrary to Islamic shariah law.

In the Tafseer Kabeer, under the explanation of the Tasmiyah, it is mentioned that the Almighty possesses three thousand names. One thousand is known only to the Angels, one thousand is known only to the Prophets. Of the balance, three hundred is mentioned in the Taurah, three hundred is mentioned in the original bible, three hundred is mentioned in the Zaboor, ninety nine is mentioned in the

Holy Quran and there is one single Divine Name which is known only to the Almighty.

In the Tasmiyah, when we repeat the three Divine Names of the Almighty, we include the meaning of the three thousand Divine Names of the Almighty because every meaning is encompassed in these three Divine Names. Therefore, whosoever repeats these three Divine Names has repeated the three thousand Divine Names of the Almighty.

Among these three Divine Names, the word “Allah” is the name of the Divine Being. The other names are names of His Divine Attributes. The Divine Name indicates to the Divine Creator while the Divine Names of attribute, explain His Divine qualities.

For example, if we look at a person called Abdullah Khan, we would also call him Moulana if he was learned in Islam. If he was also a person who had memorised the Holy Quran, we would also call him a Haafiz. If he had performed Hajj, we will also call him a Haji or a landlord if he owned many properties. In this example, only the name Abdullah Khan would be considered the name of his actual being while all the other names would be the names of his attributes. In the same manner, the word “Allah” is the Divine Name of the Almighty which indicates His Divine Being and names such as “Aleem, Qadeer, Raheem” etc would be the names of His Divine Attributes. If a person qualifies in Islamic law, we will call him a Shaikh or Moulana and if he had memorised the Holy Quran, we would call him a Haafiz. We would not say that because he is Abdullah Khan, he is a Moulana or Haafiz. There is a stark difference between the name of a person and his attributes.

It is for this reason that many names such as “Aleem, Raheem” etc have being used in the Holy Quran to describe a creation but the name Allah has never being used to describe any creation!

Another point we must remember is that there can be an increase in the attribute of someone but there can never be an increase in the name of someone. As an example, we can say that Abdullah Khan is a Moulana or Haafiz, but we can never say that every person who is called Abdullah Khan is a Moulana or Haafiz. Therefore, there is a difference between the name and attribute of some one.

When we have understood this, it means that there can be creations that are described as “Qaadir or Qadeer” etc, however, no creation can ever be called Allah because there cannot be an increase or decrease in the name of a being.

There is also a difference of opinion on whether the word Allah has been derived from another word or not. Some are of the opinion that it is and some others clearly state that even those who say that this word is derived from another word are themselves not that sure.

Some have stated that the word Allah is derived from the word “Ilaaha” which signifies peace, tranquillity and calm. In other words, when a person remembers Allah, he experiences peace, tranquillity and calm, therefore Allah has been called Allah. Others have said that everything is mortal and would one day cease to exist unlike the Almighty, therefore he has been called Allah because the word Allah indicates immortality and a ceaseless existence. Some are of the opinion that the word Allah has been derived from the word “Wa lahu” because every creation is over awed and amazed by His Divine existence whether one accepts it or not.

Some opine that it has been derived from the word “La ilaaha”, the meaning of which is loftiness which signifies that He is immensely lofty compared to the creation. Some say that it has been derived from the word Laa-hu, the meaning of which is hidden or concealed. It is quite obvious that the Almighty is concealed from all eyes, sense and intellect, therefore he is called Allah.

Some say that the word has been derived from the word “Ilaaha” which signifies helplessness and pleading because all creation is helpless and pleads to Him. At times, creation looks at the outer modes of assistance, yet, ultimately, creation would have to turn to the Divine Being of Allah.

Some are of the opinion that it has been derived from the word Ilaaha which signifies running to someone in anxiety because ultimately all creation runs to Him in anxiety and concern.

In Tafseer Kabbeer an interesting example is mentioned about this meaning. It is mentioned that when a person in debt sees the creditor, he runs away in anxiety and fear. Yet, the Almighty is so Infinite in His Grace and Mercy, that even though people owe Him, yet they all run to His Divine Court for help and assistance. As a matter of fact, the Almighty Himself calls people to His Divine Court.

In Surah Daariyaat, verse 50, He advises His creation:

فَفِرُّوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۚ اِنِّىْ لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

Therefore flee towards Allah. Undoubtedly I am a clear warner to you from Him.

When we look at the world, we will see that a King would close the doors of his palace so that a poor person does not enter, yet the Divine Entrance of the Almighty is always open and it is opened for everyone. Creation is moving away from Him, yet, in His Divine Mercy, He continues to call to them.

In Surah Ghaafir, verse 60, he declares that:

An interesting story is told of two brothers. One was very pious and other not considered very pious. The not very pious brother was at his death bed and next to him was his pious brother. The pious brother remarked, “My brother! I had

continued to tell you not to commit sin and transgression in this world, yet, you never listened to me. Tell me, what would be your condition (in the hereafter)?” The sinful brother replied, “Tell me, on the day of judgement, if control on that day was given to our mother by the Almighty, where would she send me, to hell or paradise?” The pious brother replied that certainly she would send him to paradise. When he heard this reply, the not so pious brother remarked, “Listen! My Creator and Lord is even more merciful than our mother!” When he said this, he immediately passed away. A few days later, the pious brother saw him in a dream and inquired from him as to how the Almighty had treated him. The not so pious brother replied, “The Almighty had forgiven all my transgressions because of those last few words which I had uttered.”

This is the reason He is called Allah. In reality, it is our opinion that the word Allah has not been derived from any root word as His Divine Being has not been derived from anything. All Praise is due to Allah, when there is such power in merely His Divine Name, what power must there be in His Divine Being?

Significance in the word “Allah”

In the Tafseer Kabir it has been mentioned that there are some special qualities in the word Allah. It is stated that the Divine Name of Allah is not solely reliable on the letters of this Name to prove His existence.

If the letter Alif is removed from the word, there would still remain the word Lillah. In surah fath, verse 4, the Almighty declares:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيَّاهُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ

جُنُودِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝٢

He it is Who sent down satisfaction in the hearts of the believers so that they might add belief to their belief and to Allah belongs all the hosts of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Knowing, wise.

If we remove the first Lam, he would still be “Lahu”.

In Surah Taghaabun, verse 1, He declares that:

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهِ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

قَدِيرٌ ۝

Whatever is in the heavens, and whatever is in the earth glorifies Allah; His is the kingdom and His the praise, and He has power over everything.

Even we removed the second Lam, He would still remain “Hu”.

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

Such is the Divine Being of the Almighty that even the letters in His Divine Name are not reliant on each other to prove His undoubted existence. In like manner, His Divine Being is not reliant on anyone or any creation.

Another important fact which should be borne in mind that other Divine Names of the Almighty point to a specific Divine Quality, yet the name Name Allah encompasses all His Divine Attributes. When a person pronounces the Name Allah, he has included in his call all the Divine Qualities which are present.

The third important fact is that within the article of faith or Kalima, the only Divine Name which exists is the Name Allah. When a person reads this, if he is a disbeliever, he is immediately considered a believer. If a person uses another Divine Name, he would not become a Muslim. If a person declares, “لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا الرَّحْمٰنُ” or uses another Divine Name in his declaration, he would still not be considered

a believer. Only if he declares the Name Allah in his declaration, would he or she be considered a Muslim.

It is interesting that there are also very similar and special qualities in the name “Mohammed” also. Obviously, this is not the place to discuss it; however, we would include a single special fact which is very interesting. If we say the Name “Allah”, we would notice that the lips does not meet, yet when we say the name Mohammed, we would notice that the lower lip touches the upper lip. From this we come to realize that pronouncing the name Mohammed enables the lower to meet the upper. This clearly proves that the special quality of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is to make the lower part which is creation to meet the upper dimension which is the Creator. This is merely only a single point which we have presented and others would be explained in its specific time.

We now move on the other words in this statement which are “Ar Rahmaan and Ar Raheem”.

The word “Rahmaan” is said to be derived from the root word, “Rahm”. The meaning of which is a “soft heart” or “to be extremely merciful”. The womb of the mother is called Rahm because it is considered extremely soft and kind to the child within it. This is the reason why the child within the womb feels so comfortable. Close relatives are called Zi Rahm because they are extremely kind, soft and merciful to each other. However, since the Almighty is pure of such explanations as having a heart etc, in this context, the word Rahman would mean beneficent.

It must be remembered that there are a few differences in the word Rahman and Raheem or its actual context and meaning. It is said that the word “Rahman” indicates to having mercy or displaying kindness over the entire creation while the word “Raheem” signifies having mercy on a special entity. When we look at

the wind, the sun or water, this act of mercy is shown to everyone, both believers and non-believers. In these acts, the act of Rahmaaniyat is being shown. However, when we look at special acts of mercy such as giving someone spiritual domain, or sainthood or Prophet hood, this act is only given to specific people. In these acts, the act of being Raheem is being displayed. In this world, the Almighty displays mercy to both the believer and non-believer while in the hereafter, He would display Mercy to the believers while displaying Divine Anger and Wrath to the disbelievers. In this act also, the act of being Raheem is being displayed.

Another amazing fact is that whether a person seeks something large or major or even something small, everything is received from the Divine Court of the Almighty. Even if the shoe lace of a person is broken, he would request the Almighty to help and assist him. Therefore, when he grants a major favour to someone, it is said that this is an act of being Ar Rahman while when He grants a small special favour, it is said that this is act of being Ar Raheem.

It is interesting that when a worldly king is asked a small favour, he considers it a personal insult while when a worldly person is asked a major favour, it is beyond his capabilities. Yet, such is the Greatness of the Almighty that He grants both major and small favours to His creation. He does not consider it a personal insult if a person asks Him for a small favour. Another important point is that the Almighty has granted creation favours which are sometimes without cause or mean and sometimes He has granted us favours through a cause or mean. If we look at a human, we will see that he possesses life without the cause and mean of a mother and father, yet he has created us as a physical being through the cause and mean of parents. In like manner, He has created the rain, sunlight and moonlight etc without the cause and mean of anything.

At the same time, He has created for us sustenance and clothes etc through the means of other creation. In this manner, all those favours which He has blessed us with is considered as being an act of Him being Ar Rahman while granting us

favour through cause and means is considered as an act of Him being Ar Raheem. It is said that the favours which He has granted us in the world is only temporary while the favours which He will grant us in the hereafter is forever. This also distinguishes the act of being Ar Rahman and Ar Raheem.

Important point:

In the Tasmiyah, it is interesting to also note that the Almighty has used the Divine attributes of Ar Rahman and Ar Raheem after His Divine Name “Allah”. It is said that the Name Allah possesses Awe and fearfulness while the words Ar Rahman and Ar Raheem indicates that He is also Beneficent and Merciful. This is His Grace on mankind, He understood that when creation hears the Name “Allah” they would be immediately filled with awe and fearfulness and to lesson this, He has included His Divine Attributes of being Beneficent and Merciful in the Tasmiyah so that creation would also be able to ask and request Him for His Grace and favours.

In the Tafseer Kabear, an interesting story is told of a poor person who approached the massive front doors of a rich person. However, he was given a small favour. The following day, another powerful person approached this same massive front doors and began to remove it from its hinges. When the rich owner asked him as to what he was doing, he replied, “If you have such a massive door in front of your house, at least you should give according to the extent of your door. And since you had not done so, I felt that you were not entitled to have such a door in front of your house”. This is the reason that when we supplicate the Almighty, we ask Him in these words, “O Allah! Grant us not according to our status, but rather grant us according to Your Divine Status”.

Another important point which we should bear in mind is that we are only allowed to call the Almighty by those names which have been approved in shariah and not names which are not permissible. Words such as “god” etc are not names approved in Islamic shariah.

The benefits of the Tasmiyah

There are numerous benefits and advantages in reciting the Tasmiyah. However, we will highlight just a few:

It is considered as the key of purity. Whatever good act both wordily or religious commences without this key is considered as incomplete.

In the Tafseer Ruhul Bayan, an interesting story is told about the night the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – went for Meraj. As the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – was travelling through Paradise, he noticed that there were four different streams which were made up of water, milk, another made of a special drink and lastly a stream of honey. He inquired from Jibraeel Ameen as to the source of these streams and Jibraeel Ameen replied that he did not know. Another Angel approached and informed them that he would take them to the actual source of these four streams. As they approached the source, they noticed that there was a large tree and below this tree there was a small structure which had a lock on the door. The Angel was asked to open the door but he replied, “O Prophet of Allah! I do not have the key; rather it is you who have the key.” When the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – recited the Tasmiyah and touched the lock, the door immediately opened. As they entered this structure, they noticed that there were four pillars within it. On each pillar was written the Tasmiyah. From the letter “Meem” of the Tasmiyah, the stream of water emanated, from the letter “Ha” of the Divine Name “Allah”, the stream of milk emanated, from the letter “Meem” of the word Ar Rahman, the stream of the special drink emanated and from the letter “Meem” of the word Ar Raheem, the stream of honey emanated. From this same structure, it was declared, “O Beloved! Whosoever among your followers recites the Tasmiyah, he would become entitled (to drink) from these four streams.”

Another interesting story is recorded in Tafseer Kabeer. It is said that the tyrant Pharaoh had actually written the words “Bimillah” on one of the outer doors of his house. He had done this prior to claiming that he was a god. However, when he made the false claim that he was a god and Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – was commanded by the Almighty to go and give him advice, he refused, with the result that Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – cursed him. The Almighty then informed Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – that without doubt this tyrant was entitled for punishment; however, he would not be punished within those premises because the Bismillah was written on one of the doors. This is the reason that Pharaoh was not punished while he lived there but rather he was taken away from his house and then drowned far away. Praise be to Allah! If this is the mercy shown to a disbeliever because of the Tasmiyah, what Mercy would be shown to a true believer who recites the Tasmiyah with sincerity and earnestness?

In the Tafseer Azeezi it is recorded that a saint once advised people that the Tasmiyah should be recorded on his shroud so that on the day of Judgement, it would become his certificate for salvation.

In the Tafseer Kabeer, it is mentioned that the Tasmiyah contains 19 letters and the Angels who deliver punishment in Hell are also nineteen! It is hoped that by reading the Tasmiyah, a person would be protected from each Angel.

Another strange reality is that there are 24 hours in a day. Five hours of which are taken up by the five daily salah which leaves 19 hours. Believers have been blessed by the nineteen letters of the Tasmiyah so that when a Muslim recites the Tasmiyah the balance of the 19 hours is also recorded as hours which have been spent in the Zikr of the Almighty! In this manner also, the sins committed in those hours would also be cancelled!

The advantages of the Tasmiyah

There are many advantages recorded in the recital of the Tasmiyah:

In the Tafseer Kabeer, Tafseer Azeezi etc, it is recorded that if a person recites the Tasmiyah prior to having sexual intercourse with his wife, then the Satan would not become a partner in this private physical relationship. It is also recorded that the child which is born from this relationship would benefit the parents in that for every breath he or she takes, the parents would be recorded with good.

It is said that when a person alights his horse or any mode of travel and recites the Tasmiyah and the Hamd, for every step, he would be rewarded with good.

If a sick person recites the Tasmiyah and consumes the medicine, he would be cured. An interesting story is told of Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him. It is said that he once experienced a severe pain in his stomach and asked the Almighty for a cure. He was told to go to a certain place and eat a certain root. Amazingly, when he eat the root, all the pain disappeared! On another occasion, he experienced the same pain and eat the same root, however, instead of the pain decreasing, it began to increase! He then inquired from the Almighty about this strange and unusual difference. The Almighty replied, “O Moosa! The first time you approached it, it was from our side and this time, you approached it individually from your side. O Moosa! Cure is in My Name and whatever object is taken without my Name in the word is an evil poison and only My Name is a cure.

Another interesting story is told about Nabi Esa – peace be upon him. It is said that he once passed by a grave and noticed that the person inside the grave was been severely punished. Nabi Esa – peace be upon him – then relieved himself a small distance away and when he passed the same grave again, he was surprised to see that the same grave was full of Noor and the Divine Mercy of the Almighty had overtaken the entire grave and was falling like rain. Nabi Esa – peace be upon him – then inquired from the Almighty about this sudden change of fortune. The Almighty replied, “O Ruhullah! This person was a sinful person which is why he

was being punished. However, when he died, his wife was pregnant and had given birth to a child. Today, that same child had gone to a madressah and had learned to read the Tasmiyah. I feel ashamed that I should punish this person in the grave while his son takes my name in the world!" From this, we also come to realize that good deeds performed by the children also benefit the parents in their grave and also become a means of their salvation.

In the Tafseer Azeezi, it is mentioned that if a person suddenly experiences a major calamity and difficulty, he should recite the Tasmiyah 12 thousand times in the following manner. After every 1000 times of reciting the Tasmiyah, he should perform two rakah of Nafil salah. After completing this, he should make a sincere Dua for the removal of this difficulty. Insha Allah, his dua would be accepted.

A person who experiences difficulty should write the following on a piece of paper:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مِنَ الْعَبْدِ الذَّلِيلِ إِلَى الرَّبِّ الْجَلِيلِ رَبِّ إِنِّي مَسْنِي

الضَّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ

In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful. From the disgraced slave to the Supreme Lord, Oh my Lord, that Distress has touched me and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful.

He should then place this piece of paper on flowing water and recite the following Dua while this is happening:

اللَّهُمَّ بِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَإِلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْمُرْشِدِينَ أَنْ أَقْضِ حَاجَتِي

يَا أَكْرَمَ الْأَكْرَمِينَ

O Allah, for the sake of Muhammad and his good and pure progeny, and his rightly guided companions, fulfil my needs, O the Most Generous of all who show generosity.

A person who recites the Tasmiyah before entering the toilet would be protected against the satan being able to see his private area.

When Nabi Nuh – peace be upon him – entered the ship, he recited the following Dua

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مَجَرَّهَا وَمُرْسَهَا ۖ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

In the name of Allah is its moving and its berthing. No doubt, my Lord is assuredly Forgiving, Merciful.

Whosoever reads this same Dua would also be saved from drowning.

When Nabi Sulayman – peace be upon him – wrote a letter to Bilkis, the following was written:

إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٢٠﴾

Undoubtedly, it is from Sulaiman and it is by the name of Allah, the Most Affectionate, and the Merciful.

The blessing of this was that not only did Bilkis become his wife, but the entire kingdom of Yemen came under his control.

It must also be remembered that at the beginning of the Surah Taubah, the Tasmiyah does not appear. In the same manner, when one slaughters an animal, he is not allowed to read the complete Tasmiyah. What is the reason for this? The reason is that in the Surah Taubah from the beginning to the end, there is advice on war and killing and it is sign of destruction which is to befall the disbelievers. In other words, wrath and anger is being echoed. In the same way, during the slaughter, an animal is being killed. This is also a time of fury.

Therefore, the Muslim has been advised not to echo the complete words of Mercy and Grace which appear in the Tasmiyah but merely only a certain portion which is “Bismillah Allah Akbar”.

Another interesting story is told about Hadrat Khalid bin Waleed – may Allah be pleased with him – in that once a disbeliever presented him some poison and challenged him that if he could drink the poison without being killed, that person would accept Islam and also believe that Islam was the true religion. Hadrat Khalid bin Waleed – may Allah be pleased with him – then read the Tasmiyah and drank the poison and with the Grace of the Almighty, nothing happened to him! When the person saw this miracle, he immediately accepted Islam.

Another interesting story is told of the ruler in Rome. He once sent a message to the then leader of the Muslims, Hadrat Umar – may Allah be pleased with him – and complained that he was suffering from severe headaches. He also wanted the Caliph to recommend a cure. The Caliph then sent him a hat to wear. As soon as he placed the hat on his head, his headache suddenly disappeared. When he removed the hat, the pain again appeared. He was surprised by this strangeness and when he opened the hat, he found a small piece of writing material within it and on the material was recorded the Tasmiyah!

Question:

We have seen that by merely reading the Tasmiyah, the poison had no power against Hadrat Khalid bin Waleed – may Allah be pleased with him, yet why is it that even when we eat something good, it has a complete opposite effect on us?

Answer: It must be remembered that every Dua and wazeefah can be compared to a bullet and a person can be compared to a rifle. Without doubt if a person wants to kill a lion, he has to have a good rifle. The dua which is read is the same as read by this pious people; however, the person reading it is different. Every minute of the day we are using our tongues to back bite and commit other evils.

How can this tongue of ours have any effect? If we want to see real result, we have to create qualified tongues. Only then would we see the proper result.

Various jurisprudential rulings pertaining to Tasmiyah

The Tasmiyah is considered as a complete verse of the Holy Quran but not a part of any Surah. It is considered as a verse which separates the various Surahs. This is the reason that it is read softly in salah, (this is the Hanafi viewpoint, the Shafi viewpoint is contrary to this which is why they recite the Tasmiyah loudly in salah).

Every Surah of the Quran should commence with the Tasmiyah except Surah Taubah. However, if a person starts the recital of the Quran from Surah Taubah, he should commence the recital of the Quran with the Tasmiyah.

It is considered as Sunnah to commence every good act with the Tasmiyah and it is forbidden to commence any sinful act with the Tasmiyah. If a person steals, backbites or speak lies by first reading the Tasmiyah, there is a possibility that this would lead to Kufr. In the book of fiqh entitled “Shaami” it is stated that one is not recommended to read the Tasmiyah prior to eating anything which has a bad odour such as smoking a huqqa or eating onions etc.

It is stated that there would be no blessing in an act even if it is a good act if the Tasmiyah was not recited before it.

When a person is being buried, one should read **بسم الله وعلى ملة رسول الله**

When slaughtering an animal, it is considered as Waajib to recite the Bismillah. If one deliberately omits the Bismillah, that animal would be considered as carrion and would not be permissible to eat. If however, a person forgets to read the Bismillah, the animal would still be considered as permissible or Halal.

If a person throws a sharp object at an animal which he is hunting and recites the Bismillah while he is about to throw, that animal would be considered as Halal even though the animal is dead by the time he reaches it. This would also be applicable to all domestic animals.

If a person has a trained hunting dog and at the time of releasing the animal, he recites the Bismillah, the hunted animal would still be considered as Halal even though it has died because of the bite of the hunting dog.

Surah Fatiha (introduction)

There are a few issues which are to be discussed pertaining to this specific Surah.

They are:

- ✓ How many names or titles does this Surah possess?
- ✓ The significance of its revelation.
- ✓ What are the specific advantages of this Surah?
- ✓ What are the different laws of jurisprudence which pertain to this Surah?

Various names and titles of Surah Fatiha

It is stated that there are about twenty names or titles which have been referred to this Surah. They are:

- ❖ Fatiha
- ❖ Faatihatul Kitab
- ❖ Ummul Quran
- ❖ Surah Kanz
- ❖ Surah Waafiyah
- ❖ Surah Kaafiyah
- ❖ Surah Shaafiyah
- ❖ Surah Shifa
- ❖ Sab'a Mathaani
- ❖ Surah Nur
- ❖ Surah Rukayyah
- ❖ Surah Al Hamd
- ❖ Surah Dua
- ❖ Surah Taleem-ul-Mas'ala
- ❖ Surah Munajaat

- ❖ Surah Tafweedh
- ❖ Surah Sawaal
- ❖ Surah Ummul Kitaab
- ❖ Surah Faatihatul Kitab
- ❖ Surah Salah

This Surah consists of seven verses and one hundred and forty letters.

We now move to each name and the reason for these names:

Faatihatul Kitaab – The reason is because the Quran commences with this Surah. In some narrations, it is also mentioned that this was among the first verses which were revealed.

Suratul Hamd – This is because the first word mentioned in this Surah is Al Hamd.

Ummul Quran – The reason for this is because this is considered as the essence of the Quran. In other words, the entire subject matter of the Quran is encompassed in these few verses. It can be compared to a seed. Even though it may be considered as small, yet within it, the complete tree is to be found.

Ummul Kitab – The reason for this is because the subject matter of all previous revelations are also encompassed in this Surah. Within this Surah, rules of worship and various Divine Qualities of the Almighty is also explained.

Sab'a Mathaani – The reason for this is because within it, seven verses are said to be repeated. Another reason is because it was revealed twice and one is also commanded to recite it in every rakah of the salah. Half of the Surah is in praise of the Almighty and half of it explains the plea and sincere request of creation. Another reason is that this type of revelation was never sent to any previous revealed book. It is also said that this Surah is equal to one seventh of the entire Quran. It is for this reason that it has been revealed that whosoever reads this Surah seven times, he will receive the reward of reading the entire Quran. It is also said that there are seven entrances in Hell and whosoever reads this Surah, the seven entrances of Hell would be closed to him. It is said that once Jibraeel Ameen approached the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and declared, “I used to fear the punishment of Hell for your Ummah,

however, when Surah Fatiha was revealed, I was at peace because the seven verses in (this Surah) is a lock against the seven dimensions of Hell”. (Tafseer Kabeer).

Surah Waafiyah – This means something which is completed. This means that it has to be completed in every rakah in salah. Other Surahs of the Quran can be divided into two rakah except for surah Fatiha.

Surah Kaafiyah – It means that it can be a substitute or alternative for other Surahs, however, no other Surah can be an alternative for it.

Surah Shaafiyah – This is because this surah is a cure for many diseases and sickness.

Surah Salah – Obviously because one is required to recite it in every rakah of salah.

Surah Sawal – The reason is because this Surah teaches us the manner of how we should implore and seek assistance from the Almighty. We are taught that we should firstly praise the Almighty and then ask Him for our needs. At the same time, one should endeavour to ask for things which would help oneself in the hereafter instead of worldly things.

Surah Shukr or Surah Dua – The reason is because the creation is taught how to show gratitude and gratefulness to the Almighty and the manner in which we should ask for Divine Help.

The significance of its revelation

There are three opinions on this issue. One opinion is that it was revealed in Mecca prior to the emigration and that it was the first revelation.

It is reported that once the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – approached his blessed wife Sayyidah Khadija – may Allah be pleased with her – and informed her that while he alone, he could hear a voice telling him to read. She then approached her cousin named Waraqah bin Nufal who informed the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – that if he heard this voice again, he should listen carefully to it. When this voice

appeared again, it read the Tasmiyah and the opening line of Surah Fatiha. From this incident, we can conclude that this was the first revelation.

Another opinion is that it was revealed in Madina shareef. However, there is a problem with this because salah became Fard or compulsory in Mecca and had it not been revealed in Mecca, what were the Muslims reading in their salah when we know that it is necessary to recite the Surah Fatiha in ones salah.

The third opinion is that it was revealed twice. Once in Mecca and once in Madina shareef which is one of the reasons that it became known as Sab'a Mathaani. Another reason it is said why it was revealed twice is to impress upon the Muslims the grandeur and status of this Surah and that it was a special spiritual gift given expressly to the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him.

From this, we also come to realize that the besides educating the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, the Quran was also revealed for other reasons as well. The verses of the Holy Quran are called “Ayah” because it signifies a sign or a symptom.

The smallest verse of the Holy Quran is:

مدهامتن

And the largest verse is the final ruku of Surah Baqarah.

The word Surah is derived from the word Sur which means something which encompasses. This is the reason that a wall surrounding a certain town is called Suwarul Balad because it encompasses or surrounds a town. Therefore, a Surah would mean that collection of Ayah which has completed or encompassed its specific subject or topic. This collection of topics or subjects is then given a name.

Further, there are two ways of explaining where a certain verse was revealed. They are divided into Meccan or Madani. The verses which were revealed before the migration is considered to be Meccan and those after migration are considered to be Madani irrespective at which place they were revealed. There are some people who say that because a verse was revealed in Mecca it should be called a Meccan surah, however this is incorrect. Only those Surahs are considered as Meccan which were revealed prior to emigration and only those would be considered as Madani which were revealed after the migration.

The smallest Surah in the Quran is Surah Kauther and the largest surah is Surah Baqarah. Another stark difference in the status of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – compared to previous Prophets is that other Prophets had to go to a specific location to receive revelation; yet, the revelation of the Quran followed the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. Wherever he went, revelation was sent to him directly. Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – had to go to the mountain of Thaur to receive revelation. If we look at the Quran, we will find that many verses of the Holy Quran such as the changing of the Qiblah was done to please the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. Such is the status of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – with the Almighty.

Various names of the Surah

The names of the various Surahs have been kept because of certain subjects, certain objectives or because of certain words which appear in them. Surah Fatiha is also called Surah Hamd because this word appears in the Surah. Surah Baqarah is called Baqarah because of the amazing story of a cow which is mentioned therein. Surah Ikhlas is called this because it intends to convey to the Muslim that his or her actions should be sincerely for Allah. The names of the Surah has not been kept only because the same subject or topic appears in that Surah from the beginning to the end.

Number of verses of Surah Fatiha

Everyone accepts that there are seven verses in the Holy Quran, however, the difference of opinion is on which seven verses constitute Surah Fatiha. Hadrat Imam Shafi – may Allah be pleased with him – considers the Tasmiyah as the very first verse and that from Siraatal lazeena to walad daaleen as one single verse. He does not consider that there is a full stop at the word Alayhim. Because of this, according to him, the Imam should recite the Tasmiyah aloud because it is considered as part of the Surah. Hadrat Imam Abu Hanifa – may Allah be pleased with him – on the other hands considers that the Tasmiyah is not part of the Surah and he also considers that there is a full stop after the word Alayhim. It is because of this, the Hanafi Imam would recite the Tasmiyah silently.

Benefits of Surah Fatiha

There are numerous benefits which have been recorded about this specific surah especially in books such as Tafseer Kabeer which we would outline here:

In the Muslim shareef, it is recorded that when this Surah was revealed, an Angel appeared to the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and declared, “Mubaarak or congratulations! You have been blessed with two Noor which have never been given to any Prophet before you, the first is Surah Fatiha and the second is the last few verses of Surah Baqarah.”

In the Tirmidi shareef, the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – has declared that there is no surah like Surah Fatiha which is to be found in the original Bible, the Taurah or the Zubur.

In Tafseer Kabeer, it is recorded that the Almighty had revealed 104 books and Sahifa. He then encompassed the knowledge of a hundred of these books in three books, the Bible, the Zubur and the Taurah. He then encompassed the knowledge of these three books in one single book which is the Holy Quran. He then explained all the laws from Surah Hujurat until Surah Naas and kept all of this expansive knowledge within the Surah Fatiha. Therefore, whosoever has learnt

Surah Fatiha has learned all the previous revealed books and whosoever has read this Surah has read all the previously revealed books!

Another special point to remember is that this Surah is a surah which is exclusively Divine Mercy in totality. The Almighty has not used any letters or words which indicate directly or indirectly Hell. It should be remembered that there are 7 letters which are not found in this Surah. They are thaa, jaa, khaa, zaa, sheen, zu or faa, (ث ج ح ز ش ظ ف). There is wisdom behind this. The word thaa is the first letter in the word Thaboor which means destruction or annihilation. The letter Jeem is the first letter in the word Jahanum which indicates Hell. The letter Khaa is the first letter in the word Khuzaa which means disgrace or humiliation. The letter Zaa is the first letter in the word Zafeer or Zuqoom, the first which indicates the type of scream or sound made by the dwellers of Hell and the second which indicates the type of food eaten by the people of Hell. The letter Sheen is also the first letter in the word Sheeq which describes the sound, the scream or shrieks made by the people in Hell. The letter Zu is also the first letter in the word Zulm which indicates oppression.

In Tafseer Ruhul Bayaan, it is said that when this Surah was revealed, at that moment, Jibraeel Ameen was accompanied by seventy thousand Angels.

This specific Surah is a cure for many ailments if it is read with sincerity. Some of these specific methods of reading this Surah in a special manner have been explained by many Sufis in their respective treatises.

Verse no. 1

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝۱

All praise unto Allah, Lord of all the worlds.

There are four things we need to remember in this aspect.

- ✓ Why is this the first verse?
- ✓ What is the scholarly and Sufi commentary on this?
- ✓ What lessons or examples can be derived from this verse by the Muslims?
- ✓ What are the various questions and answers pertaining to this specific verse?

There are many reasons why this verse has appeared where it has:

It is reported that when Nabi Adam – peace be upon him – was created, the first thing he did was sneeze and the first word he uttered was “Al hamdu lillah”. This is the reason that Muslims have also been commanded to utter these words when they sneeze. The person listening to this should reply “Yar hama kumullah” and the person who has sneezed should again declare, “Yah di bi ku mullah wa yus lih”. From this we come to understand that these were the first words uttered by man, hence, these are also the first words mentioned in the Quran.

It is also explained that there are 8 letters in these words and there are also 8 entrances in Paradise. It is hoped that the person who recites these words with sincerity would become entitled to enter these 8 doors. We also come to realize from this that the person who reads the Quran with true sincerity immediately becomes entitled to Paradise! The more he reads, the more advantages he becomes entitled to.

The third point is that praising the Almighty is the true essence of worship. Hence, these words clearly praise the Almighty.

Muslims are also taught by these words that whenever they commence anything, they should praise the Almighty because this is also the manner in which the Almighty has begun His revelation.

Lastly, we also know that before we ask for anything from any person, we first praise that person and then we make our request. Sura Fatiha has taught us how to make Dua and from this we come to understand that before asking the Almighty for anything, we should firstly praise and honour Him and then make our humble request.

The scholarly commentary:

There are three parts in this statement which we intend to explain separately. They are Alif Lam, Hamd and Lillah.

In Tafseer Ruhul Bayan, it is explained that this Alif Lam at the beginning of the word Hamd could either be “Is tigh raaqi” which means that it encompasses everything or Ah di which means that it indicates to a specific type of praise.

If we accept the first type, then it would naturally mean that every type of praise, in every generation, in every condition performed by anyone only belongs to Allah. The person who praises is called “Haamid” and obviously praise in Arabic is called “Hamd”. Therefore, we say that every type of praise from the beginning of creation only belongs to Allah. What do we mean by this? It means that no matter whoever we praise, that praise ultimately belongs to Allah. If we praise a saint, the sun, the moon or a valuable item, indirectly, we are praising the Almighty simply because praising something is to praise the Creator of that object. If we praise a house, we are praising the builder of that house, if we praise a certain book, we are praising the writer of that book etc etc. Logically therefore, if we praise the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, we are praising the Almighty because the Almighty has created such a matchless and unique creation.

At the same time we must understand that every part of the body utters the praises in its own unique manner. The feet and hand praises the Almighty by displaying humility and modesty especially while performing the salah. Whatever type of ibaadah we perform, whether it be Hajj, giving alms etc, we are praising the Almighty. Worship can be both verbal and physical. When we visit the shrines of the saints who are the creation of Allah or when we recite the praise of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, or when we help a poor person physically or perform the Hajj as a physical ibaadah, all these are forms of praising the Almighty because it is the Almighty who has created such beautiful things.

The Almighty declares in Surah Hajj, verse 32 as follows:

ذَلِكَ ۚ وَمَنْ يُعِظَّمْ شَعِيرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ ﴿٢٢﴾

The thing is this and whoso respects the signs of Allah, then it is from the piety of hearts.

We see that a person who respects any government officer is indirectly showing respect to the government itself. When we argue or abuse any officer, we are actually disrespecting the government in whose employ that specific officer is in. Therefore, we can see from this that merely the Alif Lam in these words has covered a huge and expansive ocean of knowledge.

We must also understand that when we give thanks to the Almighty, we are praising Him and even when we display patience during difficult times, then too, we are actually praising the Almighty. A person should endeavour to praise the Almighty in every condition he finds himself in, both good times and difficult times. It is quite obvious why we should praise the Almighty when we are blessed with something, however, we should also praise Him in difficult times because these difficulties have being caused through our own sins and through this, and the Almighty is giving us an opportunity to wipe away that sin through praising Him. In other words, praising the Almighty becomes a means of paying expiation or compensation for our sins.

Praising the Almighty when we are well means to worship him, to visit the sick and to serve those who are less fortunate. Praising the Almighty for the wealth He has given you is to help the poor and destitute and therefore, there is a specific manner of praising the Almighty with every part of our body. Using the eyes to praise the Almighty is such things as looking at the Kaba, looking at the Quran and to look at the faces of those who are learned in Islam etc. To use the ears to praise the Almighty is to listen to the Quran, to listen to the praises of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, to listen to the lectures of the Ulama etc. Praising the Almighty through the hands means to use it

according to what Islam has recommended and not to transgress what the Almighty has dictated.

Every creation from the beginning of creation, most of which we are not even aware of, have continued to praise the Almighty in their own manner and way. From the creation of time itself everything praises the Almighty.

The Almighty declares:

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ط وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ

بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ ط إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿٢٢﴾

The seven heavens and earth and whoever is in them speak of His Glory. And there is nothing, which might not speak of His Glory praising Him, yes you understand not their glorification. No doubt, He is Forbearing, Forgiving.

(Sura Bani Israel - v44)

If we accept that this Alif Lam is Ah di in its meaning, then it would signify that a specific praise is strictly for Allah. In other words, the Almighty does not accept every praise except a certain specific praise. What type of praise is this? We can safely say that that specific praise is the praise which the beloved Prophet has uttered in praise of the Almighty. Perhaps this is the reason why the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – has been named “Ahmed” the one who praises in excess and the Almighty as Mahmood or the One who has been praised.

It is stated that on the day of Judgement, the Almighty would bless the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – with a special type of Divine Praise which he would perform while in prostration and through this, he would implore the Almighty to forgive his Ummah and to also begin the process

of intercession. There are many non Muslims who think that they are praising the Almighty, yet none of their so called praises are accepted. The reason is that Muslims praise the Almighty in the manner which has been taught to us by the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and these non Muslims have adopted a manner which has no basis or foundation.

It could also mean that real praise for the Almighty is that praise in which His beloved Prophet is also remembered. It is obvious that as a true and sincere Muslim, any praise of the Almighty without praising the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is something which is meaningless. Why did the Satan become cursed, simply because he refused to show respect to a special creation of Allah in the form of Nabi Adam – peace be upon him. This is the reason that the so-called praises of these non-Muslims have no effect because they do not include in their praises the sweet remembrance of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. If we look at every type of worship we perform, in every action is included the praise of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him.

We can compare the Zikr of Allah as being our spiritual food and the zikr of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – as salt in this special spiritual food! It is obvious that without salt, there is no taste in any type of food. From this we come to realize that everyone praises the Almighty, however, the best of praises is that which has been taught to us by the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him.

It could also mean that the essence of praise is actually the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and we are told that we should praise the Prophet not in any ordinary manner, but the manner which has been taught to us by the Almighty. This is the reason that one of the Divine names of the Almighty is “Haamid” One who praises and the name of the Holy Prophet – may

Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is Mohammed or the one who has been praised.

Another amazing fact in this regard which is to be remembered is that every type of Ibaadah we perform is an act which has been taught to us by the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. In other words, it is a Sunnah of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. The Almighty does not perform any type of worship neither does He in His Infinite Glory have to praise anyone because everything has been created by Him. However, there is one thing which has always been done by the Almighty and that is to praise His beloved Prophet!

In this way, we come to understand that even if the worship of everyone ceases to exist, yet the praise of the Prophet would continue because this would be done by His Creator who would never cease to exist. The true status and praise of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – would certainly be seen on the day of Judgement on a plain called Maqaam-e-Mahmood or the place of glory and praise.

Sufi commentary:

The Sufis say that actual praise is to display that which has been given to us. In other words, whatever we have been blessed with, in reality, this is only the greatness of the Almighty which is being manifested. They say that when the world appeared with all its glory and greatness, this was a form of praise to the Almighty. In other words, whether a person praises the Almighty or refuses to praise the Almighty, still, all praise would only belong to him.

When an idol worshipper begins to worship his idol, he is doing so in his ignorance, yet every part of his body negates and disputes his action and screams to him that every part of his body has been created by the Divine Creator and that he is wasting his time and effort worshipping something which has no power

over anything. His physical being itself, which has been created by the Almighty, is a proof that he should be only praising the Almighty; yet, he does not listen to this.

If this person could only understand this or understand the reality of his inner self, he would never worship an idol. This is the reason that the hadith shareef declares:

من عرف نفسه لقد عرف ربه

“Man ‘arafa nafsahu laqad ‘arafa Rabba hu”. He who understands his inner self understands his Creator

The sufis also declare that:

لا موجود الا الله

“La mau jooda illal laah”. (nothing exists except Allah)

In other words, nothing exists besides Allah; everything else is merely a shadow. It is quite obvious therefore that when we praise a shadow, we are praising the person whose shadow this is. In other words, whatever or whoever we praise, we are praising the Almighty because everything is a shadow of His Infinite Existence.

The Sufis also say that the first manifestation of His Divine greatness is the creation of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and everything thereafter is a manifestation of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. It can be explained in the following manner. If we have a mirror on the ground and the sun is shining on it, after that we have different mirrors which are all pointing towards this large mirror, it is obvious that these small mirrors would also receive the reflection of the sun’s rays from

this large mirror. In the same way, we can say that the example of the sun is the Divine Being and the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is the large mirror while the rest of creation is the small mirrors which receive its reflection from the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him! It is quite obvious from this that when we praise is the large mirror, we are praising the actual sun and when we are praising the other mirrors, we are actually praising the large mirror.

The Almighty is the actual Divine Light. He declares:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكُوتٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ط الْبُصْبَاحُ فِي
زُجَاجَةٍ ط الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ
وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ط نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ ط يَهْدِي اللَّهُ
لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ط وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ ط وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ٣٥

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a chandelier (of glass). The chandelier is as it were a star glittering like a pearl; it is lighted from the blessed olive tree which is neither of east nor of west, it is near that its oil may flare up even though the fire touches it not. The Light is upon the Light. Allah guides to His Light whomsoever He will. And Allah narrates examples for the people.

And Allah knows all things.

(Surah Nur – 35)

The first entity is the Divine Being of Allah; the second is the Blessed personality of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and all

the other mirrors is the rest of the universe. If the large mirror is not present, all the other small mirrors would cease to have light or Noor. This can be proven from the Hadith shareef where the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – has declared that:

انا نور من نور الله وكل الخلاق من نوري

Ana noorun min nooril laa wa kullul khalaai min noori. (I am from the Noor of Allah and all creation is from me – in other words everything has been created from my Noor).

It is for this reason that the great Sufis explain that every praise belongs to Allah. At once, He is the One who is praised, the One who praises and the One who should be praised. This is where they derive the issue of Wahdatul Wujood from. This can only be understood by those who have the inner vision or the inner light to fathom this complex issue.

Some jurisprudential points:

It is considered as Waajib to pronounce the Hamd during the Khutbah of Juma. To pronounce the Hamd before the Khutbah of nikah, or during the dua or after eating or drinking is considered as Mustahab.

To utter the Hamd after one sneezes is also considered as Sunnat Mu'akkidah.

Question:

Those who disbelieve in the Holy Quran or in the existence of the Almighty have the following questions. They say that:

The Quran is not the word of the Almighty but rather the creation of a human because if it was the Divine Word of the Almighty, He would have said, "All Praises is due to Me" and not "All praise belongs to Allah".

Secondly, they say that in this Surah, it says “You only do we worship”. Who is this You in this verse. If it was the Divine Word of Allah, He should have said, “I alone should be worshipped.”

Thirdly, they say how can the Almighty praise Himself as this is a form of pride or boast?

Answer:

It must be understood that this is the Divine Word of the Almighty and the manner in which He has given us these words is so that creation would be able to understand and learn how to supplicate to Him. We see that when a teacher reads himself and teaches his students, it does not mean that he does not know the lesson, he is only doing this to teach those who do not know. There are many occasions when officials of government speak through others.

If we look at certain affidavits, we would see that although the person who wrote this affidavit is someone else, yet the person filling it uses the word “I declare this or I declare that etc”. This is only done to educate others and to declare that he is the person entitled to fill in this form. Therefore, in these verses, the Almighty is teaching creation that if you wish to present yourself in His Divine Court or wish to ask the Almighty, you must ask Him in the manner which He has taught you. This is not praising oneself but rather it is a method of educating others. If the Almighty had not told us about His existence, how would we know about it?

When a ruler of a certain area informs his officer that I have certain rights over people in a certain area and I have the following status, he is not praising himself but rather educating the officer of his true rank and position and also educating the people of that area so that they would obey his command. How can we say that the ruler is unduly praising himself? Therefore, this objection has no basis whatsoever.

Objection from a deviant

There is an objection from certain misguided people in this regard. They say that since all praise belongs to Allah, we should never praise His creation. Therefore, we should never say such things as, “Ya Rasoolallah or Ya Ghous” as this would constitute Shirk.

Answer:

To praise the pious servants of Allah and to honour them is to praise and honour the Almighty. As a matter of fact, sincere praise of the Almighty is when we praise His dutiful servants. If praising the creation is considered Shirk, these people themselves praise their teachers and parents etc. Have they not themselves become Mushriks by this action of theirs?

رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ①

Lord of all the worlds.

What is the connection between this and the previous word “Al hamdu lillah”

There are a few ways in which this is connected with the previous words. In the previous word, creation has been commanded to praise the Almighty and, in this statement, the reason is being given.

The first statement was a proclamation and this second statement is the proof. In other words, all praises belong to Allah or is for Allah because He is the Lord, Cherisher or Sustainer of the entire universe and obviously, the Divine Being who sustains the universe is entitled to be praised.

Another reason is that there are four types of people who praise the Creator.

The first group is that special group of creation who praise the Almighty strictly for the sake of praising Him. They have no ulterior motive. These would be the Prophets and the special group of saints.

The second group are those people who praise the Almighty because of His immense grace which He has granted them. This group would include ordinary creation.

The third group are those people who praise Him with the hope that He would forgive them in the future or show mercy to them. These are people who are sinners or transgressors.

And lastly, the fourth group are those who praise Him out of fear and awe.

In this context, we can say that for the first group, He has declared:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ

All praise unto Allah

In regard to the second group, He has declared:

رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ①

Lord of all the worlds.

He has said this so that they would understand that indeed He is the Divine Being who sustains every creation and because He is the Divine Being who feeds everyone, He should be rightly praised.

In regard to the third group, He has declared that:

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ②

The most Affectionate, the Merciful.

This is because even in the future He would grace people with mercy and compassion; therefore, they should continue to praise Him.

In regard to the fourth group, He has declared that:

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٢﴾

Master of the Day of Requital.

This is because He the Master of all creation and everything belongs to Him. Therefore, they should rightfully fear Him and continue to praise Him.

These four verses clearly prove the status of each group and each statement clearly has a connection between each other. It also proves to us the existence of four clearly defined groups.

Commentary:

The word “Rabb” is said to have three meaning. Owner, Lord and Sustainer. There is no doubt that He is the Owner of everything. He has always owned everything and will always own everything. Whatever ownership He has given to creation, that ownership is only for a certain period and time. This ownership which He has given to certain people is something which has been specifically given by the Divine Owner who is Allah.

If you own an object today, you were not the owner of that since time was created and neither would you remain the owner of that object forever. If you own a cow today, this ownership is only for a limited period. This is applicable on whatever belongs to you.

The second meaning of this word is “Lord”. This implies someone who is the highest in status and rank and there cannot be anyone Higher or Greater than Almighty Allah. Whatever people have received, they have received from Almighty Allah. This is why He is referred to as “Azeem”.

The third meaning of this word is “Sustainer”. This word itself has many dimensions in its implication. Who does He sustain, how does He sustain, since when does He sustain etc. Since He is the Lord of the Universe, it means that He sustains the entire universe. As long as the universe exists, He will continue to sustain the universe. Without His Divine Presence, the universe would not be able to sustain itself. It is Divine Grace that He has allocated certain ways and methods of sustaining each and every creation. For every creation, He has His own way and method of making that specific creation survive.

Let us look at parents. Parents are considered as that special creation who displays amazing behaviour when it comes to caring for their children. This is applicable to all parents, both human and non human. Yet, let us look at the creation of a child. When the child is transferred from the father to the mother, during those nine months, the child changes into many shapes and amazing transformation takes place in the child. All this occurs within the womb of the mother. The parents have no control over what happens within the womb. When the child is born, the Almighty creates sustenance in the breast of the mother so that the child can survive. When this same milk reaches the stomach of the child, the mother has no control on what happens within the stomach of the child. When this same milk helps the child and when the child begins to develop and grow, even at this stage, the parents have no control over what is happening!

What is amazing is that the mother is only allowed to feed to child for two years if she so wishes. In other words, as the child begins to mature, the mother or father has no control over what happens in the child during this physically maturity. As the child grows older, the interaction of the parents begins to decrease. Finally, the child becomes fully mature and the parents become old and frail. Now the role is completely opposite. The child has to look after the parents! If during all this time, the child dies for some reason, connection between the parent and child is severed.

We praise the Almighty who sustained us when we were in the womb of our mother, who sustained us when we were too young to think for ourselves, who sustains us when we become adolescent, when we become old and frail, who sustains us when we become sick and when we become healthy. That Divine Creator who sustains us every minute and second of the day and night. And, in His Divine Grace and Kindness, He has not asked for any payment in return. Without doubt, only He is entitled to be called the True Sustainer of the entire universe.

What is amazing is that He sustains us mentally, physically and even spiritually. We praise Him who has made a bone (our ears), a means of hearing, a piece of flesh, (our eyes) a means of seeing and a piece of meat, (our tongue) a means of speaking. How amazing is His Greatness?

The Almighty has also sustained every type of creature in the manner which is suitable and applicable for that specific creature. If we look at the trees, he understood that they do not have to means of acquiring sustenance themselves, so he created people who would take care of them. He ordered the clouds to deliver water to these same plants and trees because they do not have the means to travel to water. The birds on the other hand had the power to travel and move, however, they do not have to power to earn their own sustenance, so He ordered them to leave their nests and travel because He would provide them with food in the fields and in other places. The birds leave their nests early in the morning while they are hungry and He has informed them that they will arrive back at their nests fully satisfied and having fulfilled their hunger!

As far as man is concerned, He has informed man that unlike the trees and birds, they can move and they can earn a livelihood, therefore he has informed them to do so while all the time providing them with the means to earn a livelihood. He has informed man to plant the seed in the ground while He would bless them

with sunlight and rain. Such is the Mercy of the Almighty that when a small child could not survive on its own, He provided sustenance to that child even in the womb of the mother and when the same child grew older, in His Mercy, he provided that same child the means to earn a sustenance.

The difference between the Creator caring for someone and a human taking care of someone!

Even though some people take care of others and help them in so far as earning a livelihood is concerned, yet there is a marked difference between their care and the Divine Care of the Almighty.

The first difference is that a human helps another because he has a reason to do so. The Almighty does not help and aid people with any set intention. If the parents take care of their child today, they have the intention that tomorrow when they grow old; the same child would take care of them. When a rich person takes care of a poor person, he has the intention that he would become famous among others or that he would earn a reward in the hereafter. A ruler takes care of his subjects with the hope that these people would be able to help and assist him when the time comes. Each one of these people has a set intention in their minds. Yet, the Almighty takes care of the entire creation without asking for anything in return.

Another difference is that when a person helps another, there is a possibility that his wealth or means would decrease, hence, he helps in a very cautious manner. He has this constant fear that his wealth would decrease. If his wealth decreases, he sometimes gets rid of many workers. Yet, there is no decrease in the Mercy of the Almighty; therefore, He does not remove anyone from the benefit of His beneficiaries.

Thirdly, when a kind and generous person helps another, he cannot help but show off about his assistance and kindness and another point is that this same kind person only helps another if and when he is asked to do so. However, the Almighty sustains creation without even being asked to do so. Look at the state

of child in the womb, even in that place unseen to humans; He continued to help sustain the child.

Fourthly, a person does not help everyone at once; he only helps those he knows and those who are his family. The owner of a business only takes care of immediate workers, while the Almighty helps every creation.

Lastly, a rich person becomes uncomfortable and stressed when he sees a poor person because he understands that this person is about to ask him for something. He has this fear that pretty soon his wealth would decrease, yet the Almighty does not have this fear. In His Greatness, He wishes that more and more people would ask Him so that He would grant more and more to His creation. Every creature that comes to His Divine Entrance comes with new requests and he continues to provide for all of them.

Important point:

The Christians call the Almighty their father and we call Him the Divine Cherisher and Sustainer. There is a great insult in calling the Creator “father”. We need to understand the status of a father compared to the Divine Creator to understand what dimension of insult is being committed by these people.

The first difference is that the father needs the mother so that the child can come into this world. It is the mother who gives birth and without her presence, the father ceases to be called a father. The Almighty is definitely not reliant on anyone to take care of His creation.

The father is only able to take care of the physical needs of the child. This is the reason that when the child matures, he sends the child to a school or madressah so that the teacher or Ustad would be able to take care of the educational and spiritual needs of the father. The Divine Creator on the other hand, takes care of every need of the creation.

Thirdly, the father is less in status than the religious teacher or spiritual guide. The reason is that the father brings us into this world, yet, the spiritual guide or religious teacher helps us so that we can be successful in the hereafter. In other words, they guide us towards the heavens. If our religious teachers did not teach us true Islam, we would be considered as the lowest of the low in creation or Asfalus Saafileen. The father has bequeathed us a physical body which would one day become destroyed, yet, the spiritual guide or Islamic teacher, bequests us with faith and purity in belief which would last forever. Even though the father enjoys a special rank in our financial hierarchy such as heritance etc, yet, the rank of the spiritual guide is not lesser. Yet, all of these things are not applicable to the Divine Creator because there are no laws of inheritance applicable in that Divine Court.

Another important difference is that the offspring of a certain creature would be the same as its parents. The offspring of a human would be a human and the offspring of an animal would only be an animal. If there is impurity found in the parents, the same impurity would be found in the off spring.

From this, we come to realize that there is a stark difference between the Creator and a father. When the Creator is not like creation, how can He be called a “father”? Another stark difference is that the father is in need of the child and vice versa, yet the Almighty is not dependent on anyone.

The difference between special Divine gifts and common Divine gifts

The Almighty grants both of these to His creation. Some of His Divine Mercy is granted to everyone such as sunlight, the wind or the covering of the sky protecting us again the sun etc. However, he also grants wealth, children, and respect etc to certain of His creatures.

Yet even in these Divine gifts such as sunlight, they only serve a specific purpose. When the sun appears, it only warms a person externally. It does not warm a

person spiritually. It is because of this that He in His Divine Grace decided to send a creation that would be able to benefit His entire creation in such a manner who would be able to convey the Divine Grace to every creature without favour and without asking for anything in return.

That special grace is the personality of the Holy Prophet.

Clarifying this, the Almighty has declared:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

And We sent not you, but a mercy for all worlds.

(Al-Ambiya 21, Verse 107)

As the Divine Creator is the Sustainer of the entire worlds, in like manner, the Holy Prophet is a mercy for the entire worlds.

We can safely say that the Divine Mercy of the Almighty reaches all of us through the mercy of the Holy Prophet. He has blessed us with the Quran, the Kaba and with Islam, yet, such special spiritual dimensions as wilayat or even martyrdom is something which is distributed only from the court of the Holy Prophet!

The word “Aalameen”

This word is said to have originated from the word “Aalam” which means a sign. The universe therefore has been called Aalam because in its complete existence, it proves the presence of a Divine Being or Divine Creator.

In Tafseer Ruhul Bayan, it is said that there are 18 thousand Aalams or universe. This universe which we are able to see such the heavens and earth, it is only one of multiverses. This specific universe which we live in, is considered as the smallest of these universes. It is said that paradise is so expansive and huge that if this entire universe was placed within it, it would look like small pebbles on the ground! At the same time, the depth of Hell is so deep that if a stone was thrown

from one corner, it would take 70 years for that stone to arrive at the bottom of this pit. If the same stone was thrown from that sky, it would take minutes for it to arrive on the ground. At the same time, this universe is so expansive that not even all the creatures that live within it have yet being discovered. Every day, new creatures are being found and every day new discoveries are being made. If this is case with mere creatures, how can we say that we have fully understood the Creator Himself!

Question from an atheist:

If the Almighty is someone who cares for His creatures, why do Muslims have the death penalty and why does He use Muslims to kill other Muslims?

Answer:

A human who becomes an obstacle for another human in the acquiring of sustenance, the killing of such a human is not oppression but a form of making sure that another human is being sustained. When a farmer looks at his field which has being ploughed, he may notice beautiful green grass also appearing in the field. Even though they may look fresh and nice, yet, he would immediately remove it because he understands that this would eventually destroy his crops. In the same manner, there are people in this world that may look green and fresh in appearance, but, they pose a great danger to others and therefore, they have to be removed so that others would be able to survive.

Question:

The Creator is someone who should care for His creation, why therefore does He present trial and tribulation to His special creatures? Some of them experience extreme hardship and adversity in this world such as poverty and destitution.

Answer:

The difficulties and adversity which befalls His special servants are sent to them for a special reason. There is numerous wisdom in this. These adversities

sometimes become a reason for their ultimate forgiveness and success in the hereafter. Look at the example of giving Zakah, outwardly, it may look like one's wealth is being wasted, yet, through this, the poor and destitute are helped and assisted. At the same time, there is immense Barakah in one's wealth thereafter. It can be compared to a plant which is being pruned. It may look like one is destroying a plant, yet, in the long term; the pruning actually assists the plant to grow larger.

Minor sickness may sometimes eliminate major diseases. There may be occasions when we may not like something when it commences, yet, in the long term that same thing may have good results. When the father sends a child to school, the strictness displayed there may not appeal to the child at the beginning, yet, eventually, it would help and assist the child.

Question:

If He is the Lord of the worlds, then why is it that we continue to make Dua and He never seems to answer?

Answer:

There is no doubt that at times, a person seeks a thing which would eventually lead to his destruction. The Almighty is Aleem and Khabeer (All Knowing) and in His Infinite Wisdom, He understands that what we seek at times can be detrimental to us. When He does not answer our Duas at times, this proves His Grace and Mercy and not His oppression. We see that when a child is suffering from flu, the child would request the father to give him some honey, even though this is a sweet item, yet, the father knows that giving him this would only increase his sickness; instead the father gives him some bitter medicine. This is not an oppressive behaviour of the father; rather this proves his concern and mercy for the child.

Question:

If the Almighty is the Lord of the worlds, then he should not make people suffer from death. Why has He created death if He is so Merciful and Beneficent?

Answer:

Those people who fear death do not understand its actual meaning or inner essence. Death is an opportunity to meet the Merciful Creator. It is also the time to meet the beloved Prophet of Allah. This world is a place to sow the seed of good and nobility and the hereafter is the place to reap the benefits of these good deeds. Therefore, death is not a curse for the true believer but rather a station of grace and mercy.

Question:

If the Almighty is the Lord of the Worlds, then why do we have to ask His creation for help such as Prophets and saints etc.

Answer:

There is no doubt that to ask these beloved servants of Allah for help and assistance is to ask the Almighty. We see that even though He is the true giver of sustenance, yet, we still go to work to earn a livelihood and be able to buy food. All these are means of gaining His sustenance. We know that He is the true Giver of health, yet, when we are sick, we still go to the doctor for help. Again, for the same reason. If you believe that we should not seek the help of Prophets and saints and other beloved servants of Allah, we would suggest that you stop going to work or even stop going to a doctor when you are sick.

Verse No. 2

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ②

The most Affectionate, the Merciful.

How is this verse associated with the previous verse where it was declared that He is the Lord of the worlds? Perhaps there was a question that since He is the Lord of the universe, He was doing so because He had no other option and like a normal ruler, if He did not take care for His kingdom, His Lordship would no longer exist. Or perhaps it can be compared to a person who has domestic animals and if he did care for them, it would cause major stress to him. In all these possibilities, the Almighty has clearly declared by this specific statement that He is not helpless in this regard as creation is. He sustains the Universe simply because He is Most Beneficent and Most Merciful.

There are two ways of sustaining something. It is done in a state of resentment as the government feeds those who are imprisoned. Even though by law, prisoners are to be fed, however, it is obvious that these prisoners are a heavy burden on ordinary tax payers and therefore, the government views feeding these people as an irritation and burden.

The Almighty on the hand does not consider it a burden to sustain creation. He does so with Grace and Mercy. Another important point is that praising someone ultimately leads to that person showing mercy to you. Those people who praise the Almighty would ultimately achieve His Divine Mercy. We know that when Nabi Adam – peace be upon him – sneezed, the first thing he uttered was praise to Allah and this sunnah of Nabi Adam – peace be upon him – is still in practise until this day. We have already explained the difference between Ar Rahman and Ar Raheem in our explanation during the explanation of the Tasmiyah. In this explanation, we also want to remind you that the attribute Ar Rahman could also

mean that He is Beneficent to such a degree that it is an act of being beneficent which cannot be achieved through any creation and He is Ar Raheem or Merciful to such a degree that such Mercy would never be attained from any creation.

It could also implicate that the first Divine attribute Ar Rahman indicates to sustenance which is bestowed by Him without any cause or mean and Ar Raheem implicates that Divine Attribute where He sustains a creation through some mean and cause. There are many creation who sustain themselves through their parents and there are many creation who are able to survive without any support from their parents. It is said that the offspring of a crow is completely abandoned by the parents when it hatches from the egg. It is like a small piece of helpless meat. However, suddenly a large congregation of flies gather around it and by consuming these flies, it is able to survive for the next few days. This is how it is sustained for that moment. When its body becomes mature, then the mother once more returns to this offspring. (Tafseer Ruhul Bayan, Tafseer Kabeer).

Incident:

Hadrat Zun Nun Misri – may Allah be pleased with him – narrates an interesting story. He says that once he noticed a scorpion which was travelling at a great speed towards a certain river. As it approached the bank of the river, it hitched a lift with something was able to cross over to the next bank. Amazed by this behaviour, Hadrat Zun Nun – may Allah be pleased with him – followed this scorpion to see the reason for this amazing journey. When the scorpion arrived at the opposite bank, again it began to travel speedily as if it needed to arrive at a certain destination with great haste. A few yards away, he noticed that there was a young man sleeping and a poisonous snake was about to bite him. The scorpion then attacked this snake and both of them bit one another with the result that both of them died immediately! In this way, the young man was saved!

This incident goes to prove that even though we may claim that we care and sustain ourselves while we are awake, yet, who sustains and protects us when we

sleep? There are many incidents when we are saved strictly through the Mercy and Grace of the Almighty. This is a manifestation of Him being Ar Rahman. The idol worshippers still believe in their ignorance that the Almighty protects them in major difficulties while their idols save them in smaller difficulties. This verse clearly proves that the Almighty is Ar Rahman and Ar Raheem. He protects and sustains His creation in every calamity and difficulty whether it is big or small.

A question from an atheist:

When these words Ar Rahman and Ar Raheem have already appeared in the Tasmiyah, what was the reason to repeat it?

Answer:

In the Tasmiyah, these words were used to describe His Divine Being and in this verse, the words are being used to describe His Divine Qualities. When something is mentioned in the Holy Quran on a regular basis, it means that the Almighty wishes that creation understands the importance of this so that they too can mention it regularly.

Question:

If the Almighty is Beneficent and Merciful why has He created dangerous animals, hell or even Satan?

Answer:

This has already being explained in the verse “Rabbul Aalameen”. There are many forms of difficulties which becomes reason for His Divine Mercy. In reality, these are forms of Him manifesting His Mercy. If these difficulties and trials were not created, then our spiritual and physical being would not be able to cleanse itself. Ibaadah such as salah, fasting, hajj etc, may seem difficult to perform, yet they are actions which are able to cleanse us internally. We can compare this to a piece of stone which eventually becomes a valuable piece of jewellery. When it is found

in the ground such as a piece of gold. It does not become valuable immediately; there are major processes which occur such as going through acid, fire, crushing etc. Eventually, after going through all of these trials and tribulations, only then, is it considered a valuable and precious item. All these trials were a means of making it more valuable.

In the same manner, the difficulties which are experienced by man are a means of removing the impurity from him and to make him better and eventually extremely valuable. These trial and tribulation which comes to those who are close to the Almighty are also a means of them getting closer to the Almighty and of becoming even more valuable. Therefore, these tests cannot be considered as a calamity but rather as a Mercy from the Almighty. In like manner, animals which we may consider as dangerous are also a means of protecting us whether we realize it or not. You would be surprised to know that the mosquito or fly is also able to remove from our blood many types of harmful bacteria through its bite without us realizing it. In like manner, there are many types of creation which are found in our fields and farms which are actually a source of eliminating other harmful objects and this itself is a means of us receiving Mercy.

Verse No. 3

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٣﴾

Master of the Day of Requital.

In the previous verses, the Divine Mercy of the Almighty was explained through which hope was created in the heart of His creation. At the same time, it was also necessary to create fear in the heart of creation because true and sincere faith is between hope and fear. In this verse, the Almighty is explaining His Divine Power, Divine Might and Ownership. The Christians believe that no matter whatever sins are committed by them, they have this false notion that nothing would happen to them because Nabi Esa – peace be upon him – has already expiated them of all sin and transgression. In this false claim of theirs, they only believe in the Divine Mercy. Since they have no fear for the Divine Wrath of the Almighty, they believe that they can commit whatever sin they wish. The Hindus on the other hand believe that no sin would be ever be forgiven. In this way, they have completely negated the idea or concept in the Divine Mercy of the Almighty. In this manner, these people have become embroiled in a major sin because to not believe in the Divine Mercy of the Almighty is in itself a major sin.

We see that when a cat is able to escape from a dog, it grabs every opportunity to do so, yet, when it is cornered, then it is able to defend itself against the cat. Similarly when a person has been condemned to death, he is extremely careful that he does not commit another crime because he has given up hope in life. A person can only avoid sin if he is certain of the Divine Wrath of the Almighty and in His Divine Mercy. This is the reason that after explaining His Divine Mercy, the Almighty has now explained His Divine Might and Power. At the same time, there are people who worship him because they consider Him Merciful and there are others who worship Him fearing His Divine wrath. For

the former, the previous verse is applicable while for the latter, this verse becomes applicable.

Commentary:

There is a difference of opinion whether this specific word “Maalik” should be read as “Maalik” or “Malik”. Obviously the second word does not have an Alif after the letter Meem. The first word would mean owner and the second indicates a ruler. Those who prefer to read it as Malik, say that kingship or ruler ship in this sense is better because it is higher in degree to a normal ruler. In other words, He would be the Ruler of the day of judgement.

However, those who say that it is better to read it as Maalik have a few reasons for their preference. Firstly, they say that the word Maalik has four letters in it ملك while the word Malik ملك. Has only three. We all know that for every letter of the Quran recited, one receives ten rewards, therefore, it would be better to read Maalik as this would achieve forty rewards for a person while the reading of Malik would only achieve thirty rewards for a person. Secondly, a Owner or Master is someone who commands people and rules over them while an owner is the absolute master and ruler over his subjects and servants. An owner or master is someone who has complete control over his subjects while there are subjects within the dominion of a ruler who may demand certain concessions from him. This is the reason that a ruler is sometimes called a ruler because he has to sometimes concede to certain subjects of his. It is for this reason that it is better to pronounce Maalik than Malik.

Thirdly, there is a possibility that subjects can leave the kingdom of a certain ruler and emigrate to another kingdom or they may even decide to remove the king from his position. However, the servants of a certain Master and Owner can never leave their position. Therefore, the status of a Master and Owner is much more powerful than that of a ruler. Fourthly, a ruler is not the complete owner of the wealth of his subjects or their life; the subjects have their own wealth and own their own lives. The owner or master on the other hand is in complete

control over his servant and everything which is owned by the servant. Fifthly, the subject is not solely reliant on the ruler for every decision he makes or takes, while the servant is completely reliant on the master for every action he takes or every decision he makes. Without the strict permission of the master, he can do nothing. Sixthly, the subject does not have to ask for everything from the ruler, at times, he is able to make his own arrangements. He only serves the ruler fearing his wrath and power. The servant on the other hand receives everything from the owner and master where it is his food or clothes. In like manner, we ask for everything from the Almighty and He is our Master and Owner. Therefore, it is more proper to read Maalik than Malik. Seventhly, the ruler is reliant on the subject to sustain his kingdom. He knows that if his subjects pay their taxes, his kingdom would survive and if they fail to do so, then there would be danger to his kingdom and his position as the king. He is also reliant on his subjects to protect him in joining the army etc. However, the master and owner are not reliant on his servants for anything. The master or owner does not take wealth from his servants but rather, he is the one who gives his servants wealth and food. The servant is someone who is completely reliant on his owner and master. In like manner, we are also completely reliant on the Almighty for everything.

Eighthly, the ruler would only accept the help of those subjects who are healthy and strong and would refuse to accept the elderly or sick, yet, the owner and master takes care of his servants even when they are sick and old. If they become involved in any difficulty, it is the owner who removes them from this difficulty. Ninthly, there is complete fear in the rule of a king, while there is mercy and grace in a master or owner. The Almighty shows extreme Divine Compassion and Mercy to His servants. (Tafseer Kabeer). All these reasons prove that it is better to recite Maalik instead of Malik.

Yaumud Deen: (The day of requital or judgment).

The word “Yaum” in Arabic signifies “day”. Obviously, time within a day is determined by the movement of the sun and since there would be no sun on that

day, this would mean either age or moment. This verse would therefore signify that the Almighty would be the complete Master or Owner of that day or He would be the Owner or Master of all the events that take place at that moment.

There are two meanings of the word “Deen” دين. It can firstly mean decision or retribution and secondly, a religion or a certain religion. In this regard we can say that this is called “deen” because on that specific day, the Divine decision would be made about every follower of every religion. We see that in the world, everyone seems to live side by side, those who are religious or seem to possess a religion and those who are irreligious. One cannot make out who is on the right path and who is on the wrong path, however on that day, everything would become apparent.

Another reason why it is called “deen” is perhaps because every person adopts a certain religion thinking that perhaps through that specific religion, he would achieve salvation. It must be remembered that every person belonging to whatever religion accepts the reality of that special day and everyone has accepted a religion thinking that perhaps it is through that religion they would achieve success even though some have accepted the wrong path and others have accepted the right path. Perhaps, it has been called “Deen” is because on that special day, no worldly acts would be of any benefit to anyone. If this word signifies retribution, then it means that on that day, every action performed would be determined on that day. In this world, we may commit whatever we want; there is no retribution, unlike on that day. On that day, there is no action except retribution.

We can take the example of a student. He may study during the rest of the year or he may not study. No one would question him on whether he has studied or not, however, when the day of final exams arrive, only on that day, those who have studied would succeed and those who have not would dismally fail. We can also compare it to a farmer who grows his crop. In the field there are many things

which grow. All of them receive the same water and same sunlight, however, when the day of actual harvesting arrives, on that day the farmer throws away the waste and only accepts the good crop. The world is a place where we sow a seed and the day of judgement is where we will harvest our effort.

Important point:

We know that the Almighty is the Divine Owner and Master of everything, why therefore has He specifically mentioned that He is the Owner and Master of the Day of Judgement? There are many reasons for this:

Firstly, when an owner intends to show his power and might, he would always point to something in his ownership which is mighty and powerful. If a King wishes to display his rule, although he may rule a small country, yet he would say that he is the king of a certain kingdom or capital etc. This does not mean that he does not rule other parts of his kingdom; however, this is only intended to display his supreme power. This is the reason that the Almighty has being called the Lord of the Kaba and the Lord of Mohammed.

Secondly, within this world, there are many people who display their might and power and consider themselves as the ruler and king of a certain place, however, on the day of Judgement, no person would be able to claim kingship or ultimate rule except the Almighty.

It is stated that on that day, the Almighty would ask, “Who is the master of this day?” **لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ** *lima nil Mulk ul Yuam*. And since no one would answer, He Himself would reply, “It is only Allah, Who is One and All Powerful” **لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ** *Lil laahil waahidil qah haar*.

Thirdly, when you point to something which belongs to someone powerful, that specific object also gains eminence and status. In the same way, people would point to a mansion belonging to someone powerful. By pointing to this day, the Almighty is impressing upon us that this Day would solely belong to Him; hence

the greatness of this day is being impressed upon the creation. By impressing on us the stature of this day, the Almighty also wishes to remind us to perform good deeds and refrain from bad deeds.

Important point:

The Hindus on the other hand believe that this world is a place for action and retribution and no other place. They believe that when a person dies and if he was a bad person he is transformed into something bad and if he was a good person, he would be transformed into a good shape. They say that this is applicable to animals, which in previous life were humans. However, because of their bad and evil deeds, they have now come back as animals. However, the Muslims believe that this world is a place of action or deeds while the hereafter is a place where one would receive either reward or punishment. Of course there are certain acts within the world which does bring about certain rewards and hardship such as caring for ones parents. If one cares for them, one is comfortable in life and if one does not, then one is disgraced in this world. However, it must be remembered that this is result and not retribution. It can be compared to a person getting rewarded by his employer or a person getting jail for his misdeeds. These are not retribution for all his deeds or misdeeds. We know that punishment only commences after a court case.

This belief of the Hindus is quite strange and totally against logical thinking. If we accept this belief, and if the person is transformed into another being, whether he receives kindness or punishment, how would he remember his past deeds? If a person becomes poor and destitute because in his previous life he was a sinner and he was wealthy, how would he remember that he was rich or because of what specific deeds of his, he is now poor and destitute? This type of belief makes no sense whatsoever. At the same time, if these people believe that people transform into animals and vice versa, then the quantity of each creation should be forever increasing or decreasing. Yet, we see that the number of animals is increasing on a daily basis. Go ahead and count only the ants and this would become apparent.

An interesting story is told of a debate between Hadrat Moulana Naeemudeen Muradabadi – may Allah be pleased with him – and a Hindu priest called Ram Chandar. The Moulana asked this priest as to whether there was someone among the Hindus who was so pure and sinless and had died. The Hindu priest replied that this would be the main Hindu priest who according to him had committed no sins. The Muslim then asked him that if this was the case, in which form this Hindu priest would reappear in this world. The Hindu priest replied that this person would appear as a King. The Moulana replied that there is no one more filled with anxiety and pressure than a king. Every day he is concerned about his kingdom and everything that goes with controlling a large empire. The Moulana then replied, “This is extremely unjust. For a man according to you to have passed a pious life and then to be rewarded with such stress and anxiety?” Since the Hindu priest was answerless, he then replied that perhaps, this head Hindu priest has reappeared as a devout and secluded person who has no connection with the world. The Moulana then replied, “This is also very unfair. The recluse in India walks around with no shoes, no hat, sometimes no clothes and does not even have food and drink for many days. Don’t you think that this is an unfair reward for someone who has been so pious?” The Hindu priest again was speechless. He continued to try and find something which lived in the world without stress and anxiety and could not find one. Finally, the Moulana replied, “Sir! I can advice you on what shape or thing the Hindu priest should adopt when he reappears in this world.” When the Hindu priest asked him, he replied, “Perhaps he should reappear as a pimp because the work is done by someone else, and he would enjoy the spoils and money without having to do anything.” Obviously, the Hindu priest was angry and speechless at the same time and kept looking at the Moulana. The Moulana then advised him to stop having this nonsensical belief and accept the truth of Islam. Islam has clearly defined the world is where you sow and the hereafter is where you reap either the reward or the punishment. When we look at the world, we will see that sometimes a person is rich and sometimes he becomes poor. The state of a person never remains the same. How therefore can

a person remain in one state when he reappears in this world? This belief therefore of the Hindus is completely baseless and illogical.

Question:

If the Almighty is the Owner and Master of the Day of Judgment, does it mean He is not the Owner and Master of anything else?

Answer:

We have already answered this question in the above discussion.

Question:

When you people accept that the Prophets would be able to intercede for you on the day of Judgment, this belief is completely contrary to this verse. The people who are Bidatis perform the Niyaz and Nazr for these Prophets and Saints because they believe that these people would help them on the Day of Judgment. This belief is completely Shirk.

Answer:

The idea to believe in the Absolute Authority of the Almighty and still to believe that these pious and close servants of the Almighty would help and assist us is not contrary to Islam. We do not believe that these pious servants of the Almighty would help us on the day of Judgment because they are also the owners of this day; we believe that they would help and assist us because they are the special servants of the Almighty who have been given a special status by Him on that day. Their supplication that day would certainly be accepted. If you claim wrongly that we believe that these special servants of the Almighty would own that day exclusively, what then would be the meaning of our belief in intercession? We believe in intercession simply because we know that the True Owner and Master of that day is the Almighty and these servants of the Almighty would only intercede once they have been given permission by the Almighty. We will insha Allah discuss this fully in the Ayatul Kursi and I have also discussed this in my book entitled "Shaan-e-Habeebur Rahman".

Verse No. 4

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٤﴾

We worship You alone, and beg You alone for help.

The connection between this verse and the one before is in a few ways. Before this, the Almighty had been describing His Divine Benediction, His Divine Power and His Greatness. The purpose was to encourage mankind to worship their Creator and Lord. The reason is quite obvious in that mankind would normally worship a Being who showers favours upon them and for whom they have fear. Previous to this, mankind was encouraged to worship the Creator and he was being lead in this direction. However, in this specific verse, he has now being commanded and instructed to worship his Creator.

Another important point is that the Almighty has mentioned five Divine Names and Attributes prior to this. They are Allah, Rabb, Rahman, Raheem and Maalik. In this way, it has been indicated that He is Allah, He has also sustained us, therefore He is also Rabb, since He has also hidden our sins and transgressions, He is Rahman, since we have asked him for forgiveness for our transgression and He has forgiven us, He is also Rahmeen, since creation is in His control and the day of retribution is still to come and He would be the Divine Owner of this, He is also Maalik. Therefore, creation should worship him as servants normally do and only He is entitled to be worshipped because only He, it is who possesses such Divine Attributes.

Another explanation is that man possesses three states or is found within three conditions. Time which has passed, the present and the future and in all three stages, man is solely reliant on His Creator. When man was not present, the Almighty brought him into existence. When man was not able to sustain himself, it is the Almighty who gave him sustenance. This is the reason why the Divine

Names, Allah and Rabb have been used. In like manner, in every state and condition, man is in need of the Almighty which is why He has mentioned the Divine attributes of Ar Rahman and ar Raheem. In the same way, within the grave and during the Day of Judgement, man would rely on his Creator since He is the Master and Owner of that day as He has mentioned by using the Divine Attribute Maalik, therefore, through these words, man is completely reliant on His Creator. Therefore, it is being clearly explained that since you have always needed Him and that you will always need Him, you should only worship Him.

Commentary:

The Ulama explain that from this verse, the meaning and style of His Divine advice has now changed. Before this, the Divine Names and Attributes have been explained but now, His creation has also been mentioned. In like manner, now the attributes of His servants are being explained. The first word in this context is “Iyya ka” and the second word is “Na’budu”. The word Iyya ka has been presented to indicate “absolute”. In other words, “only you”. There is no doubt that the Almighty is Divine and Immortal and has always been, while as creation, we have been created later on and are only mortal, therefore as far as sequence is concerned, it is only proper that He should be mentioned first and His creation thereafter.

It also educates man that whenever he mentions the Creator, he should mention the Creator first and mentions himself thereafter and that man should only worship the Almighty strictly for the sake that He is the Divine Creator so as to achieve His Divine Pleasure and that man should not worship Him merely to show others.

A person who performs worship or performs it as a show, he is not a true worshipper of the Almighty, instead he is a worshipper of that thing or person whom he wishes to impress or show off to. It is said that there once a pious servant of the Almighty who used to weep a lot when he used to stand up for

salah. I then asked him the reason for this and he replied, “I have no idea whether I am true and honest in the performance of this salah or not because I am uttering ‘Iyya ka na’budu’ and if there is a smallest amount of untruth in my heart or falsehood, then the Almighty would declare to me that I am a liar. He would declare, ‘O disgraceful man! You are standing in a masjid in front of Me with your hands folded and still you are speaking lies to Me. You are uttering Iyya ka na’budu with your tongue and yet, you worship something else in your heart!’”. We pray that the Almighty make us sincere in this declaration.

The word Iyya ka has been used to signify that one is addressing the Almighty. In other words, we need to impress in our minds that the Almighty is ever Present, we are watching Him or He is watching us. Therefore the direct address is being used. In other words, prior to this, the Divine Attributes were spoken and because of the blessing of these Divine Names, the servant has now presented himself in the Divine Court of the Almighty and is speaking to the Almighty directly. When we spoke about the Divine Being and His Attributes, we spoke in the third sense, however, now there is direct conversation between the creation and His Creator.

Important point:

It must be borne in mind that to speak to anyone within the salah is completely impermissible. If some does this, his salah would be nullified immediately. However, within the salah, one is only permitted to address two entities directly. Obviously, the first is the Creator and secondly, the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him! When we address the Almighty, we say “Iyya ka” and when we address the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, we say “As salaamu alay ka ayyu han Nabiyyu.” From this we come to realise that as a person is convinced that his Creator is ever watchful, in like manner, he must also remember that his Prophet is also watching him all the time. As we intend to please the Almighty, in the same way, we must always try to please the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. We

see that the blessed Companions made sure that they respected the command of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – even while they were in salah!

The word “na’budu” has been derived from the word “Abd” which signifies a state of humility and humbleness. This is the reason that a common road in the Arabic language has been described as “Tareeqa Ma’bad” because it is under the feet of everyone who passes over it. (Tafseer Kabeer). In a technical sense, this has been derived from the words “Ibaadah” or “Uboodah”. The word Ibaadah would be a word from which the word “Aabid” has been derived and from the word Uboodah, the word Abd has been derived (Tafseer Ruhul Bayan). All these meanings indicate that we wish to worship You or wish to become your worshippers.

The word Abd has been used in the Holy Quran to describe four different states. One is a state of being creation, the second is a state of being a servant, third is a state of being obedient and the fourth is a state of being completely immersed in the remembrance of the Almighty such as when the incident of Meraj is mentioned.

In Surah Bani Israel, verses 3 – 5, the Almighty declares:

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا ﴿٣﴾

O You the offspring of those whom We bore with Noah. No doubt. He was a great thankful bond-man.

وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ

عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤﴾

And We revealed to the children of Israel in the Book that certainly you shall create mischief in the earth twice and necessarily you shall be proud excessively.

فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ أُولَٰئِهِمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَا أُولِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُوا خِلَالَ

الدِّيَارِ ۖ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولًا ۝

Then when the promise of first time came to them, We sent against you Our bondmen as the strong warriors, then they entered into the cities for your search, and it was a promise to be fulfilled.

In reality, the word “Abd” describes the noblest state of a creation. This is the reason that in the Kalima or article of faith, the word “Abduhu” is mentioned. For a person to be a true servant of the Almighty, he needs to be free of pretence and deceit. A person should feel pleasure in serving His Creator. Another condition of being a true servant is that a person should also love and revere the pious and beloved servants of Allah. From the scholar, one receives knowledge, from the writer, one receives the art of reading, from the poet, one receives poetry, however, from being in the company of the pious, one receives the art of truly serving and worshipping the Creator!

In a technical sense, the meaning of ibaadah is to worship someone with the intention that, that being is one’s creator. As long as one does not have this intention, then worship in a true sense is incomplete and would not be considered as ibaadah. If we look at an idol worshipper, he also stands in front of a stone and we also stand in front of a stone which is the Kaba, however, the former is considered a Mushrik and Muslims are considered as people who believe in One divine Creator. The Hindus also have this complain as to why they are being considered as Muskhriks when they worship Ram etc and Muslims also accept Prophets and Saints. The major difference is that these Hindus consider these

idols as a Creator while Muslims consider these Prophets and Saints special servants of the Almighty and not a Creator.

Aside from this, there are many forms of worship or ibaadah such as salah, fasting, hajj, zakah etc. As a matter of fact, it must be remembered that any deed performed with the intention of pleasing the Almighty is to be considered as a form of worship and ibaadah. If a person cares for his children with the intention of pleasing his Creator, that act itself is a form of worship and he would certainly be rewarded for this. In like manner, there are many ways of becoming a true servant of the Almighty. If one is completely pleased with whatever the Almighty is pleased with, if one is grateful for whatever the Almighty has given him and is patient with whatever trial and difficulties come to him, all of these are included in the meaning of the word “Abd”.

Another important point to remember is that in this verse, a singular pronoun is not used but rather a plural. The word “I” is not used but rather the word “we”. What is the reason for this? The reason is that when a slave stands in the court of the Almighty, he signifies by this word that he has not come alone, neither does he present his worship alone, but rather he is also with the other servants of the Almighty which would include the Prophets, the Saints and other pious people. In this manner, the servant is indicating to the Almighty that even if his worship is not acceptable, at least with the barakah and wasila of these other pious servants, his worship should be accepted because a buyer of precious goods would not refuse to accept other items which are inferior within that parcel.

The jurists declare that when a person mixes good and not so good items in one parcel and sells them, and the buyer has agreed to it, thereafter, the purchaser cannot keep those items which are good and return those items which are not as good. He has to either accept all of them or refuse to accept any of them. It cannot be that everyone’s ibaadah in the Divine Court would be totally rejected. It is

hoped that through these pious and blessed servants of the Almighty, even we as sinners, our ibaadah would be able to achieve success in that Divine Court.

Issue:

Even if a person is performing his salah alone, he should still make this intention all the while remembering that before him, many blessed servants of the Almighty have also performed this salah or are now at this moment performing this salah and that he is including himself in that blessed company. In like manner, if a person cares for his children or works somewhere with the intention that this is the Divine Command of the Almighty, then this act of his is considered as Ibaadah. He should have this thought and intention in his mind that the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – also cared for his children and that many Prophets and saints also worked for a living and he is following their blessed example. In this way also, the use of plural would also be applicable. It must also be remembered that the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – also performed these tasks so that these acts would also become a Sunnah. Therefore, when a person performs the salah alone, even then, he would read “Iyya ka na’budu” because there are many blessed servants who have performed this same salah before him and there many who are performing this same salah at this moment. With him also, the Angels are also worshipping the Almighty. Therefore, even though he may seem alone, yet there is numerous creations who are also with him. It is for this reason that when a person greets someone with salam, he uses the word “kum” at the end, in other words “As salaamo alaykum” which is a plural because there are many Angels who also accompany a person.

Issue:

From this, we come to realize that a person should strive to perform the salah with congregation because worship itself should be a reason of a Muslim gathering or congregation. There are many times when an act of worship of

someone would remain incomplete if he has not performed the ibaadah with congregation. This point should be kept in mind.

Sufi commentary:

The Sufis believe that only that act of worship is to be considered as complete which is performed with the intention of pleasing the Almighty. They believe that if one performs worship with the intention of acquiring paradise or for fear of Hell, then this is a type of personal deceit. This is the reason that the word “Iyya ka” has been used. In other words, this worship is only for You and nothing else. This is the reason that when one makes the intention, one says “For the sake of Allah” in ones intention, one does not say “for the sake of paradise or hell”. If one makes the intention that one is doing so to achieve paradise or to save oneself from Hell, he would not be able to see the result of his ibaadah except only after the Day of Judgment because this would be decided only then. However, if one performs the ibaadah with the intention of only pleasing the Almighty, he would see the result of his intention right now and this is the ultimate success.

The essence of worship

It is said that the essence of worship is that a person should move away from pride and deceit and come towards happiness and contentment. A person should move away from the darkness of the world and come towards enlightenment and Noor. The possessions of the world are full of darkness and true religion is Noor. There is anxiety and stress in the world, while there is peace and tranquillity in worship.

In the Quran the Almighty addresses His beloved Prophet by declaring that, “We are aware that you are pained by the words of the disbelievers” the cure for this is: (Surah Hjr- 97,98,99)

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

And We do indeed know that your heart straitens at what they say.

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

Then praising your Lord, speak glory of Him and be of those who prostrate.

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ ﴿٩٩﴾

And remain worshipping your Lord till death comes to you.

From this, we come to know that ibaadah is a form of removing the stress and anxiety of this world. Therefore, that form of ibaadah which does not have this sincere intention is an ibaadah which has no essence or soul. From this we come to realize that anything which makes the Beloved happy is a form of ibaadah and that action which displeases Him, is a sin.

The action displayed by Hadrat Ali – may Allah be pleased with him – during the Khaiber incident is something to be remembered. When he missed his Asar salah so that it would not disturb the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – was the true essence of worship. If refusing to serve the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – was ibaadah, then Hadrat Ali – may Allah be pleased with him – would have refused to serve him. He knew that serving the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – was a form of ibaadah. Why is it that we do not perform salah during sunrise? The reason is that this is displeasing to the Almighty and His beloved Prophet.

Question:

If the Almighty is Divinely Independent as you claim, why does He require our worship? Why has He commanded that we worship Him? Why should we be burdened by this worship?

Answer:

The Almighty has absolutely no need for our worship. We are in need of this. Only that person would be fit or entitled to sleep on a clean bed whose body or clothes are clean. A person who is unclean and dirty, you would never allow such a person to sleep on a clean bed. In like manner, paradise which is the creation of the Almighty is a place which is pure and clean and obviously, only that person is entitled to enter it who himself is pure and clean. The affairs of the world and its mundane activities have a way of dirtying the heart of a person. Worship should be compared to a water of mercy which cleanses the heart. Worship is the trust which cleans and shines the body and obviously if the worship is not able to cleanse a person, then the person or the mirror becomes unclean and worthless. When a person is surrounded by numerous enemies, the only time he can protect himself is if he himself is strong or he is surrounded by powerful people. When we are surrounded by Satan himself who uses our carnal desires against us, it is vitally important that we protect ourselves by creating a greater and more powerful contact with the Almighty.

The soul can be compared to a traveller who wishes to return home. When we make the Zikr of the Almighty, the heart feels content and at peace because it feels like it is listening to stories from home.

Incident:

It is said that there was a severe wound on the leg of Hadrat Abdullah ibn Zubair—may Allah be pleased with him. It was so severe that his leg had to be amputated. However, due to the severe pain of amputation, he was much stressed. Amazingly, while he was in salah, his leg was amputated and he felt absolutely no pain whatsoever!

A question from Hindus:

The Muslims claim that they are worshipping the Divine Creator and they are truly worshipping only One Creator. Yet, they bow their heads in front of the Kaba which is also a piece of stone. Therefore, they are also worshipping a stone.

If the Muslims claim that they do not worship the Kaba, but merely pointing in the same direction. What is the difference between them and the Hindu? After all, the Hindu also claims that he does not worship these idols but is only using them as a mark of direction and nothing else.

Answer:

This has already been answered in the discussion about the intention which one makes before the salah. One makes the intention that he is performing this salah for the Almighty pointing in the direction of the Kaba. From this, it becomes clear that worship is certainly not performed for the Kaba but for the Almighty. The words of the intention clearly prove this. If worship was for the Kaba which is merely a piece of stone, then Muslims would be facing wherever the Kaba was to be found. If a piece of cloth which adorns the Kaba is given to someone, that person does not prostrate to that piece of cloth. If the entire Kaba or part of the Kaba was placed in any other part of the world, no true Muslim would ever face towards it. The Hindus however, are different; they only face the direction of their idols. Where you place an idol of theirs, they face that direction. From this we realise that they only worship their idols. The Muslims do not worship the Kaba. If a Muslim is travelling and does not know the direction of the Kaba, he is allowed to face any direction and perform his salah.

وَإِلَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٢﴾

And You alone we beg for help

There are a few ways in which this ayah is related to the previous verse because there are few subjects which are discussed in Surah Fatiha. Firstly, praising the Almighty, secondly, to publicise one's role as His servant and thirdly, to supplicate to Him. Prior to this, first two subject matters have already been discussed and now we move on to the third subject.

However, before one makes a Dua, one needs to have a wasila, hence, prior to this, worshipping the Divine Creator has been mentioned and only after this has the Dua been mentioned. We supplicate to Him in this manner, “O Allah! We supplicate to You and through the wasila of our worship, we make Dua to You.” (Tafseer Azeezi). This is the reason that when we have any difficulty, we give charity, perform salah and then ask the Almighty so that these acts of good would become our wasila and a means of our Dua being accepted.

Import point:

From this, we come to realize that it is necessary that we use the wasila of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – in all our dua because to present oneself in the court of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is also a form of worshipping the Almighty and every type of worship is a means of wasila in every dua we make.

The Almighty declares in Surah Maida, verse 35 that:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجْهْدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

'O believers! fear Allah and seek the means of approach to Him and strive in His way, haply you may get prosperity.

Prior to this, we had proclaimed to the Almighty that we worship only Him and now we are asking Him to assist and help us in making sure that this worship which we have performed becomes complete. In other words, to start something is from our side and to make it succeed or to complete it can only come from Him. At the same time, we must understand that there are a few outer preconditions of salah which needs to be completed without which, the salah would remain incomplete such as Wudu etc. At the same time, there are also certain inner preconditions which need to be complete also which if not fulfilled

means that the worship presented in the Divine Court would not be accepted. These include such traits as sincerity in ones heart and to make sure that one's heart is free of conceit and pride etc.

We know that these outer preconditions are things which are within the control of a human; however, the inner preconditions are things which remain outside the control of people. For the heart of the Muslim to remain present and focused in salah, for the heart to remain clean and pure, seems to be things which are nearly impossible for people to control. It is for this reason that we have firstly uttered, "Iyya ka na'budu" which means that we worship You and secondly, we have declared "Iyya ka nasta'een". The first would be applicable to the outer preconditions and the second would apply to the inner preconditions which need to be fulfilled and for which we ask the Divine Help of Allah for. In like manner, we had firstly claimed that we are worshipping Him and now we are asking Him to make sure that our humble worship safely reaches His August Court and is accepted through His Divine Grace. After all, there are many reasons which appear which makes our worship null and void and we are now asking Allah to make certain that our efforts reach safely in His Divine Court. There are many things which become obstacles in our path when we worship the Almighty such as our carnal desires, the mischief of the satan, worldly obstacles and evil thoughts etc. At the same time, there are certain inner things which are required when we worship. They are such things as soul, faith, belief, recital of the Quran etc. We can see from this that when we are worshipping the Almighty, it is as if two armies are facing each other.

Hence, this is the reason that we supplicate to the Almighty to help us in this battle against the satan and we are clearly asking for His Divine assistance.

Commentary:

The Ulama have explained that in this context. It would either mean that we ask for His Divine Help only in worship or in every form of task and duty. In answer to this, they have declared that the latter meaning is more appropriate. In other

words, as we ask Him for help in our salah, in the same way we ask Him for help in everything we do. The reason is that the Muslim is not an idol worshipper who asks Him for certain things and asks someone else for other needs. The Muslim declares by these words that he solely and exclusively has trust in the Almighty and that the Divine Help of the Almighty is true help. From this verse, the Muslim is being taught that he should solely trust in Allah who is the True Divine Helper. If he does receive help from creation at times, still he needs to remember that ultimately, this help has come from the Almighty. Everything else is His servants and a means for receiving His Divine help.

We can take the example of electricity which helps in many ways. It helps the globe to come on, it helps the fan to spin, it starts a machine etc. All this may look like the wire connected to the machine or globe is helping these items, yet, the actual power is coming from the central power station. In like manner, whosoever has helped us until this moment, if he did not have the power to help or if there was no mercy in his heart, we would have not helped us. This power and mercy which this person had was something which was placed there by the Almighty. Therefore, the actual help comes from the Almighty and at the same time, to refuse to accept the Almighty and rely solely and exclusively on someone else is total ignorance.

Sufi commentary:

The Sufis declare that at times, they reach such an elevated state that when they arrive in the Divine Court of the Almighty; they remain silent and do not ask for anything so that even the words of their Dua do not become an obstacle in this amazing state of theirs.

The story is told of Nabi Ebrahim – peace be upon him – when he was about to be placed in the fire by the tyrant Nimroud. At that moment, Jibraeel Ameen approached him and asked him whether he had any request. Nabi Ebrahim – peace be upon him – replied that there was nothing which he required from

Jibraeel. Jibraeel Ameen then asked him whether he had any need which he wanted to ask the Almighty, he replied:

حسبي من سوالي علمه بحالي

Hasbi min sawaali ilmihi bi haali

“He Himself knows and for Him to know is sufficient, what therefore is the need for me to ask?”

All Praise is due to Allah, this is that special station of a pious servant of Allah, where they even restrict themselves from asking for anything. This is indicating to the true meaning of the verse, “Iyya ka nasta’een”. We ask only You for help.” We must also understand that this intimate state of the saints, do not remain in every moment of their life.

It is said that when we are faced with difficulty and calamity and to refrain from asking at that sensitive moment, all the while being happy with what the Almighty has decreed is true worship. This is the reason that no one pleaded to the Almighty to remove the trial and difficulty which was to befall Hadrat Imam Husain – may Allah be pleased with him – during the coming days in Karbala. When a person pronounces his servitude to the Almighty, he should ask everything from the Almighty no matter how small or big it may look.

In Tafseer Kabeer and Tafseer Ruhul Bayan, it is stated that when Nabi Ebrahim – peace be upon him – practised on the true essence of the verse “Iyya ka nasta’een”, the hot burning fire of Nimroud transformed into a soft and sweet orchard. Therefore, when a Muslim reads this with sincerity, the fire of Hell would not be able to harm him in any way. It is said that when a true believer passes over the Pul siraat, the bridge which passes over Hell and leads to Paradise, the fire of Hell will urge him to travel quickly because the light and Noor of his faith would be decreasing the strength of the fire of Hell. It is also reported that when certain people from paradise would go to into Hell to remove certain sinful Muslims, the fire of Hell would have no effect on them.

A question posed by Deobandis

When you have declared that you will only ask and seek the help of the Almighty, why therefore do you ask the Prophets and Saints for help and assistance?

Answer:

To ask the pious and blessed servants of the Almighty for help is to actually ask the Almighty for help! You must understand that the Divine Help of the Almighty comes in both forms. They come directly from Him and they also appear through others. This help which comes from these blessed servants also come from the Almighty. The Quran itself has also asked you to ask for help from something other than Allah!

In surah Baqarah, verse 45, the Almighty has declared that:

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ إِنَّهَا الْكَبِيرَةُ ۖ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

And seek help in patience and prayer, and surely, the prayer is hard indeed save to those who lean towards Me with their hearts.

In Surah Mohammed, verse 7, the Almighty again declares:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ ﴿٧﴾

'O believers! If you will help the religion of Allah, Allah will help you and will make your feet firm.

In the above verse, we clearly see that even though the Almighty is Divinely Independent, yet, He is seeking the help of the Muslims! In the same way, if we ask people who are more pious and close to the Almighty for help and assistance, what wrong have we done?

Nabi Esa – peace be upon him – also asked his followers for help in the following manner:

Then again when Esa – peace be upon him – found infidelity in them, he asked, “Who have become my helpers towards Allah”. The disciples said, ‘We are the helpers of the religion of God; We have believed in Allah and bear you witness that we are Muslims.

In like manner, the Quran has also declared in Surah Maida, verse 2, that:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّوا شَعِيرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا

أَمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَتَتَّعُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرِضُونًا ۖ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ

فَاصْطَادُوا ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن

تَعْتَدُوا ۚ وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝

'O believers! Do not make lawful the symbols of Allah, and nor the sacred months, and nor the sacrifices sent to the Sacred House (Haram). and nor those bearing signs in their necks, and nor the property and honour of those who repair to the sacred House, seeking the grace and pleasure of their Lord. And when you put off the pilgrim's garb, then you may hunt. And let not the enmity of any people, as they had prevented you from the Sacred Mosque incite you to commit excessiveness. And help each other in righteousness and piety and help not one another in sin and transgression and remain fearing Allah.

Undoubtedly, the torment of Allah is severe.

In brief, the Quran has described for us many occasions where help was sought from the servants of Allah and also commands us to seek help from these entities. It is interesting that a special group of companions were actually called Ansaar, the meaning of which is “helpers”. If to ask help from anyone besides Allah is Haraam, then this title of the companions itself would have to be changed! How is this possible when the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – himself gave these blessed people this title? Even the Holy Quran has mentioned them by this title! The true Christians or the ones who truly followed the teaching of Nabi Esa – peace be upon him – have been referred to in the Holy Quran as “Nasaara” which itself indicates that they were helpers of Nabi Esa – peace be upon him. If we had to compile the number of Ahadith which encourage and command us to seek the help of other creation, we would be able to fill volumes in this regard. If you require more help in this regard, I suggest you refer to my book “Ja’al Haq”. Even the Doebandis seek the help of the police, the court, the government etc in their daily life. By this definition of theirs, even they would cease to be considered as Muslims. Madressah Deoband actually survives through the help of people. In brief, from his birth, man is reliant on creation for help and assistance. He is helped by a nurse when he is born, he is then helped by his mother as he matures, when he is sick, his doctor helps him, when he has a financial need, he seeks the help of rich and wealthy people so that he may survive, through the help of his religious teachers, he has been blessed with faith and religion. Through the help of his close relatives, when he dies, he is bathed, shrouded and then buried. Even while he is in the grave, the Muslims in the world continue to help and assist him with their prayers and Dua. When all this is a state of reality, how can anyone say that to seek the help of someone other than Allah is Shirk?

When a person is asked to seek help from Allah, this is the essence of the word help, in other words, everything comes from Him and when a person is asked to seek the help of others, this is also Divine Help, however the Almighty has used someone else to deliver His Divine Help to you. In this manner, all the Quranic

verses and Ahadith are in complete agreement. We would like to mention that to understand the Quran, we require the Noor of faith or Imaan and the glasses which is blessed in Madina shareef.

Another question:

It is permissible to ask someone who is alive for help, yet, to ask someone who is dead for help is certainly shirk.

Answer:

In this specific verse, there is no difference between those who are alive and those who have passed away which is mentioned. In the previous verse, it has been said that “Iyya ka na’budu”. In other words, worship is strictly for Allah, which clearly means that to worship someone else whether they are dead or alive is not permissible. In the same way, this should have been mentioned or indicated in the verse “Iyya ka nas ta’een” yet, this is not mentioned. It must be remembered that to seek help can be done in two ways. The first is physical help and the second is internal help or spiritual help. To give someone water, to give them bread are help which is considered as physical help. However, to ask a pious and blessed servant of Allah for assistance, or to ask him to bless you with a pious child or to ask him to bless you with entering Paradise as the blessed companions used to ask the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – or to ask them to protect you against the fire of Hell or bless you with guidance, all these are considered as spiritual help.

When a person dies, the bodies of only certain people perish. However, the strength of the soul increases. When a person dies, he is able to see everyone who is participating in his burial and is even able to listen to the lightest of sounds. When a soul is able to help and assist in this world, when it passes away, that soul is able to help and assist even more. Look at the incident of Meraj. It was Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – who helped the Muslims by decreasing the number of salah which is to be read on a daily basis. It must be borne in mind that this help of Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – was given nearly three thousand years

after he had left this world! Even today, when a person accepts the Prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him, he becomes a Muslim. Therefore, even today, people are being helped by the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him.

During the time of the Bani Israeel, they got help against their enemies with the wasila and barakah of the holy relics of previous Prophets. The Almighty declares in surah Baqarah, verse 248 that:

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ

مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ

مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

And their prophet said to them: 'the sign of his king ship is that there would come to you an ark in which there is tranquility of hearts from your Lord, and there are something left of the relics of the respectable Moosa and the respectable Haroon, the angels raising it would bring. No doubt, in it there is great sign for you if you believe

The blessed companions used to achieve health by drinking water from the blessed clothes and hair of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – which they used to rinse. Many of these Deobandis and their elders have also asked for help from the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – which they refuse to acknowledge. Mamood Hasan Deobandi who had done the translation of four parts of the Holy Quran and which was completed by Shabir Ahmed Usmani explains under the verse “Iyya ka nas ta’een” that, “To seek the help of a special servant of Allah to achieve the mercy of Allah and to believe that he is not the actual being who helps (but

it is Allah) and to openly ask such a person for help, this is completely permissible. This help is actually asking Allah for help”. A further discussion on this has been presented in the book “Ja’al Haq”. Ultimately, the same explanation of this verse would have to be accepted which we have explained.

A question presented by Hindus

From this, we come to realize that this Quran is the not the word of the Almighty but the word of creation. If this was the word of the Creator, would he worship anyone and would He ask anyone for help?

Answer:

A detailed explanation on this subject has already been given. Once a Hindu had also asked a Muslim named Khalil Das Banarasi this same question. He gave the same answer which I have already given in these pages. He then challenged the Hindu priest to prove that this book of the Hindus which is called the Vedas is actually the word of Allah. He also promised him that he would give him a reward of one thousand rupees if he could do so. He also clearly told him that nowhere in the entire Vedas has the Almighty being mentioned by his Divine Name. The only names which are mentioned are such ridiculous names as “Aum, Baghwaan, Paratmah, Shakti etc”. He even explained that this word Aum actually means a musical sound or musical beat which the Hindus have actually accepted as the name of Allah.

However, in the Holy Quran, the Almighty has declared in Surah Waqi’a, verse 80 that:

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

It is a sending down from the Lord of all Being.

He then challenged this Hindu that he would prove from their own so called Holy Book who had been the author of this book which they were calling the Vedas. He then read a section from this same book, the translation of which was,

“O Baghwaan, I am the author of this book and my name is Guatam, please give me strength to complete this task.” This so called Holy book of the Hindus itself is clearly declaring that it is not the word of the Almighty but something which has been authored by man. Suffice to say that the Hindu priest was speechless after this.

Verse No. 5

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٥﴾

Guide us in the straight path.

This verse is related to the previous verse in several ways. In the first verse, the Zikr of Allah was been performed and in this verse, one is asking for Divine Help. In other words, previous to this, there was no indication as what we needed, however, in this verse, a direct request is been made that we should be guided on the straight path. We also come to realize from this that we should seek the Divine Help of Allah in all our affairs whether it pertains to religious issues or worldly issues. This is the essence of all that which is noble and good.

Second relationship:

As we have said, previous to this, the Zikr of Allah was been performed and now we are asking Him for something. This proves that when we have completed His Zikr, we should always make Dua. This is one of the reasons why it is considered as Sunnah to make a Dua after salah. Thirdly, previously, we had clearly stated that we worship Allah and that we seek help from Him, now we are requesting Him to keep us on the right path. It could also mean that we request him to keep us steadfast on performing salah. It must not be that we perform our salah and after a few days, we abandon this important duty. We should continue to perform our salah, because this is the straight path.

Fourthly, after making His Zikr, we are asking Him to grant us the strength to perform salah in the right manner according to the straight path. In other words, that type or quality of salah which is acceptable in His Divine Court and which is also in between two extremes and in the manner in which His beloved and blessed servants had performed.

We are also asking Him to protect us against slackness when we become well off in the world and we are also asking Him for protection against laziness if the act of salah seems difficult to us. Fifthly, we also come to realize that after performing any ibaadah, we should ask for guidance, because without guidance, the ibaadah itself does not achieve its ultimate objective. We know that famous worshippers eventually became heretics such as Iblis, Bal'am ibn Baur etc. These people initially were serious and first class type of worshippers, however, thereafter, they moved away from the right path. In this verse, we are indicating that we are not people who gloat or show off about our salah, but rather, we ask the Divine Being for hidaayat and that we remain steadfast on guidance.

Commentary:

In this regard, the four important issues which have been presented will be analysed. The word "Ih di" is derived from guidance or direction. The meaning of which is to guide, to know the ultimate destination, or to give a sign. Guidance in this regard is of two types. The first is to show someone the road and the second is to make sure that that person arrives at his destination. It must also be remembered that in Arabic grammar, if the first meaning is intended than after the word guidance, one would find the words "Ilaa or Lam". None of these two words are to be found in this verse, hence, it clearly means that we are asking the Almighty to not only let us reach the straight path but to also give us the strength to make sure that we travel on this straight path.

We also know that there are many people who wish to misguide us on this path, hence, without Divine Help, it is impossible to remain on this path. At the same time, when we look at this verse, we clearly come to realize that we are not only asking for guidance for ourselves, but we are pleading to the Almighty to guide all of us.

There are a few points of wisdom in this. We know that since there is tremendous advantage in Zikr which is performed in a congregation, in like manner, that

Dua is more likely to be accepted which is made for everyone. The reason is because if the dua of one person is accepted, then it is hoped that the Dua of everyone is also accepted. This is the reason that one reads Durood shareef before and after every Dua.

It is through the Durood shareef, that one's Dua is accepted. When the Durood shareef is read, then it is hoped that the words which are in between are not rejected and that all the words within the Durood would also be accepted. (Tafseer Kabeer).

Another reason is that if only one person has received guidance and everyone else is misguided, then the life of that one single person who is on the right path would become extremely difficult simply because if he follows the others so as to please them, he himself would become misguided and if he remains steadfast, they would become his ardent enemies. In general, life would become very difficult for this person. It is therefore necessary for everyone to get guidance so that everyone would be successful in both worlds. (Tafseer Azeezi).

Thirdly, in the Hadith shareef, it is mentioned that you should seek a sinless tongue to make Dua for you. When the blessed companions asked the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – as to where they would find these sinless tongues, he replied, “Each one of you should make Dua for one another because your tongue is sinful only for you and not for others.” (Tafseer Kabeer). From this, we come to realize that the secret of Dua is to make Dua for everyone especially if you want that your Dua be accepted. We should sincerely raise our hands and implore the Almighty to guide all of us collectively.

It must also be remembered that guidance for a disbeliever is faith. For a believer, guidance is piety, for those who are already pious, guidance is piety in the superior sense, for those who are blessed, guidance is achieving the nearness of Allah and for those who extremely blessed, guidance for them is to reach intimate

closeness with the Almighty. When a disbeliever recites this verse, his dua is for guidance, when a sinful person reads this, his dua is for piety and when a pious person reads this, it is to ask for achieving closeness with the Almighty.

In this way, we clearly come to realize that the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – did not recite this verse because he was (Allah forbid) a sinful person. We have already explained how a piece of ordinary stone becomes priceless only when it goes through the process of cleaning.

The word “Siraat”. It is derived from the word “Sirtun” or صِرْط . The meaning of this is to swallow something. It is quite obvious in that a road seems to swallow a person as he travels on it like a person swallows a morsel of food. It must also be remembered that the word “Siraat” is only used to describe that type of road on which many people can travel on. It will not be used to describe that small and narrow pathway on which a few people would find it difficult to travel on. Since a dua is made for many people, hence the word “Siraat” has been used. The word siraat is also close in meaning to the words “Tareeqah or Sabeel”. However, in this verse, the word Siraat has been used so that the person can also importantly remember the Pul Siraat! In other words, a person is being made to remember that when he makes Dua, he should sincerely pray to the Almighty to make him travel on that straight and correct path so that this path of guidance would also enable him to cross the Pul Siraat with ease and comfort.

The word “Al Mustaqeem”. It is derived from the word Istiqaamat or استقامت. The meaning of this is to straighten. It is obvious that a straight path always leads someone quickly to his destination. A path which has bends and curves, sometimes do lead you, but it would only do so after tremendous difficulty and trouble or at times, it may not even lead you to your destination. Obviously, if the road is interrupted or damaged in between, there is no way that you would be able to travel any further.

The path of Kufr or disbelief is that path which would never allow you to arrive at your destination. The other path which is winding and bending is the path of other groups within the Muslims and which are not on the path of the Ahle Sunnah wa Jamaah. These would include those people such as the Shiah who insult the Ashaab and consider Hadrat Ali – may Allah be pleased with him – as the rightful Caliph after the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – or it would also include those Wahabis who had not themselves insulted the Almighty and His beloved Prophet in any way whatsoever. Even though these people would eventually enter Paradise, yet, they would only do so after severe trial and difficulty. In this dua, we are asking the Almighty for protection against travelling on both these roads.

Which path is Siraatal Mustaqeem?

This word encompasses numerous meanings. It can include religious beliefs, various types of worldly affairs, worship, good manners etc. In this manner, we are asking the Almighty to keep us on the right path even when it comes to our beliefs and our actions. The reason is that, there are three dimensions in this regard. The first is called Ifraat which is considered as excess, the second is referred to as Tafreet or complete openness and permissibility and the third is the middle path. On this middle path, there is no excess neither is there open permissibility to do as one wishes. Of all the religions, Islam is the only religion which is seen to have adopted the middle path.

When we inspect the religion of Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him, we see that it was extremely severe and strict. One had to give away one quarter of one's wealth as Zakah, any item which became impure had to be either cut off or burnt. No worship was allowed anywhere else except in places dedicated to worship. The forgiveness of a person was only accepted after tremendous punishment. However, the religion of Nabi Esa – peace be upon him – was different. There was a sense of complete freedom here. Alcohol and pork was permissible. When the religion of Islam was revealed, it was neither severe nor completely open in

its laws. Zakah became more manageable and that too, these laws became easier for people to follow which took into consideration the state of a person. A person was allowed to perform his worship whether it was in a masjid or an open field or anywhere which was clean. Major sins were forgiven if one made Dua with complete sincerity. The manner in which items could be cleaned if it became impure became easier and clothes were considered clean if it was merely cleaned with water etc. If water was not available, then one was permitted to perform dry ablution which is called Tayyamum. The consuming of alcohol or pork which ultimately creates shameful and disgraceful behaviour in any nation was banned and prohibited.

Religious beliefs

The path of the Ahle Sunnah wa Jamaah is the Siraatal Mustaqeem. It must be remembered that the misled group which called itself the “Jabariyyah” sect, considered a human to be completely helpless and powerless as a piece of stone. Another sect called the “Qadarriyyah” on the other hand, considered man to be completely independent and self sufficient without having the need for anyone. The Ahle sunnah on the other hand, has walked the middle path. They believe that man is helpless when it comes to his creation, but has the power to decide when it comes to the manner in which he earns his livelihood. This explanation would be discussed further when we discuss the topic of “Taqdeer” or predestination.

On the other side, we have the misled group which calls itself Shia. They are complete enemies of the blessed companions while the misled group which calls itself the Khaariji are complete enemies of the blessed Ahle Bait. However, the Ahle sunnah is a group which is completely different from these two. The blessed Ahle Bait is considered as the ship while the blessed companions are considered as the shining stars. With the result, the Khariji has abandoned the ship, while the Shia has turned their faces away from the guiding stars of Islam. In this way, the ships of both these groups have sunk. Only the Ahle Sunnah has succeeded.

In like manner, a group called the Chakra lawi have abandoned and refused to accept any Hadith shareef or even any laws of jurisprudence, while the Ghair Muqallid has refused to accept any Islamic jurisprudence whatsoever. The Deobandi has severed their relationship with the blessed Prophets and Saints and have gone against the Almighty and His beloved Prophet. They have even called the Almighty (Allah forbid) someone who can speak a lie! They even believe that the Prophet has no knowledge and that he is an ordinary human and have deemed every new good action as a sinful act. In this way, all these misled groups have adopted the path which leads to hell.

The Ahle Sunnah wa Jamaah on the other hand, has given each entity its due respect and reverence and this is the true Siraatal Mustaqeem. We make dua that Almighty Allah keeps us on this straight path. As far as deeds and actions are concerned, only those actions are considered as actions of the Siraatal Mustaqeem which have been taught to us by the Quran and Islam. Even actions and behaviour within the house of a person has to be middle of the road.

If a person is so busy in ibaadah and performing worship, that he completely ignores the rights of his family or if he is so busy in wordily activities and occupation that he ignores remembering the Almighty, both of these people are not on the Siraatal Mustaqeem. This is the reason that the Hadith shareef clearly explains that one should sleep at night and at the same time also not forget to worship Allah. A Muslim is commanded to keep fast, but also make sure that he breaks his fast through Iftaar. It has been stated that our eyes have a right over us, our wives have a right over us, our guests have a right over us etc etc. The eminent Muhadditheen have also created a chapter in this regard where a genuine Muslim has been advised to tread the middle path in all his dealing.

In Surah Baqarah, verse 143, the Almighty declares that:

وَكُذِّبَ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ اُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ

شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ

يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَاِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ

لِيُضِلَّ اٰيٰتِنَا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَّءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

And thus We made you exalted among all nations that you may be witnesses to the people and this Messenger your guard and witness. And O, beloved! We had not made that Qiblah upon which you had been before, but to see who follows the Messenger and who turns back upon his heels. And verily, indeed it was hard, but to those who were guided by Allah. And it does not behave Allah that He might waste your faith: Verily Allah is very Kind and Merciful to human beings.

Good manners which are considered as Siraatal Mustaqeem are those manners which have been adopted by the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. He never unjustly became angry with anyone as this behaviour of becoming unjustly angry is itself a shame and against noble behaviour. To remain constantly angry is also something which is considered as bad behaviour. To become angry with a person for the sake of Islam and to remain kind and gentle in all other matters is the behaviour of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. If we have to fully explain Siraatal Mustaqeem, we would be able to fill volumes in this regard. We have merely outlined a few important issues. We make Dua that Almighty keep us on the path of Siraatal Mustaqeem.

Sufi commentary:

The sufis explain that guidance is given in different ways. The first is Ilhaami الهامى which is achieved naturally by a person. The example of this is the child which automatically knows that it must suckle from the mother's breast or when the child cries so that it can draw the attention of the mother. The second type of guidance is Ihsaasi احساسى. This type of guidance is achieved when one begins to mature and starts to differentiate between what is good and what is bad. The third type of guidance is considered as Aqli عقلى. This type of guidance is achieved through using one's intellect or powers of analysing. This is achieved using different proofs and at the end, a person is able to conclude what is correct and what is not.

The fourth type of guidance is considered as Ilaa hiyah الهيه. This type of guidance is achieved through the help of the Prophets and through the Divine Mercy of the Almighty. In other words, this type of guidance cannot be achieved through our intellect or analytical deductions. For this type of guidance, the Almighty has specifically sent Prophets.

In respect of this guidance, this is further divided into two types. The first type is common in essence and the second type is considered as special or unique. The first type is Islamic laws which are there for the guidance of people which is explained through the Prophets. These are laws of belief and various actions etc. They are also referred to as Taufeeqi. The second type of guidance is the special or unique type which is achieved through the Noor of Prophet-hood or through the Noor of Sainthood. (Tafseer Azezi). It must also be remembered that the second type of guidance is considered as the last stage in our guidance, meaning the common man, but it is the first stage in guidance for the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him.

There are special servants of the Almighty who are born with guidance. We know that when Nabi Esa – peace be upon him – was born, he declared to everyone

while in the cradle, that he was the servant of Allah. We also know that when the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – was born, the first act which he performed was to immediately go into Sajdah. When the first revelation came to him, at that moment, he was in a state of I'tikaf and was busy in the Zikr of Allah. We also know that the great Shaikh, Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani never drank the milk of his mother during the days of Ramadan even though he was still a baby.

Everything comes from a central point and the central point receives guidance from the Almighty. The entire world receives its water from the ocean; however, the ocean is reliant on the Almighty for its water. All the stars receive their light from the sun, but the sun is reliant on the Almighty for its light. The ocean is the central point of water, the sun is the central point of light, however, the central point of guidance is the personality of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. Moulana Rum has explained that this type of guidance is not achieved even through the amazing intellect of such people as Fakhrudeen Razi, because this guidance is above the intellect.

It is for this reason that the Sufis explain that the reach of the world is only until external proof and testimony, while the reach of the Sufi is through sight and vision. In other words, the world is able to present proof while the Sufi is able to present an action to prove this. The external world is reliant on speech and words while the Sufis rely on action and deeds. One is considered as Haal and the other is considered as Qaal حال قال.

In this verse, we are asking the Almighty for this type of guidance. In other words, that guidance which is above intellect and is achieved only through the Divine Grace of the Almighty. This is the reason that the word “Ih di” has been used. Therefore, in relation to the previous verse, it means that when we had declared “Na’budu” and “Nas ta’een”, the person uttering this was the slave, in other words, wherever our intellect could reach, we have sought Divine Help, however,

that which is beyond our intellect, “O Allah! Only You can bless us with this”. In this context, the subject is Allah who is performing this act of Mercy. The letter “Na” in this verse could also signify that we wish to travel on the road of the blessed and chosen people of Allah. In this way, the servant is asking Allah, “O Allah! We have placed our feet on this path, however to remain on that path whose ultimate objective is to reach You, only You can guide us on this path.”

What is Siraatal Mustaqeem according to the Sufis?

They explain that there are different opinions on this. Firstly, Siraatal Mustaqeem is that path which is combined by both love and intellect. Another name for this is Sulook. They say that only intellect which is void of love and reverence for the Almighty is irreligious in nature and to only have love without having intellect (as a precautionary) measure is considered as Jazb. Both these paths consist of Ifraat and Tafreet or extremes.

When a person has love and reverence for Allah and possesses intellect which still remains intact, this is considered as Sulook and this is indicated in this verse. They also declare that the Saalik is higher in position than the Majzoob. An example of this is when Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – is said to have seen a mere reflection of Divine Greatness and fell unconscious while the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – continued to smile while He was blessed with the Vision of the Almighty without any veil in between during the journey of Meraj. The first state is the state of Jazb and the second state is the state of Sulook.

Secondly, only that path is considered as Siraatul Mustaqeem which leads to Allah. All other paths are filled with extremities. They are not satisfied by the news of Paradise or maidens in Paradise, they only look for that path which leads to Allah. They also supplicate to Allah in the following words, “O Allah! There are many paths present and there are many who call to different paths. Sometimes, it is the Satan who calls us, sometimes, our nafs call us, sometimes

our inner and external enemies call us. Our friends wish us to go somewhere, our enemies wish us to go another way. However, O Allah! We are seeking that path which reaches only You”. That path is also the path where a slave is satisfied with whatever the Almighty has blessed him with.

The Ulama declare that the right path is achieved through good deeds, pure beliefs and noble acts which ultimately enable a person to enter Paradise. The Sufis believe that the right path is the path of the Mashaa'ikh and the various spiritual silsila that exists which would enable a person to reach the Almighty. From this, we can understand two things. During the time on earth, every person is on a certain path and would only see the result after death. As a traveller cares for his property while travelling, in the same way, a person should protect his deeds. Secondly, a person is very fortunate who has been blessed with walking on the right path and therefore, this dua has been repeated in the Surah Fatiha. Thirdly, it is clear that a person would never be able to meet the Creator if he does not use a wasila otherwise what is the meaning of using a road. After all, everyone is close to Allah, so what is the reason for using a path? Hence, the need of using a wasila to guide us on this path.

An interesting story of Hadrat Ebrahim bin Adham – may Allah be pleased with him

It is said that once he was on his way to perform Hajj when a villager who was on horseback saw him and inquired as to where he was going. Obviously, the villager did not know who he was. Hadrat Ebrahim bin Adham – may Allah be pleased with him – replied that he was on his way to perform the Hajj. The villager was shocked and declared, “You seem like an insane person to me. You have undertaken such a long journey, and yet, you have no animal to transport you and neither do you seem to have food with you. Perhaps death has brought you on this journey.” Hadrat Ebrahim bin Adham – may Allah be pleased with him – then replied, “You have only one horse, but I have many animals. However, you cannot see them.” The villager asked about these horses and he

again explained, “Whenever any calamity befalls me, I climb on the horse of patience. Whenever any good comes to me, I climb on the horse of gratitude. Whatever comes from the Divine Court of Allah, I climb on the horse of contentment. Whenever my carnal desires call me, I climb on the horse which displays my age and weakness (which protects me against the nafs)”. After he had explained this, the villager was surprised and burst out, “Without doubt, you are the person on horseback and I am actually the person walking.”

This is the same as in the world. When we wish to travel to different locations, we may need different modes of transport. The sufis say that in this journey of religion also, we may need different transport while the reins of this transport are in the hands of someone else.

Thirdly, the Sufis declare that to remain steadfast on religion is the actual meaning of right path. They say that to remain steadfast for one moment is more valuable than a thousand miracles. They say that the meaning of being steadfast is to completely and totally surrender oneself to the Almighty. If the Creator commands one to jump into a river, there must not be a moment's hesitation. The examples of Nabi Yunus – peace be upon him – are a living example. If the Creator commands one to sacrifice one's child, then too, there must be no hesitation such as the example of Nabi Ebrahim – peace be upon him. If He commands to jump into a burning inferno, one must do it immediately as the example of Nabi Ebrahim – peace be upon him – again. If He commands that one learns from someone lower in rank, then too, there must be no hesitation as the example of Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – who was commanded to learn from Hadrat Khidr – peace be upon him – and happily acceded to this Divine Command. If one is commanded to face a saw which is to cut one to pieces, as is the living example of Nabi Zachariah – peace be upon him, then too, there must be no hesitation. The sufis declare that if one's wealth, one's life and one's children become an obstacle in this path, one must tear away this veil. At that moment, this action would not be considered as wasteful but a means of meeting

the Creator Himself. It is said that Nabi Sulayman – peace be upon him – sacrificed a thousand camels when his Asar salah was missed, this was not wasteful spending. In fact, he tore the veil away. This is an extremely difficult action which is why we ask the Almighty for help and assistance to guide us.

Question from a Hindu:

They say that Dua during this time is a useless action. They say that a person has already accepted Islam and has presented himself for the salah, he has also commenced reading the Quran, therefore, according to Muslims, he has already found guidance. One is supposed to only ask for something which one does not have. Therefore, this dua of a Muslim has no basis or foundation.

Answer:

From the explanation of this verse, we have already explained that asking for guidance could have many implications. It could mean that one is pleading to Allah to remain steadfast on it, or one is asking for increase in faith, one is asking is one's heart to remain true, one is asking for strength to remain firm in the face of difficulties etc. We have also explained that asking for guidance could mean different things for different people. When a disbeliever asks for guidance, it means that he wants the strength to accept Islam. Asking for guidance by a believer would mean that he is given the strength to be more pious. For those who are already pious, asking for guidance would mean that they are seeking Divine help to remain steadfast. The type of guidance asked by a person would depend on the person asking for this guidance.

Remember that we are also on the right path and the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is also on the right path, yet, the dimension of their presence cannot be compared to us walking on this right path. In this connection, the Almighty declares in Surah Yaseen, 3,4 that:

إِنَّكَ لَبِينَ الرَّسُلِينَ ۝٣

No doubt, you.

عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ط (٢)

Have been sent on straight path.

Even the Almighty declares that He is on a straight path. In Surah Hud, verse 56, He declares that:

إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ ط مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ط إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى

صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (٥٦)

I relied on Allah. my Lord and your Lord. There is no moving creature whose forelock is not under His control. No doubt, My Lord meets on straight path.

Question from a Wahabi:

When we make the same dua in salah that we be given the strength to walk on the right path as do the Prophets and saints, what therefore is the difference between us and them?

Answer:

Every one of these blessed souls is on the right path, yet, the destination of each is different. Our ultimate destination is freedom from the fire of hell, while the destination of these blessed souls is to ultimately see their Lord and Creator. Take the example of a wedding procession. The people that have joined this wedding procession are present, the parents and close relatives are there and also the bridegroom. Everyone is walking the same path. However, the people who have merely joined this procession, their ultimate goal is to partake in the food and festivities. The ultimate goal of the parents and close relatives is to see that this couple is finally joined. However, the ultimate goal of the bridegroom is to finally

meet with the bride. The path seems the same; however, the final destination of each is different. One should not be deceived by this and think that the dua made by the Prophets and saints are the same as ours.

Verse No. 6

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ^٥

The path of those whom You have favoured.

This verse is related to the previous verse in a few ways. In the previous verse, a person had asked to be guided on the right path which had many diverse implications. We had asked the Almighty for showing us the right path. In this verse, we are being specific in our request. In other words, the path of those whom the Almighty has graced or blessed. From this, we come to realize that the right path, is that path which have been chosen by the chosen and blessed servants of the Almighty. In another manner, we asking the Almighty to show us that path which still bears the foot prints of His chosen servants and by following that path, we would be able to find our ultimate destination.

Thirdly, it must be borne in mind that the right path is that path which is free of Ifraat and Tafreet or in other words, that path which is free of extremes and is considered as the middle path. There are three groups which have been highlighted in this verse and the middle path is the path of the chosen servants of the Almighty. It is said that Ifraat in this sense would mean the path of “Ghairil magh doobi alayhim” and the path of Tafreet would mean “Daa leen”. In other words, in this manner, the Almighty has clearly defined for us the boundaries of this specific path.

Commentary:

The Ulama explain that there are two paths. The first is the path which is considered as the path of the creation towards the Creator and the second path is considered as the journey of the Almighty towards the creation. The path of the creation towards the Creator is a path which is filled with dangers and calamities and many travellers on this path have been robbed. There are also

many places where people wait to ambush people on this path and the head of these robbers is Satan who is constantly watching.

He has also challenged the Almighty in these words which are found in Surah Araf, verse 16 that:

قَالَ فَبِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾

Said he, I swear that because You have seduced me, I shall necessarily sit on Your straight path in wait for them.

It has therefore become necessary and vitally important that we are able to travel in the company of the people who would protect us and those who are superior in rank and status and in every corner of this path, there are people who would protect the traveller and accord him safety from those who wish to rob him. If these protectors are present, then the robbers would have no courage to attack the travellers. The protectors of travellers on this path are those who have already been mentioned in this specific verse.

The word “An amta”. This is derived from the word “In’ aam” انعام. This signifies to “give someone a gift or a present”. In Arabic grammar, the word Ne’mat also signifies “softness or gentleness”. This is the reason that the Arabs call soft and tender clothes as “Sau bun Naa’em” or soft leather as Jild Naa’em. Technically, this word also signifies happiness and taste. In this sense or in this verse, this word would signify comfort and ease which is achieved by man. This is the reason that wealth and health has been referred to as Ne’mat.

There are three types of Ne’mat or comfort. The first is that which comes directly from the Almighty and without cause or mean. They include such things as life itself, sustenance which is given to a small child and guidance. The second type of Ne’mat is that which seems to come to us through another person such as worldly wealth etc. The third type is that which seems to come to us through our

effort and endeavour such as when we read something to increase our wealth or to acquire paradise etc. (Tafseer Kabeer).

The example of these three would be explained in the following way. We know that a person would attain Paradise through good action and pure faith. This is considered as an obedient servant of the Almighty. Secondly, we also know that a person would attain paradise through a certain reason such as the child of a Muslim who dies at birth. The third category of people are those creation who have entered Paradise to populate it such as the maidens and servants in paradise. The first type of Ne'mat is further divided into two. The first type is considered as worldly ne'mat or comfort, such as our limbs and the respective power of our limbs etc. The second type of Ne'mat or comfort is considered as religious in nature such as pure faith and guidance etc. In this specific verse, this second type of ne'mat or comfort and grace is being indicated, which is religious comfort or ne'mat is.

Therefore, the true meaning of this verse would be: "O Allah! Give us the strength to travel on the path of those blessed people whom You have blessed with religious ne'mat or comfort". As to the question of who these people are. The Quran clearly explains who these people are:

In surah Nisa, verse 69, the Almighty declares:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ

وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ۖ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا ﴿٦٩﴾

And he who obeys Allah and His messenger, then he will get the company of those who have been blessed by, Allah, viz. the Prophets, and the truthful, and martyrs and the righteous, and what good companions They are! .

From this, we come to realize that this special group consists of four categories of people. They are the Prophets, the Siddiqueen, the martyrs and the pious servants of Allah. We have explained these ne'mats or comfort in different stages so that we clearly come to realize that if every Ne'mat is meant, than obviously it would also include those comforts which are also enjoyed by the disbelievers such as life, wealth, children, power etc. However, by explaining the ne'mat which is meant, we have clearly disqualified the disbelievers from this category. We also know that religious comfort or grace is far superior to worldly comfort or grace because the former lasts forever, while the latter is something which is finally destroyed. Hence, we have indicated complete ne'mat as in religious ne'mat because this is ne'mat in the true sense of the word.

The benefits derived from this verse:

There are certain advantages which can be attained from this verse, they are:

From this, we come to realize that the Khilaafah of Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – is justified and correct because it has been explained in this verse that the Siddique is someone who has been blessed.

The word Prophet and Siddique has been used in this verse and we all know that the leader of the Siddi qeen is definitely Hadrat Abu Bakr– may Allah be pleased with him. The meaning of Siddique is someone who is truthful in every action of his, both word and action. The Almighty has also blessed him with the title of sahabi or companion.

In Surah Taubah, verse 40, the Almighty has declared that:

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا ۖ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ

تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى ۚ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ

حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٠﴾

If you help him (The beloved Prophet) not, then no doubt, Allah helped him, when on account of the mischief of the infidels, he was to go out with only two souls, When they both were in the Cave, and when he said to his companion 'Grieve not, no doubt Allah is with us', then Allah sent down His satisfaction on him, and helped him with armies which you did not see, and put down the word of the infidels. It is the word of Allah alone which is supreme, and Allah is Dominant, Wise.

In another verse, Surah Layl, verse 18, the Almighty has again declared that:

الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّىٰ ﴿١٨﴾

Who gives his wealth to become purified.

Besides these two verses, there are many other verses which have been revealed which clearly highlight the status and rank of Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him. The commentary on these verses would be discussed in their appropriate places. The meaning of Siddique could also mean that blessed person who testified truthfully to many actions of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. There are many people who recognized the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – through his miracles, some recognized him through certain proofs which he presented to him, however, Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – was that blessed person who recognized the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – with the Noor of faith which he possessed in his blessed heart. This can be compared to the internal feeling of a human who is able to distinguish

within himself whether a certain food is tasty or not tasty and is able to either accept a certain dish or refrain from accepting a certain dish. Such is the internal faith of Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – in that he was able to internally accept that which was good and refrain from those things which are considered as evil or bad.

This can be gleamed from historical reports which clearly inform us that even in the days before the coming of Islam, Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – never bowed down to any idol, committed adultery or any such evil act. He also accepted the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – without demanding any proof or miracle. He even accepted the miraculous physical journey of Meraj without even asking for any proof. In this verse, the Almighty is advising us that we should ask for guidance for that right path on which Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – and all the truthful are found. We must realise that if Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – was an oppressor or an unjust person as some misguided people claim, then it would have not been permissible to follow him! However, in this verse, we are been clearly informed that we should follow the bless path of Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – and the other Siddi qeen in his company.

Second benefit of this verse.

Another important point which is been highlighted here is that it is extremely important and necessary that we follow an Imam or leader or become the Muqallid of an Imam. The reason is that in this verse, it is not only the right path which has been mentioned, but also the following of these blessed people on this specific path has also been highlighted. From this, we come to realize that not only is the path important, the leader or the people on that blessed path are also very important. We are been clearly told that the right path is the path which have traversed by the pious and chosen servants of Allah.

It is important to note that from the time of Tab'e Tab'aeen until now, every great commentator of the Quran, every great Muhaditheen or jurists, every eminent saint, has been the Muqallid or follower of some Imam. No one among them has ever refused to accept the leadership of a certain Imam and of following that Imam. From this we also come to realise that the road of Taqleed is also the path which has been blessed by the Almighty. If you require a detailed explanation on this, please refer to my book "Ja'al Haq".

If Taqleed was Haraam or Shirk as some misguided people claim, then even the science of hadith would disappear because every eminent scholar of Hadith was a Muqallid or the student of a Muqallid. It is also a fact that if there was one person who was considered as a Faasiq or open sinner among the chain of narrators of any hadith, that hadith itself would be considered as unacceptable. If a person who considers following an Imam as un-Islamic, then according to him, the authenticity of every hadith would be in doubt because every eminent Muhaddith in Islamic history was a Muqallid or someone who followed one of the four Imams.

Third benefit from this verse:

We also come to realize from this verse that to follow someone who is evil or bad is itself a good or bad action. The Quran clearly explains that one of the evil actions of the disbelievers in early times was that they chose and followed the evil and bad actions of their forefathers instead of accepting the Divine message of guidance given to them by the Prophet of that period. This verse clearly explains to us that we should ask the Almighty to guide us on the path of our Muslim forefathers and Muslim predecessors. Both of these verses clearly condemn the action which was adopted by the disbelievers when they followed their misled and misguided forbearers, yet, they clearly explain the excellence of the Muslim when he follows the path of other Muslims before him.

Fourth benefit from this verse:

From this we clearly come to realize that that path which is adopted by the pious servants of the Almighty: that is the right path and that which is considered acceptable by these pious people as Mustahab should be accepted by other Muslims as also Mustahab.

The following hadith shareef clearly proves this. The Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is reported to have stated that:

مَا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَسَنًا فَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ حَسَنٌ

Ma ra'al Mu'minoona hasana fa huwa 'indal laahi hasan". That which the Muslim sees as good, with Allah that is also good."

Another hadith shareef also explains that:

أَنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ اللَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِ

An tum shuhadaa'al laahi fil ardi "You are the witnesses of Allah on earth".

In other words, that person whom you consider as good, with Allah, that person is also good because the tongue of the true Muslim is like the Divine pen of the Almighty. In this way, we come to realize that acts such as the Meelad, the faitha for the deceased, the Urs of the pious saints etc which has been declared as acceptable by the pious Ulama of both the Arab and non-Arab world and also considered as Mustahab or permissible by numerous pious Muslims and Mashaa'ikh, to accept these acts as Mustahab, is to follow the Siraatal Mustaqeem because this is obviously that path which has been chosen by the pious and blessed servants of Allah.

From this, we also come to realize that the path of the Ahle Sunnah wa Jamaah is the right path because even if one misled Deobandi has condemned these

meritorious acts, one cannot say that all of these pious servants of Allah have become Mushriks by this baseless condemnation. It is in fact much easier to condemn this one single Deobandi than to condemn such a great number of true Muslims. They have only gone about building their own places of worship with a few bricks and nothing else.

The fifth benefit from this verse

From this we clearly come to realize that, that path on which one finds the saints and the blessed servants of Allah only that is the true and right path. That path, which is completely void of these special servants of the Almighty, is certainly a wrong path and a path of misguidance. That branch, which bears flowers or fruits, is certainly a branch which is connected with the root. We see that it is only that tree which is cared for. However, that tree which bears no fruit or flower clearly indicates that it has severed its connection with the root and is fit for nothing besides being burnt.

If we look at the history of the Bani Israeel. As long as their true religion existed, many saints and Awliya appeared among them such the Ashaab-e-Kahaf, Hadrat Asif bin Barkhiyah – may Allah be pleased with him, this is that saint who transferred the entire kingdom of Bilkis and placed it in front of Nabi Sulayman – peace be upon him – within the time it took to blink an eyelid! Even eminent saints like Sayyidah Maryam – may Allah be pleased with her, the mother of Nabi Esa – peace be upon him – who was also a saint and pious lady appeared in that time. However, when this religion ceased to exist, the chain of saints also ceased. We can safely say that the arrival of saints within a certain religion is proof of its authenticity and truth. In fact, these saints are living proof of that religion. It is also interesting to note that the saints have only appeared within the ranks of the Ahle Sunnah wa Jamaah. No saint has ever appeared among the Wahabi, the Shia, the Qadiani, the Deobandi sect or any other misled sect. There are three major signs of a saint. They possess pure faith, they are pious in the highest sense and the common man accepts that person as a saint.

The Quran explains in Surah Yunus, verse 63 that:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Those who believed and keep up their duty.

Sufi commentary:

The Sufis explain that by “An’am ta alayhim” is meant those special servants of Allah who have received spiritual blessing and grace and they have also been blessed by Divine Noor. In the Mishkaat shareef under the chapter of Imaan or faith it is explained that the Almighty removed all the souls from body of Nabi Adam – peace be upon him – and blessed them with Divine Noor. Some of them received this Divine Noor and some did not. Obviously, those who received this Divine Noor are those who later on received guidance and those who did not, became misled. Those who have pure insight are able to recognize a person by this Divine Noor. Ordinary Muslims who follow these blessed people also receive guidance. However, those who separate themselves from these blessed people, fall into darkness and misguidance. Therefore, the word “An ‘amta” would signify the path of the awliya or the pious. The sufis believe that this word would also exclude the misguided and misled people because they have not received any guidance. The comforts of this world such as wealth and children are means of blessing for the true believer but it is a means of problem and calamity for the disbelievers. The Muslim is able to perform more good deeds through these blessings while the disbeliever increases in his disbelief and transgression.

The Holy Quran itself declares in Surah Ale Imaran, verse 178 that:

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ بِنَايَ لَهُمْ خَيْرًا لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّا بِنَايَ لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا

إِثْمًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾

And let never the unbelievers suppose that respite, We grant them is something good for them. Certainly, We grant them respite only because they may further increase in sin. And for them is the degrading torment.

It can be understood in this manner. Look at a person who has given his enemy some sweet dish, however, he has mixed poison in it and he has also given his friend the same sweet dish but it has no poison in it. The both dishes are the same; however, this same thing has become a calamity for his enemy but has become a means of happiness for his friend. The same example can be made for someone who is sick. For the sick person, this same dish becomes a reason for increase in his sickness, but becomes a thing of happiness for the person who is healthy and also increases his strength. Yet, both are the same dish. The same type of comfort are given to both Muslim and non-Muslim, however the Muslim increases in faith and the non-Muslim increases in disbelief and becomes more spiritually ill. It is for this reason that the Sufis declare that for everyone who walks on the path of Tareeqah, he requires a spiritual guide.

Insha Allah, the importance of a Peer or Spiritual guide would be explained in the verse pertaining to that specific topic.

Issue: From this, we also come to understand a very important point in Islamic law which is called Ijmah. This clearly proves that once the Muslim nation as a whole agrees on a certain issue, it becomes an Ijmah of the Ummah. That person who separates himself from this is like a sheep which has separated itself from the flock. It is obvious that this sheep would quickly become prey to wolves and other predators. A Muslim, who separates himself from the wider Ummah, would himself become an easy prey for the satan.

Question:

The Siraatal Mustaqeem is one road and the Prophets and saints have another road. How therefore, can you say that all of them have one path? The Shariah of

all the Prophets were different. The spiritual path of each saint is also different. They are Qadiri, Nakhshabandi, Suhrawardi and Chisti. At the same time, we have Shafi, Hanafi, Hambali and Maliki in the school of Islamic jurisprudence. How can all these divergent paths be called one path.

Answer:

This answer has been beautifully given in Tafseer Azeezi. He explains that we should take the example of a single caravan which travels on one road but has many people within it that have different occupations. Some are labourers that work on stone, others work on bricklaying, others are carpenters while others are security guards etc. All of them are heading for the same direction, but they work in different jobs. Each one has his own status and eventually, one day, all of them would finally reach their destination. We can also take the example of different medicines, the western medicine could be different from the eastern medicine, yet even though they may have different names for the same ingredient, yet, the object is the same which is cure.

In like manner, the mannerisms of each Prophet or the different saints may differ, yet they all have the same objective. These differences are based on the manners of their respective generations in which they live. The laws applicable in the Shariah of Nabi Moosa – peace be upon him – were based on that time and their circumstances and were based on the behaviour of those people. During the time of Nabi Esa – peace be upon him, those laws were changed to suit the people of that specific period. In the hadith shareef, it is explained that the Prophets of each generation were the founding fathers of that period and time. Each had the same objective; however, their actions and modes of how to perform certain deeds for that specific period were different for each generation.

A question posed by a ghair Muqallid or non-conformists

The Companions were the chosen of the Almighty. To walk on their path is the correct path. They never followed any Imam. In their time, there was no such thing as Shafi, Hanafi etc. Therefore, not to follow any Imam is the right path.

Answer:

There are two answers to this question. The first is that the Prophets were not the followers of any other Prophet, in other words, they were not anyone's Ummati, therefore, we suggest that you follow the Prophets and make sure that you are also not the Ummati of any Prophet! Obviously, if they accept this, they would immediately leave the folds of Islam.

Secondly, even during the time of the blessed companions, they used to also follow others. Those companions, who were not very learned in Islamic law, followed other companions who were learned in Islamic law. These learned companions used to use the Quran and what they had directly heard from the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and then deduced the correct law applicable for that specific issue. As to the question that there were no mashabs such as Shafi, Hanafi etc, it must be remembered that these blessed companions had already heard directly from the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and there were very few differences of opinion among them. They also were not faced with misled groups calling themselves Muslims. Therefore, they had no use of putting these laws into record.

Later on however, inner fighting began and Muslims started to become weak and it became extremely necessary to direct Muslims to the right path. During that blessed period, there were no vowels in the Quran, the Quran was not divided into rukus or paras and even the science of Hadith had not yet come into existence. The narration of different hadith shareef and the personal lives of each narrator were not discussed and analysed and even the Hadith books as we know it today, did not exist. The simple reason is that, these books were not required

at that time. However, as the necessity grew, the work also began to increase. Based on this fact, how can any idiotic person now say that since there was no hadith book at that time, there is no need to read one now or to argue about a certain hadith is improper because the companions did not argue about any Hadith shareef. People would certainly consider such a person as insane who says this.

As the books of Hadith later on began vitally important, in like manner, the books of Islamic jurisprudence also became extremely important. If this people say that it is not important to accept books of jurisprudence, how would they treat an issue which is not mentioned in the Quran and Hadith? Look at issues which faces Muslims today, such as, is it permissible to perform ones salah while being on an airplane, if a person hears an ayat on the radio where one needs to perform the sajdah, would the sajdah become necessary on this person? If a person misses the second rakah of Juma, is it necessary for him to read the Juma or read the Zohar salah etc etc. There are numerous issues of this nature whose answers are not found in the Quran and Hadith. If one totally rejects the laws of Islamic jurisprudence, how would one answer these questions? This question insha Allah would be answered when we explain the verse about obeying the Almighty, His Prophet and those who are in charge.

Verse No. 7

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾

Not of those who have earned Your anger and nor of those who have gone astray.

This verse is related to the previous verse in a few ways. From the first verse, we have clearly come to understand what is the Siraatal Mustaqeem. At the same time, we can only come to know of the actual identity of something, if there is some sign on it and we also begin to realize that the reality of that entity if there is some opposite meaning to that specific entity. It is obvious that you will easily understand something, if you also understand the opposite of that item. In the previous verse, the straight path of the siraatal Mustaqeem has been highlighted and in this verse, the crooked and twisted path is being shown so that a person can clearly distinguish between both of them.

Secondly, at the beginning, the Divine Mercy of the Almighty was explained. This would have created hope in the minds of the reader, however, His Divine Wrath is being mentioned so that a person also learns to fear Him when he listens to this. We have already explained that true Imaan is in between hope and fear. Or we can explain that Imaan is something which has two wings, one which is hope and the other which is fear. We also know that a bird can never fly if it is short of one wing. In like manner, a true Muslim can never travel on this journey if he does not possess fear and hope. He has to possess both of them in equal amount.

Thirdly, in the previous verse, the Almighty had given us the description of those who have received His Divine Mercy and in this verse; He has advised us to refrain from evil acts, misguidance and evil beliefs because these are the people who do not enjoy His Divine Mercy. In brief, from this we come realize that the true believers are those who can be recognised by their correct beliefs and their

noble actions. In other words, they are neither misguided nor are they open sinners.

Commentary:

The meaning of the word “Ghair” is either “no, except, or besides”. All three of these meanings are applicable. The meaning of the word “Ghadab” is either zeal or to change. Technically, the word Ghadab indicates that condition which is a state of zeal to change the condition of the heart because of which the state of the heart changes completely.

The word “Daal is derived from the word “Dalaal” which indicates a state of amazement or surprise. The person who becomes amazed is considered as Daal. Commonly, however, the word Daal indicates misguidance or possessing incorrect beliefs. It is for this reason that whenever this word has been used in the Quran to describe the condition of a Prophet, the first meaning would be taken. In other words, amazement or surprise. A person who considers any Prophet to be misguided, immediately becomes a heretic.

In this verse, there is difference of opinion on who the “Magh dubi alayhim” are and who the people of “Daaleen are. In the Tirmidi shareef, it is explained that the first group are the Jews and the second group are the Christians. However, Tafseer Kabeer has given a few other explanations to this. It is that the first group are those sinful people who have no good deeds (Faasiq and Faajir) and the second group are the disbelievers. Another explanation is that the first group are the apparent and open disbelievers while the second group are the munaafiqs or hidden disbelievers.

It is said that the reason for this is because in Surah Baqarah, the first group mentioned is the Muslim; the second group are the disbelievers and lastly, the hypocrites. If this is what is meant here, then obviously, the pattern as adopted in Surah Baqarah has also been adopted in this Surah. Some have stated that the first group are atheist and the second group are those people who refuse to accept

clear and transparent issues of faith. It is said that the first group could also mean those people whose evil beliefs have reached the stage of heresy such as the Shia, the Qadiani and those Deobandis that have openly insulted the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. The second group would be those misled people whose evil beliefs have not reached that stage of heresy such as those Shia who only dispute the leadership of Hadrat Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – and those Deobandis who merely dispute issues such as Niaz, Fatiha etc. In all of these interpretations, we are sincerely asking the Almighty to protect us from all of these people who have become entitled for the Divine Wrath of Allah and have become misguided.

Various benefits derived from this verse:

The Prophets and the Angels can never perform a sin even for one second which would entitle them for the Divine Wrath of Allah. Hence, we are commanded to obey and follow a Prophet and have been commanded to refrain from the company of those who are misguided and misled. If a Prophet had become misled for one second or committed an evil act, then we would have been commanded not to follow that Prophet and it would have become necessary for us not to follow that Prophet. From this, we can clearly define the great status of a Prophet. You can also refer to my book “As mat-e-Ambiyah” for a more detailed explanation.

We also come to realize that it is absolutely necessary that we refrain from the company of those who are misled. It is vitally important that we stay in the company of the pious servants of the Almighty. We must refrain from adopting their manners, their appearance and from their ideas. A person who has wealth should refrain from the company of thieves so that his wealth is safe. In like manner, those who possess the wealth of Imaan, should refrain from the thieves of faith and Imaan. A poisonous snake would take away your life and a misguided person would take away your Imaan. Yet, such is the world today that people try their utmost to become brothers of misguided people and begin to disrespect and stay away from the true Ulama, Mashaa'ikh and Sufi.

At the beginning, the Zikr of the Almighty was mentioned and at the end, one is commanded to fear His Divine Wrath. From this, we come to realize that as the basis of goodness and piety is to make the Zikr of the Almighty and to praise Him, in like manner, evil deeds and evil belief is the foundation of ill fortune.

We also come to realize that from the very inception of time, all the true and sincere servants of the Almighty, wherever they were, they have all remained in one group and community. However, those who are misled, even though they may have different reflections in this world, yet, on the day of Judgement, the good and the pious would never be the same.

It must also be remembered that not every wordily hardship and trial is a punishment from the Almighty. Similarly, not every comfort which He bestows on people can be described as a true comfort. At times, these difficulties which he sends to his chosen people, is like the flame of the furnace which is intended to clean the precious metal so that it becomes much more valuable. Perhaps, it is also a Divine method of His to separate the actual precious metal from that which is not genuine. That wealth which makes a person ignore his Creator, is actually a punishment from the Almighty and the difficulty which makes a person remember his Creator is actually a blessing!

Sufi commentary

The sufis explain that Magh doob and Daal are those people who did not receive the Divine Noor at the very beginning. They also say that Maghdoob could be those people who were once blessed and then have become misled. Or they were those people who were there and then disappeared or they were among the forgiven and then became cursed. They have left the dwelling of safety and happiness and have entered the dwelling of pride and deceit such as the Satan and people like Bal'am bin Ba'ur who was once worshippers and through their evil actions, they were evicted from the Divine Court. The sufis also explain that the "daa leen" were those people who had never ever entered this Divine Grace. Or perhaps they had never left this place, or perhaps they had left this place, but stayed on the road without arriving.

The meaning of this verse therefore would be, “O Allah! Do not make us among those who have never reached your Divine Mercy and do not make us of those who have reached Your Divine Court, yet, they returned (in disgrace).” This is indeed a very sensitive issue. A person should not solely rely on his outer knowledge and self accepted piety. There are many fruits in many fields which become ripe and then wither away. Even the great Prophets have solely relied in the Almighty and His Divine Grace and continued to ask Him for guidance and steadfastness.

In Surah Yusuf, verse 101, the Dua of the Nabi Yusuf – peace be upon him – is mentioned:

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ أَنْتَ وَلِيّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾

'O my Lord! Verily You have bestowed on me a Kingdom and taught me to draw conclusion of some discourses. O Creator of heavens and earth, You are my Helper in this world and the Hereafter. Make me die as Muslim and join me with those who are worthy to be very close to You.

It is said that a farmer once asked Hadrat Sultanul ‘Arifeen, Bayazid Bustami – may Allah be pleased with him, “Tell me, is your beard better or the tail of my ox?” The eminent Sufi replied, “If I leave this world with Imaan, then my beard is better than the tail of your ox. However, if this faith is taken away from me, then the tail of your ox is far superior to my beard because hell will be my final abode and not the abode of an animal”.

Why does a man have pride and conceit? Till now, you have not faced the difficulties at the time of death, you have not faced the constraint of the grave,

you have not faced the trial of the day of reckoning and neither have you passed over the Pul siraat. If you pass safely over the Pu siraat, then you can say that you have achieved something.

Question:

Why did the Almighty create the path of guidance and misguidance? Why did He create the satan? Why did He create our carnal desires (Nafs)? How nice it would have been if these dangerous things were not created. There would be no rebellion against the Almighty. If the Almighty was pleased with those who rebel against Him, then why will He punish them? And if He is angry with them, why did He create them?

Answer:

The answer to this would be given during the introduction of Surah Baqarah and we will also explain the creation of Satan and the Divine Wisdom behind this.