

Interpretation of El-Forkan Chapter of Koran

إن الحمد لله تعالى نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره. ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا وسيئات أعمالنا من يهده الله فهو المهتد ومن يضل فلن تجد له وليا مرشدا. وأشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله. بلغ الرسالة وحمل الامانه ونصح الامه وكشف الغمه وجاهد فن الله حق جهاده حتى أتاه اليقين فجزاه الله عنا خير ما يجازي نبيا عن امته. وصلوات الله وسلامه عليه أما بعد فان أفضل الحديث كتاب الله وخير الهدي هدي محمدا ص وشر الأمور محدثاتها وكل محدثه بدعه وكل بدعه ضلاله وكل ضلاله في النار.

We praise Allah sopherah wa taaly and we thank him and per witness there is no God but him and that Mohammed was his messenger. May Allah piece and prayers be shade upon him, his house hold, his companions and who's followers to the day of judgment. Allah sopherah wa taaly greets you in this hours and profit Mohammed (S) tells us that Allah has certain angels whose mission is come to planet earth and seek out the human gathering that have gathered to praise Allah (S) and go up again to report them to there creator. And profit Mohammed (S) said when it is the day of judgment there will be a caller from Allah (S) where are those who gathered in me, who assembled in me and who visited in me. This day I spread my shade upon them when there is no shade but mine. We ask Allah (S) to make us among those in shaa Allah. We have assembled here to worship Allah (S) and to remind our selves of the Ayat of Allah (S) and bounder upon them.

Today we will go through Surat El-Forkan. El-Forkan is the differentiate between good and bad. In this Sura of Koran, there is a debate with the unbelievers and attempt at convincing them by citing the signs of Allah (S). Then comes in the fulfillment of the Forkan, and in the latter part of the Sura Allah (S) has described the believers to show the contrast between them and the unbelievers by describing to them 11 features. And I am going to take up with you today the later part of the Sura. This part is very fit to be standard, upon which each and every one of us might match him self against that standard to have some notion where we stand.

In self evaluation, we judge ourselves using these criteria. Allah has a rule of justice that is also applied in the law of the land that no one is tried twice for the same crime. Same with Allah, it is either we judge ourselves and repent, or Allah will judge us and punish us. What is the best choice, if we judge ourselves, then we repent, but Allah judges us, then his judgment comes with pain and punishment, so which one is better for us?

First feature:

وعباد الرحمن الذين يمشون على الأرض هونا

The servant of the compassionate are those who walk and behave humbly on earth, they are not arrogant, they are not proud but they have the feature of humility. In the matter of fact, the way a man walks tells us something about his personality. There is a weak way of walking, arrogant way of walking and strong way of walking. Profit Mohammed (S) has a strong humble way of walking.

This meaning have come in the Koran in various versus such as the commandments of Surat Al-Isra

ولا تمش في الأرض مرحا إنك لن تخرق الأرض ولن تبلغ الجبال طولا

Don't walk and behave on earth with insolence and pride because your foot steps will not perforate the earth and you will not be as tall as the mountains. In another place in the Koran,

ولا تصعر خدك للناس ولا تمش في الأرض مرحا إن الله لا يحب كل مختال فخور

Do not swell up your cheeks to people out of pride and do not walk in insolence because Allah does not like any proud arrogant posting person. The profit (S) said

لن يدخل الجنة من كان في قلبه مثقال ذره من كبر

any one will not enter paradise if he has in his heart an atom weight of arrogance. Any one that has such an arrogance will be denied paradise in the day of judgment. As a matter of fact, we know that the original sin was not when Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree, that was the human sin. But the real original sin was before that when Allah (S) ordered the angles to prostrate themselves to Adam and they did except Epleese, he said I am Jinn, I am created of fire and this human is created of clay, I will not prostrate myself to them. The real original sin was the arrogance from Epleese that led him to commit the first discrimination crime, based on race, in the history. and therefore the feature of arrogance is a devilish feature. It is taken after Epleese, may God curse him.

Second feature: وإذا خاطبهم الجاهلون قالوا سلاما

Those who believe and have the faith and are the servant of Allah and walk humbly among people and if ignorant address them their answer is piece. Be the word of piece, the meaning of piece and the behavior of piece. Because every vessel oozes what it contains. If you have a porous vessels and is filled with oil it will ooze oil, if it is filled with water it will ooze water, if is filled with ignorance it will ooze ignorance and if it is filled with purity it will ooze purity. Therefore, when the ignorant address the believers, the believers do not have except that fills them which is piece. Another Hadeeth from Profit Mohammed (S) when a man went to him and said teach me what religion is and the profit said حسن الخلق nobility of character, the man was not satisfied and he repeated the question twice and the profit repeated the same answer, and in the fourth time the profit said it is not to get angry. And that is why the faithful does not get angry even if they are revoked, they have the tranquility and the peace and they answer those who talk to them in an ignorant way they answer back as Koran said

ولا تستوي الحسنة ولا السيئة ادفع بالتي هي أحسن فإذا الذي بينك وبينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم

they are not equal, the good and bad so answer back with that which is more graceful. Indeed Allah (S) in another verse described the faithful as:

والكاظمين الغيظ والعافين عن الناس والله يحب المحسنين

Those who control their anger and tame it, and those who forgive people.

If you study the people around you, you will find those who have faith in their hearts, their answer will be peace even in face of ignorance and insult. But if someone has a superficial faith or not enough faith in his heart, you find him very easy to get angered, nervous and he can not control what he answers with.

The Khalifa of Muslims once were served with hot drink by one of his slave butlers and the slave butler spilled the hot drink on him. He got very anger so the slave started reciting the verse, Those who tame their anger, the Khalifa said “I tame it”, the slave continued the verse saying and those who forgive people, the Khalifa said “I forgive”, the slave continued reciting the remaining

portion of the verse saying and Allah loves those who reply back with that which more gracious, the Khalifa then said “Go, I declare you free man for the sake of Allah”.

ليس الشديد بالصرعة، ولكن الشديد الذي يملك نفسه عند الغضب

The Prophet Mohamed PBUH said, the strong is not the one who wins the fight, but the strong is the one who tames his/her anger. This makes sense because at the moment of anger the temptation of hatred, ego and retaliation are very strong. Only a very strong and well spiritually developed person will be able to control them. Indeed every one has an arm that he/she can use to hit, a tongue that he/she can use to curse and a feet that he/she can use to kick. This is easy to do, this not the way of the strong people. The spiritually strong people are the ones who hold their anger.

أثقل شيء في ميزان العبد يوم القيامة هي جرعة غيظ يتجرعها وهو قادر علي إنفاذها

The deed that is rewarded the most by Allah is when a slave of Allah swallows his anger and grudges and tames them for the sake of Allah even though he/she has the power and means to retaliate. He/she can punish, kick, hit or curse.

Omar Ibn Alcatraz R was once revoked and intimidated by an ignorant person when he was the Khlaifa of Muslims. He was about to take revenge, but before he responds, another companion reminded him with the verse

خذ العفو وأمر بالعرف وأعرض عن الجاهلين

Enjoin good, be forgiving and turn away from ignorant people. As soon as he heard the verse he tamed his anger and turned away from that ignorant person who intimidated him. He was a Khalifa and he can really revenge in the strongest fashion, but in response to this verse of the Koran, he swallowed his anger and turned away from that ignorant person.

Third Feature:

والذين يبيتون لربهم سجدا وقياما

Having described their behavior during the day walking humbly and answering gently, then comes the night, those who spend the night prostrating and standing to Allah (S). It might be an optional prayers, it might be just remembrance fulfilling the Ayah that says

الذين يذكرون الله قياما وقياما وعلو جنوبهم

They think of Allah when they are up upright, when they are sitting down and when they are lying on their sides.

As a matter of fact this an indication that there is a room to get closer to God beyond the obligatory worship, and Allah (S) in the Hadeeth Kodsya, ما تقرب عبدي الي باحب مما افترضته عليه, My servant should come close to me by observing the obligatory rituals and the obligatory prayers. But this is the base line, because beyond the obligatory prayers there are the optional prayers, and we know that Allah said, my servant you keep coming closer and closer to me by observing optional prayers until I am his eyes to see, ears to hear, hand to act and his feet to go.

Try to give part of the night to the remembrance of Allah (S), try and seek Allah's repentance in the small hours of the night before dawn because another description in the Koran say والمستغفرين

بالأسحار those who seek God's repentance in the early hours of the morning.

Indeed I think if you try and give part of the night to the remembrance of Allah (S), through some optional prayers, you will feel the difference in your self. You will feel lighter than the rest of us. You will feel that you are not so bound to earth and mud and dust, but you are a float towards the nobility and sacredness of Allah (s).

Indeed I think in modern life, The television has competed so much with remembering Allah during the night. So many people have this television addiction, but try on top of that, may be instead of it, to give part of the night to Allah (S). As we all know, American television has become so liberal such that it is very hard to watch it with out violating Allah's limits or doing Haram. I remember hearing one of our scholars describing TV to be like another God worshipped besides Allah (S). Because people spend their nights in front of it watching instead of spending it

in front of Allah (S) praying and they learn their values and life style from TV instead of Koran and Suna of Profit Mohammed (s).

If you decide to give part of the night for Allah, then make it a secret between you and Allah and do not tell any body else. Try to sneak out of the bed so that your wife does not feel and pray in the privacy of your living room. If you happen to have a red eye in the morning because of night prayers and one of your friends asks you about it, do not say it is because I was praying all night.

Allah S in Surat Almozamel made the night prayer mandatory for one year on all believers for half the night. This was a training camp from Allah to the early Muslims who carried an incredible load in building the Islamic empire. Just like training camps for soldiers. They need to be trained first to be able to fight. Mandatory night prayers prescribed on the believers was a one-year training camp from Allah to spiritually build the early Muslims so that they can bear the tough conditions they had to go through to establish the Islamic empire. The last Ayah in the Surat was revealed one year after that to make the night prayer optional.

It takes a lot of spiritual power really to do the night prayers. It is a big struggle with the temptation of comfort and sleep. Allah S said in Surat Alsajda describing the struggle of night prayers

تتجافي جنوهم عن المضاجع يدعون رهم خوفا وطمعا ومما رزقناهم ينفقون.

Allah said that they push the beloved beds away from their bodies motivated by Greed to Jannah and fear from Allah's punishment. It is such a beautiful description. The most beloved thing to any human being after a long working day that has passed and another working day that is coming is the comfortable bed. Nothing is more loved by any human being 3 o'clock in the morning than this bed. Allah is describing that minute when believers push their bodies away from the beloved beds separating two lovers from each other. Separating the tired bodies from the comfortable bed 3 o'clock in the morning to get up and do night prayers. Just think how much spiritual power one needs to be able to achieve such a thing.

What is the motive, is it to catch a late flight or to do business, no. They are motivated by love for Allah, greed to Jannah and fear from Allah's punishment. What is the reward of those who do that

فلا تعلم نفس ما أخفي لهم من قرة أعين جزاء بما كانوا يعملون.

Allah did not want to say what the reward is. He said their reward is a surprise from me. Look how kids for example get excited and enjoy surprises from their parents. This is a surprise from Allah himself. A surprise that cannot be imagined or guessed. No single soul knows what the surprises that I have hidden for them to please their eyes as a reward for their hard work.

Allah S in Surat Al-Thariat described two of the most important features of the people of Jannah and you can see the similarity between the two description. Here Allah s is saying that they sacrifice their sleep and their money for the sake of Allah and the same in Surat Al-thariat.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ. آخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ. كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ. وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ. وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ.

The believers are in gardens and springs enjoying the rewards of their Lords for they have done excellent in the previous life. They used to sleep very little of the night. And they pray for forgiveness at early dawn time. And they have allocated a portion of their wealth to the poor and needy.

Fourth feature: والذين يقولون ربنا اصرف عنا عذاب جهنم إن عذابها كان غراما

Those who say oh Allah please divert and keep away from us the torture of hell because it's torture is a grievous affliction.

So they are not so confident about their prayers and about their worship. Because as Sydna Abo-Baker (R), which was the closet companion to profit Mohammed (S), and Allah S said about him and other companions who came to Islam during the persecution period.

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

And the early believers from both Al-Mohajreen, immigrants from Makkah, and Al-Ansar, local people of Madina, and those who follow them in their way Allah is pleased with them and they will be pleased with him and he prepared from them gardens that has rivers flowing underneath. They dwell their forever, this is indeed the supreme victory.

This proves without any doubt that all early believers are R including him, not to mention that he is named among the ten people who are given the news of Jannah while still alive. Yet, he said if one of my feet enter paradise, I do not know God's plan for me.

So despite their worship and their optional prayers and being humble and peaceful in their talk and behavior, still they know that it is not your talk or your worship that leads you to paradise, but it is the grace of Allah (S). So however worshipping you are, never think that Allah has to send you to Jannah. No, Allah does not have to because it does not matter what we do, we will never qualify for Jannah. This only qualifies us to be eligible for Allah's mercy if we are not so arrogant about what we did. The deeds are also going to determine how fast we get to Jannah and how much share of Jannah we get. As narrated in the Hadeeth Qudsy:

إَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِرَحْمَتِي وَاقْتَسِمُوهَا بِأَعْمَالِكُمْ

Enter Jannah with my mercy and divide it among yourselves according to your deeds.

Why is it so important to keep that in mind? Clearly there are two state of minds; the first is for the person to feel safe from the punishment of Allah and feels that Jannah is guaranteed to

him/her. Indeed Allah doesn't like this state of mind because it is a recipe for disaster. This state of mind will make the individual kick back and relax and rely on false deceiving wishes of getting the rewards without hard work and sacrifice. The other state of mind that Allah ordered us to maintain is to always be afraid of Allah's punishment and not if we are going to be completely saved from it or not as Allah said in Surat Al-Marig

والذين هم من عذاب ربهم مشفقون، إن عذاب ربهم غير مأمون

And those who are afraid of the punishment of their Lord, for the punishment of their lord is not something to feel safe from.

This state of mind will always motivate the individual to work harder, do more progress and seek continuous improvement. It will also make him/her blame himself for the shortcomings and mistakes that he/she has committed. He become a self blaming soul that Allah has honored in Surat Al-Qiama.

لا أقسم بيوم القيامة، ولا أقسم بالنفس اللوامة.

I swear by the day of Judgment and I swear by the self blaming sould.

Indeed Allah S has described those who feel safe from his punishment as losers. In Surat Al-Araf (7:99)

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

Are the feeling safe from the punishment of Allah, indeed the ones who feel safe from the punishment of Allah are the losers.

Fifth Feature:

والذين إذا أنفقوا لم يسرفوا ولم يقتروا وكان بين ذلك قواما

When they spend, they are not too extravagant, they are not too niggardly, because the correct thing is the median between two extremes, the wrong of exceeding and the wrong of stopping short off. They take a median course between the two courses. Because when you are niggardly, you are denying others their share in your wealth, and when you are too extravagant, you are denying others their share in the money you spend in your extravagance. Allah says

إن المبذرين كانوا إخوان الشياطين

Extravagant are the brothers of the devils. Allah also says in the commandments of Surat Al-Isra

ولا تجعل يدك مغلولة إلى عنقك ولا تبسطها كل البسط

Do not keep your hand niggardly tied to your neck, but also do not over stretch it by spending money and you have to seek the happy median because we are the middle nation, and always the right thing is the median between two wrongs, one before it and one past it.

والذين يكتزون الذهب والفضة ولا ينفقونها في سبيل الله فبشرهم بعذاب أليم

Those who horde gold and silver and do not spend in the cause of God, give them the tidings of a severe torture. On the other hand do not be so extravagant.

One of the companions of the prophet (S) with the name Saad Ebn Aby Wakas went to the prophet to tell him I have a daughter and I would like to give all my heritage to Allah and to Islam, the prophet explained to him that it is also in the way of Allah to keep some money for his daughter because it is better to leave them with a measure of security than to leave them in poverty, may be extending their hands to ask others. When Saad said well shall I give to Allah two third of my wealth and the prophet said no, he said well half of my wealth and the prophet said no, he said one third of my wealth and the prophet said yes and even this is too much.

Worst thing those who are not only niggardly themselves but they order people to be niggardly and we see examples of those, when there is a fund raising for mosque or school not only that they do not pay, but also they raise a voice of protest and say we are not sure where this money goes,

why do not Dr. so and so and Mr. so and so pay, they are rich. In this way, their message to the people is do not pay, so they are niggardly and they are leading people to be as niggardly as they are. Another example for those who obstruct fund raisings for the sake of Allah. Using various excuses not only they do not donate money for Allah causes, but they also prevent others from holding fund raisings and collecting funds for the sake of Allah.

ومن يبخل فإنما يبخل عن نفسه

If you are miser and niggardly, this is all against yourself. For Allah is not needy. He is self sufficient and what ever you give, you give for yourself as Allah said

وما تقدموا لأنفسكم من خير تجدوه عند الله هو خيرا وأعظم أجرا

Whatever you give you are giving for your self. For Allah will save it for you until you come to meet him. You find what you have advanced to yourself multiplied many times by Allah and waiting for you.

The prophet Mohamed PBUH said

إن الله قد جعل في رزق الأغنياء ما يكفي الفقراء وما جاع فقير إلا بتخمة غني. ألا إن الله لمحاسبهم حسابا شديدا أل

إن الله لمعذبهم عذابا أليما

Allah S has given the share of sustenance of poor people to the rich people. And the poverty and hunger of any poor person is caused by the fat of a rich person. Allah is going to judge the holding rich harshly and punish them severely.

Sixth feature:

والذين لا يدعون مع الله إلهاً آخر

Those who do not associate with Allah another God. You might think that it is strange if someone associates with Allah (S), because you are thinking about the old form of association which is someone worshipping an idol. But this is not the only form of association. We see other forms of association. Some is related by Koran and others are related by the common contemporary life around us.

One of them described by the Koran . أرأيت من اتخذ إلهه هواه .

Did you see the one who take his temptations and desires, or whim, as God.

How is that, there are people who are at the cross roads between what God orders and between what their temptations, desires and instincts call them to. They turn their back to God and let the decision go according to their temptations, desires and instincts, and when something or someone else than Allah (S) dictates your action it is as though you are worshipping this thing or that person instead of Allah (S), because you are slave of that this or that person. This is happening in many forms in our life. For example, when a Muslim women takes off the Hegab, Islamic dress, to wear fashion dress, she is associating with Allah (S) her temptations and modes.

And let us just think deeply hear for one second. Allah S created the temptations inside us and he gave them strong influence over us. The strongest thing that influence our behavior is temptations. Naturally, any person is a slave of his/her temptations unless this person has a more powerful thing to influence his behavior. And this is why the only way to free our selves from slavery to temptations is to have something else that we hold more dear to ourselves than pleasing and satisfying our own temptations. And this is the love of Allah S, the strong desire and greed to enter his Jannah and the strong fear from his punishment. If Allah is more dear to us than ourselves, then we will give pleasing Allah a priority over pleasing our own temptations. We will sacrifice comfort, precious time, money, effort and even life for his sake because he is more dear to us than our own selves and his pleasure is more important to us than our own. This is the only way to free ourselves from slavery to temptations and there is no other way.

This is why faith is a blessing from Allah S, otherwise we will be like animals, totally controlled by temptations. This is why slavery to Allah is freedom because it frees us from slavery to all other non merciful Gods and influences and make us the slaves of the merciful companionate one.

He allows us to enjoy the Hallal temptations, and he also reward us for enjoying them, for example sexual temptations في بضع أحدكم صدقة

This concept also explains why the rituals of worship, like prayers and reading Koran, are non tempting. Because if they are tempting, then there will be no test of submission. If prayer is tempting, then how is it demonstrated that you are praying to please Allah not your temptations. How do we know that you are working for Allah not for your temptations. This is why singing is can not be the right prayer because singing is tempting.

And Allah is so generous, he says, you submit to me and perform the non tempting worship to me, and I will then reward you for enjoying your Halal temptations. You go to work, and you are really working for your temptations, not for God, but you are doing the Halal work and you have been performed the non tempting rituals of worship, then Allah will reward you out of his generosity. But with these two conditions, you must observe the non tempting worship first and then seek the Hallal temptation second. Not like that famous belly dancer who was said Work is worship and I am working, then I am worshiping by dancing. Not to mention that making Muslims happy is a good deed and I make Muslims happy when they watch me dance. So, I get double rewarded from Allah. This interview with her was published in an official newspaper and I don't know if people really were convinced that when she dances in front of men with her under ware, then she is worshiping, or not.

To further demonstrate this concept, let us look at this example that Allah is describing in Surat Al-Insan

ويطعمون الطعام على حبه مسكينا ويتيما وأسيرا

They give the food that they need very much to the poor, orphans and POW. You notice here how Islam treats prisoners of war and give tremendous reward to those who feed them. But aside from this issue, the natural behavior of somebody who is hungry and have a limited amount of food is to eat it. It is my food, I earned it, I worked hard for it, I do not have any other food, and I am the most deserving one to this food. This is the norm and this is what the temptation of every human being would be. But here, because those people are inspired with the love of Allah and fear of the day of judgment, they gave away their food for his sake. How this works, it works in the following way, those people loved Allah S more than themselves, and as a result they gave priority to his

pleasure over pleasing themselves and satisfying their hunger. See how the love of Allah freed those people from slavery to temptations. Being a true slave of Allah will free us from all kinds of slavery to temptations, worldly pressures and materialism.

When people take Jesus as God beside God this is indeed is association. The Koran said

اتخذوا أحبارهم ورهبانهم أربابا من دون الله والمسيح ابن مريم

They took their breasts and monks as Gods instead of Allah(S), and the Messiah the son of Mary. When the son of Hatem heard this Ayah and he was a Christian, he went to profit Mohamed (S) and said, oh profit of Allah we do not worship our breasts and our monks, then profit Mohammed asked him, who permits you to do the Haram or forbids you from doing the Hallal, or who gives you the orders of does and don'ts, even if it is against what is mentioned in the Bible. He said they do. Then profit Mohamed (S) said, as long as they are your arbiters, your referees and the ones that set Halal and Haram it is as though you are worshipping them.

Allah S is the one who owns the right to set the Hallal and Haram. He is the one who creates and he is the only one that can give orders of does and don'ts as he said

ألا له الخلق والأمر

To him belongs the creation and the commands of does and don'ts. In today's life, legislators are playing this role of making things legal and illegal. Part of this society is legislators who are playing the role of God by making laws and the rest of the society are slaves of these laws and regulations.

Also, the Koran tells us about the Farro when he said I am your highest God and people would side with him and take him as God. But that was long time ago. Today if you look in our present day life in Muslim countries, you will find several Ferros, or puppet thugs, who are ruling the Muslims and oppressing them, and you find those who ally themselves with them, follow and support them. This indeed is association with Allah (S) and Allah is gathering all of them together in hell fire.

وإذ يتحاجون في النار

Allah is describing the followers of the puppet thug Ferros when they argue with their leaders in hell fire and blame them. They say, we are here because we followed your orders, can you now save us and take away from us part of the punishment, the leaders reply, basically get lost, we are equally doomed to hell fire for Allah has already judged between us.

And in another verse, they say, oh Allah, those are the ones who misguided us, we pray to you to double their punishment, Allah replies double to them and double to you as well.

And you can see this kind of slavery to different than Allah when you ask them, how dare you to do something like this which is awfully Haram, they reply “أنا عبد مأمور” I am a slave to my boss who carries out his orders. This way, they are testifying against themselves with their own tongues that they are slaves to other than Allah. And you can follow the chain and see. Every one of them, says I am a slave to my boss ordered by him, you go to the boss and ask him, he also gives the same answer, and you keep following the chain of command all the way up, you find the Shitan at the end of the chain. And this is why in Surat Yasin Allah is talking about those who follow the inspiration of the Satan and implement his Satanic ideas,

ألم أعهد إليكم يا بني آدم أن لا تعبدوا الشيطان إنه لكم عدو مبين

Did not I advise you sons of Adam not to be slaves of Shitan and his motives, for he is your clear obvious enemy no doubt about it.

وأن اعبدوني هذا صراط مستقيم

And follow the straight path by worshipping me

ولقد أضل منكم جبلا كثيرا، أفلم تكونوا تعقلون

And you have seen him leading astray lots of you, didn't you have minds to think.

Another kind of worship that we witness today is science worship. Men worship human minds. Indeed over the last two century people become amazed with the scientific discoveries, they seafaring the secrets of nature and instead of revealing those secretes to remember the one who created them, they are becoming arrogant of their knowledge and discoveries. They say it is the

human mind who found that, so every thing to us will be arbitrated by the human mind. We do not need a bronze-age religion to tell us what to do and what not to do, what is right and what is wrong, we can do the thinking our selves and figure it out. The catch here is which human mind should be the arbitrator. The mind of the homosexual or the feminist or the liberal or the conservative or the believer or the non believer or who exactly. Human minds are very different and they vary from one extreme to the other. So which one is the one that arbitrates.

The first and most important question you will be asked when you enter the grave is, Who is your God?. Remember that you cannot lie then because in this life, your brain is alive and you can make up stories and lies. But then, your brain is dead and you can not lie any more. The soul is going to answer according to what was controlling its behavior in this life. The soul is going to give the answer, I was a slave of temptation, or I was a slave of Money, power, women, pleasure, ...etc.

Allah (S) has made it clear in the Koran that associating with him another deity is absolutely not forgiven by him, he said in Surat Al-Nisa in two different locations (4:48&116)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

Allah will not forgive association with him, but he may forgive any other sin to whom he wants.

These two verses are very important in answering the question that many of us have about those who die associating with Allah another deity. Is Allah going to forgive them? The answer is here in this verse from Allah himself, plain and clear, and repeated twice to confirm the same exact meaning Allah will not forgive any body who associated with him, period. Why it is so important for us to know that, because we will then really appreciate the greatest blessing ever that Allah has bestowed on us by guiding us to Islam. When we know that others who associate with Allah S are not forgiven then we deeply feel how much favor Allah has given us by guiding us to Islam. Otherwise, if those who associate with Allah may also be forgiven, then they are more lucky than us. They go to Jannah and they did not have to pray or fast or be bothered with does and don'ts. But of course this is not the case, if Allah wants to give Jannah to someone, then Allah will guide him or her to Islam. Allah S says in Surat Al-Anam (6:125)

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ

Whoever Allah wants to guide, he makes his chest open to Islam and whoever Allah wants to misguide he makes his chest tight to Islam and hard to breathe as though he is flying up into the skies.

Aside from the fact that this is one of the scientific miracles of the holly Quran that when you fly it is harder to breathe because there is less oxygen, and that was not known at the time of the Prophet PBUH because flying was not possible, let us focus here on the message of this verse. That the will of Allah is based on his knowledge. If he knows that somebody is worthy of Jannah, he guides him by opening his chest to Islam and if he knows that another is not, he misguides him by closing his chest to Islam. Allah the one who chooses which soul is guided by birth or by conversion because he the one that decides which soul is born to which family in which culture at which time. He gets to decide who gets guided by either birth or conversion and who gets to be misguided by also birth or conversion based on his supreme complete knowledge.

Knowing that, we thank Allah deeply from the bottom of our heart for the most important favor of the countless number of his favors on us.

We always hear or say this meaning at the beginning of every Friday Khotabah regardless of the speaker. We always say at the beginning of every Khotbah

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا

Which is verse 17 in surat Al-Kahf (18:17). But we do not pay attention to the meaning. It means that Allah is the one who gets to choose who deserves to be guided and who does not. Aboo Talib, the uncle of the Prophet PBUH, his dedication and service to Islam were magnificent, he raised the Prophet when he was young after the death of his grand father and worked hard defending him and protecting him to deliver his message. He was incarcerated with the rest of Banu Hashim and the Muslims in Shib Abo Talib for three years and they all starved to almost death in this concentration camp. With all of this service and dedication, Allah decided that his soul does not deserve Jannah and he did not guide him and he died as a non Muslim. The prophet tells us that he is in hell fire. This clearly also tells us that it does not matter how much service and dedication to Islam or the community or to humanity a person is if this person is not Muslim then as Allah clearly said in Surat Al-Omran (3:91)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِلءُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ افْتَدَىٰ بِهِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ

Those who die as Kufar, Allah will not accept from them their deeds even if they are as big as spending as much as an earth full of gold in charity and they have a sever painful punishment in the day of judgment and they will not find any body to protect them from the punishment of Allah.

The same meaning was emphasized two times in Surat Al-Baqra (2:161&276) and Surat Mohamed (47:34).

While it is all decided based on Allah's perfect and supreme knowledge, it is important for us to know that Allah's knowledge is not the reason for somebody to disbelief. Allah just knows the choices that this person will make ahead of time because he is "عالم الغيب", which means that his knowledge is not constrained by time or space. Allah himself is not controlled by time or space and is not restricted by time or space in any way or form. He is the one who created the time and space and he is the one who contains them, and they do not contain him. Allah S describes this fact about himself in a very simple way in the Quran so that the simple human mind can understand it. He says in Surat Al-Hadeed (57:3)

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

He is the first and nothing was before him, he is the last and nothing is after him. He is the inward of every thing and he is the outward of every thing, and he has full knowledge of all things. We human beings are contained and controlled by time and space, we did not exist before our birth and we will not exist after our death. We are contained in time between the time of birth and time of death. Not only that, but we are also controlled by time. We can not move freely in time, time controls us. Allah is the one who creates time, he contains the time by being the one before time and the one after time, he also is not controlled by time, he is in control of time and he knows the future because nothing can take place without his knowledge and permission first. He knows which soul is worthy of Jannah and which soul is not based on his knowledge of the choices of this soul, and based on his supreme perfect complete knowledge, he gets to decide who to guide to Islam by either birth, or conversion and who to misguide away from Islam by also either birth or conversion.

Some people use that to blame Allah S for their mistakes. They say, it is Allah's fault, if he wanted, he would have guided us and we would have worshiped him alone. So it is his fault. Allah responded to this in the Koran by calling them liars. Allah Said in Surat Al-Zokhruf (43:20)

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

And they said, if Al-Rahaman wanted, we would have not worshiped them, they are not speaking out of any knowledge, they are lying.

Allah is not the one to blame, his knowledge is not the one to blame for the mistakes committed by others. They can never escape his supreme knowledge, but his knowledge was not the reason for them to make evil choices, it is that they made these choices themselves and Allah knew about it ahead of time because of his powers and ability.

Allah also allowed them to make these evil choices after knowing about them. If Allah wanted, he would have prevented them just like what happened in the story of the Muses and the righteous believer. The righteous believer killed the boy based on the knowledge that he received from Allah that the boy will grow up to be a wicked criminal and he is going to show hell to his parents. Out of mercy to his parents, he killed him hoping that Allah will replace them with a righteous child. This is an example of a case where Allah prevents a person from doing the evil that he wants to do. As a reward and honor to the righteous parents, Allah S wanted to protect them from this terrible experience, so Allah gave the knowledge to the righteous believer that decided to kill the boy.

Seventh feature:

ولا يقتلون النفس التي حرم الله إلا بالحق

They do not kill the soul that Allah made Sacred except by a lawful cause. Allah (S) said commenting on the two sons of Adam, the brother killing his own brother,

من أجل ذلك كتبنا على بني إسرائيل أنه من قتل نفسا بغير نفس أو فساد في الأرض فكأنما قتل الناس جميعا ومن أحياها فكأنما أحيا الناس جميعا

On this account we decreed upon the children of Israel, that whoever kill the soul for another reason than man slaughter or corruption in the land, it will be as though he killed all man kind and whoever saved the life it will be as though he saved all man life.

We live the gang's era, and people killing. Also we see people sending troops to kill other innocent people for the sake of materialism and strategic interests. This is all against the will of Allah (S). Do you believe it, last century 180 million people were killed, not died no killed, in wars. In world war I, II and 72 major wars. Compare this number to all the people that were killed in all the battles of Prophet Mohamed PBUH from both sides. They do not exceed 500 and guess who is the bloody ones.

In the state of war profit Mohammed (S) instructed us that it has to be a war for the sake of right not the sake of wrong, and it has to be a war to protect values not to violate them. This falls under the lawful cause that Allah stated in the verse.

Sometime ago, there was a chap on the free way with a gun shooting at the passing cars, and he killed someone. When he was arrested and asked why: he said well, I felt like killing someone. This is the degradation of the human intellect of the human heart, this is not the nobility of humanity, this is where humanity becomes less than animal hood.

Some other types of killing, and they are invoked today, the question of abortion when there is a living human being inside its mother womb. And without a pressing reason to save the life of the mother, she just goes to the doctor and she says I want an abortion and she gets an abortion.

Also the crime of suicide, I do not have the right to kill myself, I do not own myself, because I did not create myself.

Eighth feature:

ولايرون ومن يفعل ذلك يلق أثاما، يضاعف له العذاب يوم القيامة ويخلد فيه مهانا

They do not commit adultery, they do not fornicate, and whoever does that his lot will be sins over sins and his punishment in the day of judgment will be doubled, and he will remain in this torture for good.

Adultery is the greatest obstacle before our youth in America to become good Muslims. It runs against the current of society to ask our youth to be chaste and pure. But we would like to give some idea how to convince our youth with the case of chastity. If you give them the health statistics and the heavy toll that adultery exacts from the society and the individual in the terms of health, life, money, venereal diseases and broken families. That will be a very strong evidence against the case of liberal sex.

Another approach is to tell them that I believe in the equality between the sexes, who does, all of them will agree, I believe of justice, who does, all of them will agree. Then tell them that I would like to propose to you that any relation between two individuals, the consequence of which are not shared equally by both can not be just, and they agreed, then tell them that in a situation of liberal sex, it is the women who is the loser all the time, if she is deserted, if she is aborted, if she signs away the baby for adoption, or if she lands with a baby without a father, she is the loser, can this be just, they will say no, therefore this is the way Islam figures it. There has to be a contract, to authenticate the mutual rights and responsibilities of the man and the woman vis-à-vis one another and vis-à-vis the children after them.

Parents should discuss this openly with their children. If they do not do, they will be probably the only ones who do not.

Prophet Mohamed PBUH has used a similar logical approach to convince a young man. When the man came to him and said, oh Profit of Allah, allow me to commit adultery, so the prophet asked him do you accept it for your mother, daughter or sister, the man said no, then the Prophet said, then how come do you accept it for other people's mothers, daughters and sisters. Unfortunately, this approach that works in the societies that does eat pork, would not work here. An Imam came from the Middle East to an Islamic center in America. One of the members came to him complaining about his son dating a girl friend and he does not know how to stop him. The Imam

said, no problem, I know the solution, just bring him to me. When the boy came to meet the Imam, the Imam asked him the traditional question. Do you accept it for your sister. The surprising answer that left the Imam speechless was yah, so what. He was astonished. He could not believe how the no jealousy infection from the American society has destroyed the natural jealousy that Allah has created in the heart of the brother towards his sister's honor to the extent that the word honor "الشرف" has disappeared from the American dictionary.

There are two characterizations of adultery in Islam and we have to be clear about them. There is adultery which constitutes a legal crime, and for this to be so, there has to be four witnesses who can identify the couple and who see the actual complete sexual act. If this pertains, that would be a legal crime and the public prosecutor can go ahead and prosecute. Of course this is very difficult to attain and it was meant to be very difficult to attain. It is almost impossible to have four witnesses if adultery is committed in secret behind closed doors because the objective of the Islamic law of Sharia is to catch those who go public only and not to invade the privacy of people.

But there is the other characterization of adultery, and that being a sin. Even this does not fulfill the criteria of the legal crime, but it is a sin, and whereas you can hide yourself from the people, you can hide yourself from the witnesses, you can do it behind closed doors and the law will have no access to you, you will never escape the watchful eye of Allah (S) because he is with you all the time. Therefore, this is the adultery which is the sin. It is a grave and heinous sin. According to this verse, the lot will be sins over sins, the punishment will be doubled on the day of judgment, and adulterers stay in it for ever.

Then Allah says

إلا من تاب وعمل عملا صالحا فأولئك يبدل الله سيئاتهم حسنات وكان الله غفورا رحيما

Except those who repent, and acquire faith, and do righteous deeds, and for those Allah will change their sins into charities and Allah is forgiving and merciful. Wow how generous is Allah. He changes the sins to charities to the extent that it was narrated in the Hadeeth that the prophet Mohamed said that sinners who repented will mention their old sins that are wiped from their records in front of Allah because Allah is converting their sins into charities and they want more of these charities.

So the door of repentance and self correction is wide open, and Allah (S) in the Hadeeth Kodsya says, you child of Adam, you approach me with an earth full of sins and then you come to me, and repent and worship me, and I approach you with an earth full of forgiveness. So those who have not fallen into sins, better remain out of it, and those who have fallen into sins, do not despair because Allah's mercy has no limit.

The concept of Allah's mercy and forgiveness is one of the most misunderstood concepts of religion. While Allah S has intended this concepts to invite the people who are outside of the straight path to repent and go back to it, we take it the other way around. We take it as an invitation to commit sins and remain in them and then count on the mercy of Allah S. This indeed was not the purpose of which Allah has made his forgiveness available for us. All the verses of the Koran and the Ahadeeth that talks about the mercy and forgiveness of Allah was meant to invite people who are committing sins to repent and correct their path and never despair the mercy of Allah. It does not matter what kind of sin that you have committed, Allah is willing to forgive it with sincere repentance. Mercy and forgiveness of Allah is a ramp that takes you back into the straight path if you have made an exit by mistake and it is not an invitation and encouragement for us to exit the straight path, remain out of it, and then count on the mercy and forgiveness of Allah.

The Prophet Mohamed S has clearly explained that in the Hadeeth:

"إن هناك أناس غرهم بالله الأمامي يقولون نحسن بالله الظن، والله كذبوا لو أحسنوا الظن لأحسنوا العمل"

Some people are deceived by the false wishes in Allah's mercy, they claim to have good hopes in Allah and good intensions, I swear by Allah that they are liars, if they have good hopes in Allah,

then they would have done good deeds. In other words, one should only have good hopes of Allah if he/she has done good deeds, but good hopes in Allah's mercy and good intentions cannot be used to justify bad deeds.

There is a big difference between having good hopes in Allah and falling into false deceiving wishes in Allah's mercy. False deceiving wishes is a passive state of mind where the individual is following his/her temptations and justifying that with good hopes in Allah's mercy and good intentions. But having good hopes in Allah's mercy is a positive state of mind where the individual is struggling with his/her temptations and fighting them and he is hoping to qualify for the mercy of Allah as a result for his/her struggle.

Allah S is warning us from falling into this trap in Surat

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

It is not according to your wishes or the wishes of the people who were given the book before you, whosoever does a bad deed will be punished for it and he will find no body to protect him from the punishment of Allah.

Also at the end of Surat Al-Kahf, Allah S said

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

The one who has hope when meeting his Lord should do good deeds and do not associate in the worship of his Lord any other false deity.

The bottom line is that indeed it is good to repent from sins, but it is much better not to commit them in the first place. Certainly no one can fool Allah by saying to him or herself, I will enjoy these Haram temptations now, and then repent later. Disobeying Allah puts the disobedient at very high risk of either a punishment in this world in a form of a car accident, a disease or a calamity, or a punishment in the hereafter if he/she forgets or fails to repent before death. When people grow older, it is harder to change themselves and this is why we always say

"من شب علي شيء شاب عليه"

Whatever a person is used to doing when he/she is young, will most likely be the same when he/she grows older.

The person who thinks of fooling Allah by enjoying Haram temptations now and repent later when they grow older is either one of two:

If he/she is a person that Allah loves, then Allah will send him the punishment in this world to wake him up as Allah S said in Surat Alsajda

وَلَنذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

We will give them the small punishment of this world before they get the big sever punishment of the hereafter so that they make wake up and repent.

The other possibility is if he/she is a person that Allah dislikes, then Allah will not send any punishment in this world but he saves all the punishment to him/her in the hereafter. Allah will close the heart of this person against repentance and this person becomes slave of temptations until he dies and then it is the pay back time.

Ninth feature:

والذين لا يشهدون الزور وإذا مروا باللغو مروا كراما

The servants of the compassionate are those who do not give a false testimony. And indeed there are those who do. In certain societies, you can buy a witness to come and give false testimony in court. But together with these are those who help the false witness. Also, those who violate general elections as happen in some countries. There are those who help doing that, and all this comes under false testimony.

وإذا مروا باللغو مروا كراما

When they come along a conversation, argument or a debate which is vane talk, random talk, futile talk, that is not worthy of respectable people to be engaged in, then they do not stay, and in honorable avoidance they just go away and leave it. Because this لغو, worthless talks, arguments and debates, is not among the features of the faithful.

Indeed Allah S dislikes worthless talks, arguments and debates because he in so many places of the Koran has described believers as the ones who stay away from such vane.

In Surat Almomenoon

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

Imam Al-Shafii may Allah be pleased with him has a surprise for us. We might think that the most vocal and knowledgeable person is the one who wins the debate. But Imam Al-Shafii says otherwise, he said “Every time I argue with a scholar I win and every time I argue with an ignorant person, he wins”. So in a group of knowledgeable people, the most wise and knowledgeable among them wins the debate, but in a mix of knowledgeable and ignorant people, the most ignorant one among them is the one who wins the debate. This fact is true for a very simple reason, you cannot reason with an ignorant person. He might quote the wrong Hadeeth and the wrong verse in the Quran and use them in the wrong way to prove his/her point by means of silly arguments or loud voice. He might also exaggerate and flip facts to prove his/her point. He might simply reject a verse in the Koran or a clear Hadeeth that opposes his/her point of view using silly arguments.

Using silly arguments should be an alarm for the believer that it is time to end the conversation. One brother was arguing with the Sheikh that it is okay for him not to fast Ramadan because he has good intentions. Fasting makes him grumpy and not able to work and this is why he does not fast. It is not because he has the bad intention of disobeying Allah, no no he loves Allah so much and he has very good intentions. It is just because fasting is inconvenient to him and makes him not able to work. He cannot give up his morning coffee and breakfast, and he cannot survive without his lunch. As soon as he made this silly argument, the Sheikh knew it is time to end the debate and he told him that he is speechless because of this strong argument and he really does not know what to say. He greeted him with peace and left.

Of course it is a silly ridiculous argument to use good intentions to justify bad deeds. Just like a good deed does not justify bad intentions, good intentions does not justify bad deeds. Otherwise, one can kill and justify that with good intentions, like 911 for example, or one can justify all kinds of bad deeds with good intentions.

Another brother who had a girl friend that he is committing adultery with was arguing with the Sheikh that it is okay to violate one rule of the religion. It is just one single rule that he is violating and no body is perfect. We are all sinners. Every one of us must break at least one rule and Allah should forgive us for that. At the beginning the Sheikh was not sure if this guy is an ignorant Muslim who is trying to make silly arguments or he is a sincere confused Muslim. So the Sheikh gave him the benefit of the doubt and he assumed that he is a sincere confused Muslim. He started explaining to him that scholars have discussed this issue, how many rules of Islam a person has to violate before he/she gets the curse from Allah. How many rules, five, ten or twenty?. All scholars agreed that it is only by one rule, violating one rule is enough to bring the curse of Allah. Their evidence is that Satan was permanently cursed by Allah for violating just one rule one time. Adam has also violated one rule but he was forgiven. What is the difference? Adam regretted his sin and cried for forgiveness but Satan insisted and he made silly argument that he is better than Adam because Adam is a piece of dirt and he is from the noble fire. So let us not follow the path of the Satan and insist on disobeying Allah and make silly arguments. Let us follow the path of Adam and repent. Specially that the Satan has broken one rule just one time, but the brother is breaking the same rule many times. He is committing not only one adultery, but he is committing it every day and this makes Allah angry. The brother replied how do you know that Allah is angry with me for breaking just one rule, did you ask him? At that point the Sheikh realized that the brother is nothing but an ignorant Muslim who is trying to make silly arguments. The sheikh replied that he is really impressed by this argument that he does not know how to answer it. He is so speechless

and it is time for him to leave. He greeted him with peace and left. This is exactly what Allah ordered in surat Alkasas (28:55)

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا نَبْتَغِي الْجَاهِلِينَ

When they recognize vane worthless talks and arguments, they turn away from the ignorant people saying you have your deeds and we have our deeds, peace be on you, we are not

Allah S has made fun in Surat Almodather (74:52) on those who expect him to send an official letter from him. Allah S says

بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَى صُحُفًا مُنشَرَّةً

Allah is not going to send a letter from himself to xyz person, you are doing something Haram, better stop it. Allah S has given us list of dos and don'ts in the Koran and Sunnah of Prophet Mohamed and he clearly said that these are his boundaries, whomsoever violates them, he/she is inviting the anger and curse from Allah. Arguing that how do you know Allah is angry with me for violating just one rule is indeed a silly argument.

We should also recognize that not all debates are clear cuts. Some issues are controversial and we should be prepared to have an open heart and an open mind when debating them. For example debating political issues, who is better George Bush or John Kerry? Or debating variable Sharia issues, such as how many athans we make before Jumma, one or two, or how may Raka of Traweeh should we pray, 20 or 8, ...etc. Those Sharia issues that are variable from one Mathhbab to another, one school of thought to another or one scholar to another. For these debates, believers must respect and tolerate other opinions for there is no clear cut in these issues. Unlike the constant Sharia issues. If two people are debating constant Sharia issues, it is a clear cut. The one who wants to comply with Sharia is right and the one who does not want to comply is wrong. It is a clear cut and there is no room for debates in these issues, but there is a big room for debates and discussions in political issue and variable Sharia issues.

There are two extremes when dealing with issues; there is the western extreme where all issues are debatable. There is nothing to them which is regarded and respected as an absolute truth. To them, every thing is debatable, the existence of God is debatable and God himself is debatable. The have nothing which is absolute truth and they have nothing like Sharia. This is why we hear all these

debates about abortion and homosexual marriages. Because to them, every thing is debatable. It is just a matter of finding enough people who are willing to support a certain opinion. This is the left extreme of the west.

The other right extreme is the extreme of every issue is black and white. No issue is debatable at all. It is my way or the highway. And indeed Islam is the middle path between these two extremes. We Muslims have an area which we regard as an absolute truth and do debate is acceptable in this area. Which is the six pillars of faith, the five pillars of worship, the authenticity of Quran and Sunnah and the fixed part of Sharia. Any one who debates in these areas is either an ignorant Muslim or a Kafir. On the other hands, we have variable Sharia issues, variable from one Mathhab to another and variable from one scholar to another, and we have other areas as well that are open for debates.

A very famous example of this is what happened during the battle of Badr. The Prophet Mohamed has selected a certain position for the Muslim army to camp in. Alhabab Ibn Almonther came to Prophet Mohamed asking first “Is this position that you have selected an order from Allah or is it based on your consultation, wisdom and war experience?” The Prophet answered. “It is based on my consultation, wisdom and war experience”. He said this is not the best choice. This land is low and it will be muddy and slippery if it rains and it is far away from water. Let us go to this high land, it will be dry and close to water, we drink and prevent our enemies from drinking. The Prophet said it is a good idea and he changed his position.

The two lessons to learn from this is first the question asked by Al-Habab Ibn Almonther, is it an order from Allah, if yes, then we listen and obey. No arguments, no ifs and buts. We immediately comply. We don't know better than Allah. And this is always the attitude of the Muslim towards the orders of Allah, no arguments, no ifs and buts, we immediately comply. He had to make sure first that it is not in this area before he starts a discussion or a debate.

The second lesson to learn is the lesson of consultation when dealing with variable issues. The location is a war issue that is subject to human wisdom and judgment. For these issues, there is big lesson to learn from the Prophet, he did not say, what, who are you, how dare are you to question my decision. I am a Prophet of God, who are you. No, he used the concept of Shura, consultation when dealing with these issues and complied with Shura decision even when it came against his opinion. The opposite of Shura is stubbornness and dictatorship. There is a big lesson

for us to learn here. Do we practice Shura like the Prophet Mohamed PBUH or do we practice stubbornness and dictatorship?

So in summary The Islamic attitude towards truth and debates are as follows:

1. Islam regards the area of faith and constant Sharia as an absolute truth that is not open for debate at all
2. Islam orders the use of Shura or consultation as well as useful wise debates and discussions regarding all other issues

This way Islam is taken the middle path between the two extremes. When comparing Islam to other religions, we find that in Christianity for example, all issues are debatable. The Christian creed is similar to the Shehada in Islam. While to Muslims Shehada is not debatable at all, there are two main Christian creeds and the Christians are debating all the time about them. If you feel surprised about that, wait. Christianity is 600 years older than Islam. I can see the Muslims debating the Shehada 600 years from today. Today's Muslims are debating what earlier Muslims have regarded as an absolute truth. We are following the same path, slowly but surely.

This is exactly what the Prophet Mohamed has predicted. He said

لتتبعن سنن من كان قبلكم حذو القذة بالقذة، حتي إذا دخلوا حجر ضب دخلتموه، قالوا اليهود والنصارى

يارسول الله، قال فمن؟

The Prophet PBUH said, you will follow the path of those who came before you step by step even if they have entered the house of the lizard, you will enter the same house. The companion said, which people that came before us you meant, did you mean the Christians and the Jews, the Prophet replied, who else.

We are following their path, slowly but surly. One of the problems that the Muslim Ommah suffers from today is the westernization, in particular the western infection of debating the divine law of Sharia. We all came from Muslim countries that have absolutely no respect to Sharia laws. In Egypt for example, the divine Sharia laws are no longer adopted as the laws of the land since 1885, this is about 120 years where the law of the land is not in compliance with the divine Sharia laws. I have listened to many debates that took place in Cairo between members of the Islamic movement and members of the secular movement debating the applicability of Sharia in today's

life. Compare this to the condition of Muslims 300 years ago for example, if any person went to the market in a Muslim country and tried to debate the applicability of Sharia, the public will cut him into pieces. And I am not talking here about scholars that are going to cut him into pieces, no I am talking about the average Muslim, the lay common Muslim, the street man. The uneducated who sells vegetables. To all Muslims regardless of education, debating this issue was an act of Kufr. Nowadays, this issue is debated and debated and challenged over and over again on public television in Muslim land and the Sharia is excluded from ruling Muslims and no body moves.

And what is next, debating the authenticity of the Sunnah, then debating the authenticity of the Koran, then debating the meaning of Shehada then ending up in hell fire. God knows what will happen 600 years from today. I pray to Allah to die before I see the authenticity of the Koran being debated among Muslims.

Members of the secular movement who claim to be Muslims use silly arguments to justify excluding the Sharia, the divine laws of Allah, from ruling. One of their most silly arguments is that Koran is holly and divine as long as it is a written text in the Moshaf. As soon as humans read this text, interpret it and implement it, then it becomes human and it is no longer divine or holly. So when Allah says in the Koran, do not kill, it is divine, holly and undebatable as long as it is written in the book, but as soon as we read it, understand as an order from Allah and enforce it, it becomes human and it is no longer holly, divine or undebatable. What really frustrates me is not that they make such silly arguments, what really frustrates me is that so many undecided Muslims from the so called educated class buy into these silly arguments.

We Muslims who live in the west are also under a similar threat. It is a fact that all diseases are contagious, specially spiritual diseases. We live in the western world and one of the diseases that sneaks into our hearts without us noticing is the disease of debating all issues. We get Americanized slowly but surly.

There are two kinds of Americanization and one is less dangerous than the other. There is the Americanization of practice and there is the Americanization of hearts. Our hearts are getting Americanized slowly without us feeling it. Our hearts slowly love un Islamic American practices and hate Islamic practices. This creates strong temptations towards un Islamic practices that lead us to debate the Sharia rules that reject them.

While we condemn governments of Muslim countries for excluding the Sharia from the life of Muslims to please superpowers, we also should examine ourselves. Part of Sharia is the

responsibility of the Islamic government, but we have two other parts; one is the responsibility of the Muslim community and the other is the responsibility of the Muslim individual on the personal level. Before condemning others, let us look at ourselves. Are we excluding parts of Sharia from our lives to please others or to please our temptations. There are two very serious violations of Sharia that are widely spread in our community:

The first one is back biting and gossiping. There is an overwhelming evidence in the Koran and Sunnah forbidding Muslims from backbiting one another. Allah have used a disgusting example in Surat Alhujorat to describe back biting. Allah Said (49:12),

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ

Do not backbite one another. Do any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother or sister after he is dead? And if one does that, wouldn't you be disgusted from him/her.

The Prophet PBUH defined backbiting as

.....

Backbiting is to mention something bad about your brother when he is not present. One companion asked, oh Prophet Mohamed, even if what I said is true, the Prophet replied, if what you said is true, then you have backbitten him, but if what you have said is not true, then it is a combination of backbiting and slander.

One of the most silly arguments that I heard to justify backbiting is “I backbite this brother and he backbites me as well so we are even”. May be you both are even as far as the rights towards one another, but none of you is even as far as the rights of Allah are concerned. Both of you are like the one who drank Alcohol together, you paid for his bottle and he paid for your bottle, but both of you are accountable to Allah for disobeying his orders.

This backbiting is not doing our community any good. Instead of getting busy working to save ourselves, children, spouses, and brothers and sisters in Islam and in humanity, we are busy eating the flesh of each other. Backbiting is nothing but an expression of hate. The punishment of Allah is that we get more divided and we hate one another even more. Allah makes us punish each other

by exchanging hates and backbites. This is just in this world, and his sever punishment is waiting in the day of judgment for those who do not repent.

If a brother or a sister is doing something wrong, then get together with him or her in a very private meeting and then kindly talk him or her out of it. If they insist and use silly arguments, then just make Dua'a for them in your prayers and try again later. Or try to avoid meeting them or talking to them or about them if you think that there is no hope.

The second serious violation that is widely spread in our community is the issue of Hijab. Allah S has ordained and described Hijab in the Koran in three different locations

Alnoor (24:31)

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى
جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي
إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ
يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

This Ayah literally calls for a Khimar that is long enough to cover the opening of the dress on the chest.

Alahzab (33:59)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ غَفُورًا

This Ayah literally calls for a long Gilbab. The Gilbab is wide enough not to show the contours of the body and long enough not to show the legs.

Alnoor (24:60)

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ اللَّاتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ

خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Tenth feature: والذين إذا ذكروا بآيات ربهم لم يخروا عليها صما وعميانا

Those who are if reminded with the Ayat of Allah, with the signs of Allah in his creation, and with the verses of the Koran, they do not just droop on them as if they were deaf or blind. How come, so many people look at God's signs, so many people read God's Koran. But it is the image only or the recitation sound only without any impact on the heart.

There are two kinds of Allah's Ayat. The written Ayat and the created Ayat because Allah has two kinds of books, the written book, which is the Holly Koran and the created book, which is the universe around us. Allah S has given us two kinds of knowledge to be able to understand both books; the knowledge of the written book, which we use to understand the holly Koran, and the knowledge of reality, which we use to understand and utilize the nature that Allah has created.

The servants of the compassionate when reminded about either kind of Ayat, they do not act as if they are blind and can not see the created Ayat of the universe around them and they do not act if they are deaf and can not hear the Ayat of the Koran recited to them.

And we are not far away from this. Sometimes, we do things that are Haram in response to a temptation that we have, and when a brother or a sister approaches us with a verse from the Koran or a Hadeeth from the teaching of the Prophet, we act just as if we are deaf or blind, deaf and did not hear the verse or blind and did not see the verse, and we continue to follow our temptations and ignore the Ayat of Allah S. Indeed if we do that, then we are disqualified from belonging to the servant of the compassionate category.

Allah (S) says describing the people who do not respond to the Ayat of the Koran as:

أفلا يتدبرون القرآن أم على قلوب أقفالها

Do not they bonder and think of the Ayat in the Koran, or are the locks bolted over their heart. Indeed Allah (S) describes the unbeliever as those who have eyes but by which they can not see, ears but through which they can not hear, and minds but by which they use not and do not utilize their minds to think and bonder. (Al-Araf 7:179)

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَّا
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ

The reason they are worse than the animals because the animals have fulfilled the purpose Allah S has created them for, but those people did not.

Another lesson to learn from this verse is that deep thinking and knowledge are Islamic duties. Allah S wants Muslims to have deep knowledge and deep understanding of both books, the written book and the reality book. Unfortunately, many Muslims have shallow understanding of Islam and shallow understanding of life. This leads to ignorance that makes easy to confuse them. It is very easy for the enemies of Allah to confuse ignorant Muslims that have shallow knowledge and shallow understanding of Islam and sometimes, use them to destroy or weaken Islam. This is why the Koran is full of the words يتفكرون، يتدبرون which both mean deep thinking. Deep knowledge and understanding of both Islam and reality are essential for Muslims to meet the challenges that are facing Islam and Muslims.

At that point, one might ask, is the knowledge of Islam easy or hard? Is it easy enough so that a ten years old boy can understand or is it hard so that we need Muftis and Imams in the caliber of Imam Al-Shafi, Abo-Hanifa, Malik and Ahmed bin Hanbal?

The answer is both. There is a basic kind of knowledge that is must to know for every one. Any child who does not know it, Allah will judge his father and mother. Any adult who does not know how to answer them, Allah will judge him/her. This kind of knowledge is the knowledge required to perform the applicable five pillars of Islam, required to know who is Allah, what is he expecting from us, what should we expect from him, what is Hallal, what is Haram and what is in the life after death. The knowledge of the six pillars of faith and the applicable pillars among the five pillars of worship. Knowledge of Zakah is not required for poor people for example.

There was a Sheikh who gave a Friday Khotbah in a very poor village, and the entire Khotbah was about the rules of Zakah. Zakat of Camels, gold, mines, land, ...etc. After the Khotbah, the people went to the Imam and told him, oh Imam, your Khotbah tells us that you are living in a totally different planet other than others. You are talking about paying Zakah and there is no single person in this village who is required to pay Zakah.

As a rule of thumb, any knowledge required for the Muslim to stay away from Haram, perform his duties and obligations and inspire him/herself is a must to learn. Every Muslim should be a Mufti in this kind of Knowledge. We do not need Imam Abo Hanifa to tell us how to make Wudu and what month to fast, but certainly we need people of his caliber to solve the Hillal problem and other complicated political, social and economic issues that we might have.

How about practicing Islam, is it easy or hard? Is it a religion which is easy to practice, or a religion that is hard to practice. Actually, it is easy to practice but we make it hard on ourselves. Allah S said about practicing the five times daily prayers in Surak Albakara (2:45)

وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

Seek Allah's help with patient perseverance and performing prayers, for performing prayers is indeed very hard, except to those who have hearts connected with Allah. Those who bear in mind the certainty that they will meet their Lord, and that they are to return to Him.

By disconnecting our hearts from Allah, we are making prayers hard on ourselves. The prayer is nothing but a reflection of what happens outside of it. Our hearts does not have on/off switch to switch focus and priorities. If outside of the prayer, our priorities and focus is this life, then when we pray, we still focus on this life in our prayers. But if outside of the prayers, our hearts and real life is connected with Allah and Allah and his business is the focus of our life, then when we pray we will just continue the normal focus on Allah.

They asked one guy, do you think about something else when you pray. He replied, are you kidding me, I love Allah so much that when I am outside of the prayer, I think about him, then when I am in the prayer, what do you think I love more than him to think about.

Prayers like that are easy, fun and enjoyments. This is why the Prophet SAW used to say, give us comfort by calling for the prayer Billal. We say, give us comfort by finishing the prayer quickly Billal.

By dedicating our life outside of the prayer to other than Allah, Allah punishment comes by making it impossible for us to dedicate our prayers to him. Any one of us can examine his/her prayers and the average ratio of dedication to Allah inside the prayer as compared to thinking about donia is very similar to the same ratio outside the prayer.

We make Islam hard on ourselves. A clear example in the Koran was given by Allah on how we intentionally on purpose make submission to Allah hard on ourselves. The name of the largest Surah in the Koran is a reminder of this concept. Surat Albakara. Albakara is not an Arabian animal and the arabs never had cows. But the secret behind this name is the reminder of the people who made submission to Allah harder on themselves

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوعًا قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

Moosa said to the children of Israel, slaughter a cow, they replied you got to be kidding. He replied, I seek the protection of Allah from being one of those ignorant ones who does not take the religion of Allah seriously.

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بَكْرٌ عَوَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فافعلوا مَا تُمَرُونَ

They said, ask your God to tell us how old is the cow, he said Allah says it should be middle age, not young and not old, comply and do as ordered. Stop nagging about the orders of Allah.

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ النَّظِيرِينَ

They said, pray to your God to tell us what color is the cow, he said Allah says it is shining golden yellow color that impresses those who look at it. And this time, he did not say like the last time, comply and do as ordered because it was obvious to him at this point that those guys are just nagging because they do not want to comply.

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقْرَ تَشَابَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ

They were able to find several cows like that, and again, instead of just selecting one of them, they continued the game of nagging. They said we have found several cows like you described, pray to your lord to tell us which one of them and we will be able to get it.

قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا ذُلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلِّمَةٌ لَا شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُوا الْآنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوهَا

وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

He said, Allah says it is a cow that is not trained for farming or watering the land, i.e. spoiled cow, and it has no birth marks in the skin. At that point, they realized that if they do not comply, they will be in deep trouble, so they hardly obeyed the order with lots of nagging and lots of pushing.

A big lesson from Allah to us. What is it with me and you dear brother and sisters that we make the religion of Allah harder on ourselves by either nagging or making silly ridiculous arguments because we do not want to comply. What is it with me and you? Why are we following the footsteps of the children of Israel whom Allah has cursed and declared his anger with them to be recited 17 times a day by every believer. What is wrong with me and you. Why do not we just follow the foot steps of the Prophet Mohamed and his companions as Allah said at the end of surat Albakara, b

وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

They said, our lord we listen and we obey. Our lord give us your mercy and forgiveness. Our lord to you is our return.

Look at the miserable condition of the Muslim Omah, when the Omah followed the path of we listen and we obey. It was easy to practice Islam to the full extent. The complete Islam that starts with as little as how to clean yourself to as big as making the empire of Allah a super power and completely destroying the empires of Shitan.

But now, when the Omah followed the footsteps of the people of the book in ignorance, nagging, making silly ridiculous arguments, it is almost impossible to practice Islam fully. We end up having to pick and chose from the religion of Allah. We open the Koran and say. This is very hard to practice, let us ignore it. Opps, this part is going to put us in deep huge trouble, forget it, do not even think about it. We should not take this part very seriously, it will disturb our lives and our comfort zone. Why are we facing this fitnah.

Listen to the Hadeeth of the Prophet predicting exactly this situation:

Do you know what is going to happen to you when your women have power over you, your young people have spoiled religion and manners, and you do not practice Jihad?

Is this going to ever happen Prophet of Allah? Yes, I swear by my Lord worse than this will happen in this Omah. What do you think will happen to you when you stop enjoining good and forbidding evil? The Shaba asked is this going to every happen Prophet of Allah, he said, yes, I swear by Allah worse than this will happen, what will happen to you if you see good as evil and see evil as good. They said, is this ever going to happen prophet of Allah, he said yes, I swear by Allah worse than that will happen, they asked, what is worse than that Prophet of Allah, he said,

what if you enjoin evil and you forbid good? When this happen Allah is going to say, I swear by my honorable face, that I will put them in a Fitnah that will make the most wise among them confused.

And look around and see. The Omah now, on the individual level, on the community level and on the government level is enjoining evil and forbidding good. And the most wise person in this Omah is very confused and does not know what to do and what is the way out.

This is why deep knowledge and deep thinking is indeed and Islamic duty. Deep knowledge of both books of Allah, the written book and the book of nature, is required. Deep combined knowledge and understanding of Islam and reality are both required. In addition, as the Ayah said, when we are reminded about the Ayat of Allah, whether they are the Ayat of the written book or the Ayat of the created book, we do not ignore them and act if we are blind and can not see or deaf and we can not hear.

The Ayat of the written book are often recited in this Masjid and we have the attitude of ignore it and do not take it seriously. In addition, the Ayat of the created book of Allah is also shown to us, the last one is the Tsunami, which is one of the reminding Ayat of Allah, because we have forgotten him. How did we handle that. Did it work with us, did we learn any thing from it. Did it make us closer to Allah, or did we ignore the lessons that Allah want us to learn from it and kept arguing about it, whether it is a punishment form Allah or not.

How do we know if the test from Allah is a punishment or mercy. How can we tell? We can tell by examining ourselves after the incident, if this incident reminded us with Allah and made us get closer to him and abandon disobeying him, then it is indeed a mercy. A person who got blind, she lost her vision. It was obvious to every one that this incident made her a better Muslim. She started wearing her Hijab and then she became very serious about her religion. To her this is not a punishment from Allah, it is indeed a mercy from Allah that he took away her eyes to make her wake up, correct her path and repent. But if this incident make her angry with Allah and she abandon praying or fasting for example and she started saying things to accuse Allah of injustice or something like that, then this is indeed is meant to be a punishment for her. In that sense, something could happen to a family, the same thing is considered to be mercy for one person and punishment for another person.

If Allah wants to give us mercy, he will send us a test at our level so that we can pass it. But if Allah wants to punish us, he sends to us a test higher than our level and then we flunk it. This is how can we judge things.

So we have to learn, think and think deeply. The matter is much more serious than what we think. We can not just follow the temptations of the comfort zone and expect Allah to do the work for us, or send angels to do the work for us. No, Allah made it a duty on us to take his written book and implement it on his created book. Allah wants the Koran to be a reality, to be an empire. And not any empire, Allah wants his Koran to be super powerful empire. Allah did not reveal this book of guidance to remain as precious words printed with cheap ink on cheap paper. No, this is not what Allah created us for. Allah created us to take his words and make them a reality. Destroy the empire of Shitan and build the empire of Rahman. Just like what the prophet did, he destroyed many satanic empires, the roman empire, the Persian empire, ...etc and he built the empire of Allah as a strong super power. The word of Allah in this empire is the highest word and the word of Shitan is the lowest word.

At that point you will see that the reality of the created book of Allah will be a super match to the written book of Allah. This is our job and this our duty. The matter is serious. The Prophet SAW said that there will be 73 forms of Islam, all of them in hell fire except one. Every one was curious about which one, the prophet said, it is the form of Islam practiced by me and my companions.

Is this the Islam we are practicing. No, we are practicing a different Islam. We a mix of pieces of Islam that fits America, and pieces of America that fits Islam. We are not taking Islam seriously while we are extremely serious about our jobs. We are willing to sacrifice every thing for our jobs and if we are short in time or money, the first commitments to be canceled are the commitments to Allah. Where is our commitment to learning Islam, where is our commitment to teach Islam to our kids, where is our commitment to the five essential duties of Muslims in America. How serious are we in these tasks, or actually are we aware of these tasks.

Ignorance and shallow understanding:

Why is it so dangerous to plug our eyes and ears against the Ayat of Allah, because it leads to ignorance. Spiritual ignorance is the worst enemy ever. If we see how the west is analyzing the causes of the problems in the third world, we hear them saying that it is because of the combination of ignorance, poverty and diseases. But this is from a materialistic western perspective, but from an Islamic perspective our worst enemy is spiritual ignorance. If we solve

the problem of spiritual ignorance, then all other problems are solved. We have many examples to prove that. Prophet Ayoob, he was tested by Allah and put in sever conditions of poverty and disease. He also had no scientific knowledge. But because of his spiritual knowledge, he was able to achieve success in this life and in the hereafter. Another example is Prophet Mohamed SAW and his companions. They were all poor and Prophet Mohamed was in a state of extreme poverty. How many times he was seen tying a stone to his stomach to kill the pain of hunger. He was in continuous dept and he died in dept. He was also illiterate. But because of his spiritual knowledge, he and his companions were able to achieve the best success in this life and in the hereafter.

This is why the first verse in the Koran is to read in the name of the Lord. Reading in the name of Allah will make us use our knowledge the good way but reading in the name of the Satan will make us use our knowledge the wrong way. Use our knowledge to slave and kill.

Another kind of ignorance is shallow understanding. Complete ignorance means 0% knowledge, but shallow knowledge means little more than nothing, or 0%. This leads us to the man who does not know and he does not know that he does not know. Muslims with shallow knowledge will end up confused. How many times we have seen ignorant confused Muslims destroying Islam from inside. Do I need to remind you that the puppet thugs who are ruling the Muslims and oppressing them are ignorant Muslims. Do I need to remind you that the ones who are fighting Islam in Muslim countries are ignorant Muslims and the ones who are supporting them are as ignorant as they are. We can never meet the challenges of today without deep understanding and knowledge.

Now how can we remove the ignorance that we have and increase the level of our knowledge and understanding. If every time we gather we gather for materialistic food only and we do not listen to an educational lecture about Islam. Unfortunately many Muslims run away from educational lectures about Islam because they consider them “torture”. Even the Friday Khotbah, we come late to avoid the torture of listening to the Khotbah. In this way, we will never gain the knowledge that Allah wants us to gain. Allah S said in Surat Kaf

Allah S said in Surat Kaf

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

This is a reminder to the one who have a heart or listens to guidance and let the guidance reach to his heart. But the one who does not listen, nothing will work with him/her.

As a result of ignorance and shallow understanding we have people today who they do not know and they do not know that they do not know. This causes problems when those kind of people start behaving and making decisions thinking that they know but they actually do not.

Another reason for deep knowledge, thinking and understanding to be essential Islamic duties is the fact that we are accountable to Allah s for the actual truth not for what we think is the truth. This why it is very important to know that we should learn what Islam says and then follow it. In other words, we are required to follow the actual truth not what we think is the truth. This is why it is very important to learn, ask, think and inquire about the truth that can easily be discovered by reading the both books of Allah, the written book and the created book. If we do something wrong because we do not know where is the truth and we go to meet Allah and Allah judges us for doing this wrong thing, what would be our excuse, are we going to say, we did not know any better, then why we did not know any better, because we were ignorant, why is it because we did not have books, we did not have time, or because we did not have the interest. The actual truth is that we have the books and the time but what we lack is the interest. This is becomes an excuse which is worse than the crime itself. An excuse that deserves more punishment than the crime itself.

Another reason for deep knowledge and understanding to be essential Islamic duties because in Islam there is not way out of our bad deeds. And accountability is individual:

ألا تزر وازرة وزر أخرى. وأن ليس للإنسان إلا ما سعى. وأن سعيه سوف يري. ثم يجزاه الجزاء الأوفى

No one is punished for the mistake of another and no one is rewarded or punished for things that he/she didn't do. And for sure every individual will be accountable for his/her deeds only and he/she will get the most fair and just reward or punishment.

So in Islam, there is no way out. May be in other religion there is, but in Islam there is no escape. May be the Jews are the chosen people, may be the Christians, they say our sins are being prepaid by the slaughter of Jesus Alyh Elsalto Walsalam. But to us accountability is individual. No one will be judged for the sins of others, every one will see only whatever he himself has done or was a reason for it.

What if we truly have the interest, but there is something that we do not know because it is very difficult such as dividing inheritance or Hisba laws, the answer is simple it comes from Allah, Allah S says

Ask people of knowledge and wisdom if you do not know.

Allah also said in Surat Al-Nisa

وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ

If they seek the arbitration of Islam on the matter, then the people who have deep knowledge among them will extract the ruling.

Thus, seek knowledge, ask scholars, discuss, inquire, read, but also think deeply because deep thinking is an Islamic duty. This is why in Islam, we do not have clergy. We do not have a pope or a holly person to lead us but we rather have a holly text. Allah does not want Muslims to be like the cattle that moves blindly following the direction ordered by a “Holly guided person” but indeed Allah S wants us to follow the Holly text that he has revealed. And to be able to do that, we must have deep knowledge of that text, deep understanding of the reality, spiritual strength inside us to fight the internal enemies of Allah, which are the evil soul and its evil temptations, and physical means of power and strength to struggle against the outside enemies of Allah S.

There are two extremes regarding this issue and we should be clear about them. The first extreme is the extreme of considering a person to be holly and consider his words to be above the words of the holly text. This is indeed the right extreme while the left extreme is to take our holly text completely in our hands and ignore all the work that was done by hundreds of scholars that the Muslim Omah have trusted their knowledge and wisdom for hundreds of years. This is indeed the left extreme and Islam is the middle path between the two extremes.

As we explained before, the Islamic Sharia has two areas; one is the constant Sharia issue that do not change from one Mazhab to another, from one school of thought to another, from one time to another or from one place to another. For those issues are not debatable, not subject to any negotiation or compromise. These are well established clear cut issues in the Koran and the teaching of Prophet Mohamed PBUH.

The other area is the area of variable sharia issues that is left open by Allah for Muslims to do Ijtihad and consult about. Those are variable Sharia issues; variable from one Mazhab to another,

from one school of thought to another, from one time to another and from one place to another. As far as these issues are concerned, there is no holy person that can give holy Ijtihad. The holy text is above all of us guiding us and setting boundaries for our Ijtihad. Any Ijtihad that leads to haram is rejected, any Ijtihad that leads to the disobedience of Allah is not acceptable.

At the same time, we can't ignore the incredible effort that was done by hundreds of Muslims scholars that the entire Muslim Ummah has trusted their knowledge and wisdom for hundreds of years. Specially when we know that these people have spent a massive amount of time studying the holy text, organizing it into chapters and simplifying it to the common lay Muslims who do not have the time or the talent to match their knowledge and wisdom.

Just imagine someone who did not finish high school coming to challenge Einstein and say his theories are no longer applicable. You will probably say to yourself, this guy is an idiot. Who is he to challenge Einstein. He did not even finish high school and he does not have the knowledge or the training of Einstein, yet he is challenging him. What an idiot. He does not know how to solve a simple differential equation or quantum mechanics and he is challenging Einstein. Wow.

Probably we get the same feelings when we find someone who does not have a high school worth of Islamic education and he says that Imam Shafii is entitled to his own opinion and I am entitled to my own opinion as well. This is indeed the formula for disaster.

Certainly there is nothing wrong of following another Imam different than Imam Shafii, for they are Einstein as well but to challenge all Imams and come up with something new is really hilarious, specially if all of them agree on a certain issue. How likely it is that all of them are wrong and you are right. How likely it is that four people who have the caliber of Einstein to be wrong and a person who did not complete a high school worth of Islamic education to be right. A person who does not know how to read Koran correctly from the book, a person who does not know the difference between Hadeeth classifications, a person who does not know how to identify the subject from the object, or the verb from the noun in a Koranic verse. How can such a person challenge the Einsteins of this Ummah.

The human soul loves short cuts. We love to get the prestige and privilege of Einstein without going through the long years of hard work of studying and research that he went through. And suddenly we consider ourselves an authority in the religion of Allah without the proper education, training or knowledge. This is indeed the worst formula for disasters and unfortunately, it is widely spread here in North America.

Games we play to run away from Allah's Ayat:

There are many techniques to ignore the Ayat of Allah when hearing or seeing them. One technique is by playing games on them like the people of the Saturday who were cursed by Allah in the Koran "أولعناهم كما لعنا أصحاب السبت"

Or we have cursed them the same way we cursed the people who violated Saturday. Those people were forbidden from using Saturday to earn any living, yet, they have set the nets on Friday night and collected them on Saturday morning as Allah told the story in the Quran

وَأَسْأَلُهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ حِيتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرْعًا وَيَوْمَ لَا
يَسْتَبُونَ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ نَبِّئُوهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

The second game is the game of the Mohkmat and Motshabihat

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ
فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ
عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ {7} رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الْوَهَّابُ

The third game is the game of silly ridiculous arguments as Allah S said

وَجَادَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ

The fourth game is to claim that we know better than Allah. What Allah and his messenger say is good only in ideal circumstances, but they are not applicable today in our conditions bla bla bla. Allah S warned believers in Surat Al-Hojorat from claiming that they know better than him and his messenger

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Ignoring our mission and duties on earth

Another thing that comes in our mind when we read the verse, those when reminded with the Ayat of Allah, they do not ignore them as though they are blind and can't see them or they are deaf and they can't hear them. That thing is our mission as custodians of Allah on earth. Allah SW trusted us with a free will and gave us control over his creation so that we implement the guidance of Allah in our reality. In other words, our job is to take the guidance of Allah and make it a reality instead of a written text. Instead of being ink on paper, we make it every day reality. When we read the written book of Allah and look to what we have done with his created book. Compare his written book of guidance to the reality, we see little match and lots of violations. This means that we have failed to do our job as custodians of Allah on earth. We read justice, brotherhood, sisterhood, peace, love and manners.

The main reason for our failure explained in this particular verse. When we are reminded that we are not implemented the written Ayat of Allah in our reality, we ignore them and act as if we are blind who can't see and deaf who can't hear. This leads to the corruption, which is the mismatch between Allah's written book and what we have done with his created book.

Another problem we face is that when Non Muslims read our Koran, they say wow. Very impressive justice, brotherhood sisterhood, love, unity, good manners, ...etc. Very impressive. Now let us look and see how much of this you guys are implementing. People of all faith and ideologies claim ideal values in their written scriptures and constitutions. But when you at the reality, it is totally different. Communism, for example, communists claim justice and rights of ploritalia and all these ideal values, but when you look in reality, you see none of that. Christians, the Bible has beautiful claims of love and peace, and if your brother hit you on the right cheek, give him the left one and so forth. Love those who persecute you. Fight your enemies with love, but when you look at reality, you see something else. We have seen them spreading love and peace in two world wars. We have seen them spreading love and peace in Iraq and Afaganistan and we have seen them dropping the bombs of love and peace on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And you Muslims are exactly the same. You claim values in your written book to deceive others but you do not practice them. You guys are talking about brotherhood. Where is that brotherhood. In your communities we see dirty games of politics, we see hitting under the built, we see backbiting and gossiping. In your written text we see justice and good manners, but you all came from countries and societies that do not have any of that.

You are trying to sell to us text on paper. You try to claim that what you have is superior to what we have. Hah, What brought you to our country then. Why did you line up in front of the

American embassy and waited overnight in front of the immigration offices here in US. Why almost all people in Muslim countries wish to immigrate to US.

And they have a valid point. Remember the story of the student who made Dawah and one of his friends became a Muslim, then he took him home with him. He quitted Islam after two months and he came back to tell his friend. You cheater, where are those Aboo Baker and Omar that you used to deceive me with their stories. Where are all these values in your Koran, I have seen none of that, I have seen the opposite.

Remember the story of the brother who married a sister from the west and she went home with him for a visit, and then every time she sees someone doing something wrong, she looks at her husband, her husband says, oh those are from the Non Muslim population. And this happened many times until the sister told her husband. Oh, I thought you were born in a Muslim country.

All of us is resulting from us not abiding by this particular quality. Those when they are reminded with the Ayat of Allah, they do not ignore them and pretend that they are blind who can't see and deaf who can't hear.

Indeed there is are people who take the deen of Allah and the Ayat of Allah seriously and there are those who do not take them seriously. The enemies of Allah call those who take Islam and the Ayat of Allah seriously radical Muslims, while they call those who are not serious about Islam and the Ayat of Allah moderate Muslim. They use the tactic of divide and conquer to conquer Muslims. They use the so called moderate Muslims to crush the so called radical Muslims. We have seen this happening almost every where. In Egypt, the Islamic movement was crushed by the police forces under the leadership of the so called moderate Muslims. Moderate Muslims are appointed in position of power as puppet thugs to crush and oppress radical Muslims. We have seen it happening before and we are seeing it happening now as we speak. For the example, the Pakistani army under the leadership of moderate Muslims is killing radical Muslims with the blessings of the moderate Muslims who see radical Muslims as a threat to them. They deserve to be killed because they will unleash India on us.

What is our role on all of this. Prophet Mohamed number one job was to reform the reality to match the written book of Allah. He taught us the way, the way is to reform ourselves first. How, is to read the Ayat of Allah and instead of ignoring them or not taking them seriously, no. We take them very serious. We change and reform our hearts and ourselves to match the Ayat of Allah and not to play blind who can't see or deaf who can't hear.

Another main problem related to this verse that we have witnessed spreading among Muslims in North America is the problem that we think that we know better than Allah and his messenger. While Allah and his messenger has given us clear instructions and guidelines of all aspects of our life, we turn our back to the Ayat of Allah and we claim that we know better. This disease is not new. It appeared before at the time of Prophet Mohamed PBUH when

Eleventh Feature: والذين يقولون ربنا هب لنا من أزواجنا وذرياتنا قررة أعين واجعلنا للمتقين إماما

Those who say, please Allah make to us from among our spouses and children, delight and joy for our eyes and make us lead others to your way. Now let us take a closer look on this very important Duaa. Normally, a Duaa means that you are asking Allah for something, you are basically beginning for something that you need. So what happens here, how come making this Duaa becomes a criteria of evaluation.

The answer comes when we examine the Duaa. Normally, the Duaa will reflect our desires and interests. One is making Duaa to ask Allah for money, another for power, a third for a job title and a fourth for a pretty wife. Making Duaa to Allah is a worship in itself and Allah gets angry when we do not ask him and beg him for things. It is an indication that we do not feel that we have a need for him and we feel that we are self sufficient, why do I need Allah, as he said in Surat Alalaq

كلا ان الإنسان ليطغى، أن راه استغني

Indeed man feels self sufficient when he sees his own wealth and power.

But the point here is the words of the Duaa themselves reflect a dream, a desire, something that I am dying for and something that is very important to me. If I make the Duaa asking Allah for one specific thing once every blue moon, then obviously I have no genuine interest in this thing. But If I keep making the Duaa, day and night, in every prayer, in every sajdah, every time I remember Allah, then it has to be something essential and extremely important to me.

Now, the servants of the compassionate are persistent in making this Duaa, day and night, it is very essential to them. Guess what are they are asking for, money, wealth, job title, land, farm, stock market, big home, no. They are persistently asking Allah to make to them from among their children and spouses delight and joy for their eyes. Is it a joy because they are beautiful and handsome and well dressed? or white or black or blond or non blond or blue eyed or non blue eyed? No. When spouses and children become the joy of the eye of the believers, it means that they are following him and supporting him in the way of faith and Iman.

So they are being the source of guidance to their spouses and children, and as a result, their spouses and children give them lots of support back in their Dawah and struggle activities. The

family support is very important. Moses peace be upon him, after Allah assigned him the mission, now he has a chance to ask for things that will enable him to do his very difficult task, among the things that he asked for was to make his own brother an assistant to him. Why, because it is the best support ever any individual can have. It is the support of his own family. Prophet Mohamed had the support of his wife Khadija R and that was the best gift from Allah to him. When Prophet Noah did not have the support of his own son, that was harder on him than any other thing and he was about to make Allah angry by asking him to save his son.

So this is extremely important issue to the servants of Allah. Their immediate family members. The biggest and most important task. They ask of Allah to enable them to guide their spouses and raise their children in the ways of faith so that they can enjoy their guidance, Islamic behavior and moral as well as physical support and assistant when they grow up.

This is indeed will contributes to the continuity of the faith. Allah S created us for a mission. This mission will span more than our life span. We are required to leave behind soldiers who are going to continue the task. Soldiers with deep knowledge and understanding of Islam as well as deep faith and trust in Allah. Their good deeds add up to ours even after we are dead.

On the other hand, sometimes, one of the thoughts that keeps haunting us and make us sleepless is that if we die before making our children good Muslims, then the chain is broken and our mission will end with us, and Islamic centers might be in the market for sale, in one generation. We sometimes see churches for sale, some of them were bought by Muslims and became Mosques. Let us ask our selves a question, what made the Christians sell their churches to Muslims? and the answer is that there was a generation that frequented the church to worship, followed by a generation which has no values that cease to come to the church to worship. The greatest danger that meets the Muslims in this land, is if they can not extend their Islam to their children or if they have children who either take Islam less serious than their parents or completely ignore Islam.

So, if this is indeed the biggest fear, if it is indeed the most horrible thing that can ever happen to us, then this will show as a persistent Duaa that reflects this continuous fear and worry. So this Duaa becomes a feature of their behavior. This explains how come a Duaa, where we are begging Allah for something becomes suddenly a criteria of evaluation.

Remember, among the 11 criteria there was one Duaa before this one the Duaa is protect us from the punishment of hell fire for it is a sever painful punishment. These two Duaas, the fear of hell Duaa and the continuity of faith Duaa are central dreams in the hearts of the believers. Why

To feel how much joy and pleasure it is, just imagine for a minute that you wake up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom or drink something and then you suddenly hear a beautiful recitation of Koran coming from your son's or daughter's room. He/she is sacrificing his/her sleep and doing night prayers to Allah and reciting Koran beautifully with Tajweed with a very beautiful heart touching voice. Just imagine and see how much delight and joy this will bring to your heart.

Just imagine if you have a young daughter that is running around in her college teaching Islam, wearing her Hijab and very proud about her identity, not ashamed of her Hijab and her identity and running away from them, no, she is proud of her identity and her Hijab, and she is very vocal explaining and defending Islam. Just imagine and see how much joy and delight to your eye is she going to be. Imagine attending a lecture for her where she is teaching Islam or a forum where she is making good points about Islam. Just imagine how much joy and pleasure this will bring to your heart.

And we know. In Islam we convert the feelings of joy and happiness to feeling and words of gratitude and praise to Allah. On the other hand, we convert any feeling of sadness and sorrow to patience and words of Duaa to Allah to replace us with a better than what we have lost. Allah S says in Surat Alhadeed.

{21} مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

{22} لِكَيْلًا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ {23}

Any disaster or calamity that happens on earth or in your selves is written in the divine book of knowledge before it takes place (How this be possible) this is very easy to Allah. For you do not feel sad of what you lost and you do not feel proud of what you gain, for Allah does not like the ones who feel arrogant and proud.

Wait a minute here. There is a delima that needs to be solved. Did not prophet Mohamed PBUH cried when he lost his son Ibrahim. To the naked ignorant eye, this may seem a conflict, but look how Imam Ibn Alkayim explained it. He said no human being that does not feel happy for gains and sad for losses, but convert the feelings of joy and happiness to feeling and words of gratitude and praise to Allah and convert the feeling of sadness and sorrow to patience and words of Duaa to Allah to replace us with a better than what we have lost.

He also made a beautiful comparison between one of righteous followers of Prophet Mohamed PBUH when he was given the news of the death of his son he smiled. He said, which is better, the behavior of the Prophet or the behavior of the righteous follower. Indeed it is the behavior of the Prophet for two reasons:

1. The prophet was able to combine in his heart two feelings, one generated the other, he combined the feeling of mercy on his own son with the feeling of patience and acceptance of what Allah has decreed. The feeling of mercy generated tears in his eyes and the feeling of patience and submission to Allah's will generated the words of Duaa on his tongue. But the righteous follower failed to combine both feelings. His heart was too small to combine two feelings so he had to keep only one and drop the other. So he kept the feeling of submission and acceptance to Allah's will and he dropped the feeling of mercy to his child, and as a result he cried.
2. Prophet Mohamed is the master teacher of the middle balanced path. Keeping the balance between sadness for loosing a child with patience and acceptance to Allah's will is what prophet Mohamed was an example for. It is indeed a form of extremism to smile when you get the news of the death of your own child.

So when the servants of the servants of the compassionate are so delighted and happy for seeing their own children's guidance and Islamic behavior. This feeling is immediately translated into feelings of gratitude and words of praise to Allah. Not arrogance and pride. Look at my son, look at my daughter. They are doing much better than yours. It is because of my efforts. Indeed this attitude is forbidden and disliked by Allah.

والله لا يحب كل مختال فخور

Two things that are important when we are raising our children:

First: You are the one who set and form the expectations of your children. If your central dream is to make your child a doctor or a rich person, then you will focus on his academic education and you will keep telling him, do your homework so that you become a successful doctor or business man or whatever. But if your central dream is to make your child to be Khalid Ibn Alwaleed or Ali Ibn Aby Talib or Salaheddin Alayoobi, then you will focus on the kind of education and training that will make him this way, as well as install this dream in his/her heart.

When dealing with our children, we should put in our mind that we are dealing with a future leader of the Muslim Ummah. We are dealing with a person who is going to build the kingdom of Allah and destroy the kingdom of Satan. We are dealing with future Salahuddin Al-Ayubi who is going to free the Muslim land or we are dealing with Imam Al-Shafi who is going to be the future authority of Islamic knowledge.

We are the ones who install these dreams in our children and set priorities. If we set the priorities wrong, then we will share the blame with them. We are also the ones who determine the kind of education and training they get, the school they go to, the environment they grow up in, and how patient they are. We either produce children who are very spoiled and can't stand not getting any thing that they want, or very persevering who can carve the stones with their teeth.

If you see a child at college age running around driving a fancy car, having unlimited credit card and a cell phone with unlimited plan. Then why this child should study. He already has every thing. Why go through the pain of education. We sometime destroy our own children and think that we are serving them.

On the other hand, if we always blame our children and humiliate them. If we accuse them and put them down, then we are also destroying them.

The solution is to keep the balance inspire them and install into them the dreams of being the future Mohamed Al-Fatih and at the same time, discipline them in a non destructive manner.

The second point is the strong foundation. Let us look at this ruler. We are building this foundation now. After we build strong foundation, we do not have to worry about them even if they bend a little bit because of whatever storm. The worst psychological storms come when they are teenagers. And this is why Allah promised the young man who grows up in the straight path to be under the shadow of his throne in the day of judgment.

Because this is a central dream in their life, you find them working hard to give their children the balanced spiritual and materialistic body of knowledge they have and their effort includes a daily continuous supplication to Allah to

If this is a central dream for the parents, then the children will certainly notice that and they will try to meet the expectations of their parents. But if the parents do not care, then most likely, the children will also not care.

By making our children a delight and joy for our eyes, then the relationship with our children will last beyond the boundaries of this life. Otherwise, this relationship will be cut and end in this life and it will become enemy to enemy relationship in the hereafter. They will be our enemies in the day of judgment in one of two ways; either they will be accusing us of not doing our job as parents and they ask Allah to punish us for their bad deeds instead of us, or if we have done our job and they did not follow, then we will be testifying against them in the day of judgment that we have given them the message and they have declined.

Compare this ugly picture to the other sweet picture of those who believed and their children followed them. Allah S says describing this picture

والذين آمنوا واتبعتهم ذريتهم بإيمان ألحقنا بهم ذريتهم وما ألتناهم من عملهم من شيء كل امرئ بما كسب رهين

Those who attained the faith and their descendents followed them in the way of faith, then we will join their descendents with them in the day of judgment and we will not deny them the fruits of their good deeds, each one is accounted for his/her own personal deeds.

Every righteous father did pray to Allah SWT to save his children. Let us look at our spiritual father, look at Prophet Abraham when Allah SWT tested him, and passed all tests, then Allah told him that I am appointing you a leader, then he said, what about my descendents?, Allah answered him that this promise of mine does not apply to the wrong doers.

وإذ ابتلى إبراهيم ربه بكلمات فأتمهن قال إني جاعلك للناس إماما قال ومن ذريتي قال لا ينال عهدي الظالمين

It is important here to differentiate between the physical descendents of Ibrahim and the spiritual descendents of Ibrahim. We Muslims are the spiritual descendents of Ibrahim, not the physical descendents. It does not matter to Allah if we are the physical descendents to Ibrahim, what really matters to Allah is if we are the spiritual descendents of Ibrahim, which means that we are following his religion and way of life. Allah S called Prophet Ibrahim our father.

ملة أبيكم إبراهيم هو سماكم المسلمين من قبل

The religion of your father Ibrahim, he is the one that gave you the name Muslims before. He is not necessarily our physical father, but he is definitely our spiritual father. We are his spiritual descendents because we are following his way of submission to Allah S. He was very submissive

to Allah S. Allah gave him the hardest ever test of submission that he has ever given to any human being and he passed it. He ordered him to slaughter his own son Ismael that was not a regular son, he was a Prophet as well. Ibrahim loved Ismail so much and he came to him after a long life of trying hard to get children without success. And he did as Allah ordered. Allah has described this test as

إن هذا هو البلاء المبين، وفديناه بذبح عظيم.

Indeed that was the tough test and we have replaced him with a great animal to be slaughtered instead. Great submission was the most important characteristic of Ibrahim PBUH in response to the order from Allah

إذ قال له ربه أسلم، قال أسلمت لرب العالمين

Allah told him submit yourself fully to my will, he responded and said, I am fully submissive to Allah the Lord of all worlds. And the Prophet Mohamed and his followers are his spiritual descendents because they are the ones following his way of submission to Allah.

We have a very touchy story in the Koran about a righteous father who worked very very very hard to guide his own children and others and he had a failure in his own family. His own son. Prophet Noah ASW, Allah dedicated a full Surah in the Koran, the Surah of Noah in which Allah has documented his hard work and struggle and the stubbornness that he was faced with.

It reached to a level that when he meets his own people, they cover their head with their dress and put their fingers in their ears. The expression is beautiful, you can't put all you fingers in your ears, but Allah wants to show us how stubborn they were. When they get a new born, the first thing they teach him is that they take him to the place of Prophet Noah and they tell the boy. This man is crazy and progressive liar, do not you ever listen to him "ولا يلدوا إلا فاجرا كفارا". As a result, Prophet Noah did make Duaa against them. He made Duaa for Allah to destroy them. Allah then told him "ولا تخاطبني في الذين ظلموا إنهم مغرقون" do not pray for any one of them, they will be destroyed for sure.

It is such a clear order from Allah, without exception, do not you ever ask me to save any of them. And the order is directed to a prophet, who has requested the destruction of his people himself. But when the flood starts and he took the ship and the believers were save while his own physical or biological son refused to join him, he disobeyed the orders of Allah and he prayed to Allah.

He said, he is my son and your promise is true that you will save me and my family, and Allah replied, he is not of your family because he was a wrong doer.

Allah S means of course he is not from your spiritual family, may be he is your physical biological son, but to Allah this means nothing, and this is why Allah replied clearly that he is not from your family, he is a wrong doer.

ونادى نوح ربه فقال رب إن ابني من أهلي وإن وعدك الحق وأنت أحكم الحاكمين. قال يا نوح إنه ليس من أهلك إنه عمل غير صالح فلا تسألن ما ليس لك به علم إني أعظك أن تكون من الجاهلين

You can see that he did not care about any one who is drowning but he disobeyed Allah SWT while he is a prophet because of his own son. This is a big example of how failure in the family is the worst failure.

Profit Mohamed used to say سلمان منا آل البيت Salman, the purgan, is from my household, on the Other hand, we know what the quran says about Abo Lahab, which is the immediate uncle of the Prophet Mohamed PBUH.

رفع الإسلام سلمان فارسا، وحط الشرك أبو لهب

Islam made Salman an honorable member of the Prophet's family while association with Allah has degraded Aboo Lahab to the bottom of hell fire.

So it is not the blood relationship that matters. Faith makes the strangers brothers and make the brothers enemies. It is the spiritual relationship that matters to Allah.

The people who like to brag that there are physical descendents from the family of Prophet Mohamed PBUH, the prophet said to his family:

يافاطمة إعملي إني لا أغني عنك من الله شيئاً. يا بني هاشم لا يأتيني الناس بأعمالهم يوم القيامة وتأتوني بأحسابكم

وأنسابكم، إعملوا فإني لا أغني عنكم من الله شيئاً

Oh my daughter Fatima, do work hard in good deeds because your relation to me is not going to be valued by Allah S. Oh you the children of Hashim, which is the immediate family of the Prophet Mohamed PBUH, I do not want to see people in the day of judgment coming with mountains of good deeds while you are coming trying to claim credit for your relationship to me, work hard in doing good deeds because your relationship to me is not going to be of any value in the day of judgment.

There is a nice way to reply to the people who like to brag that they are from the family of Prophet Mohamed PBUH, is to tell them, if you are bragging about this, then you might be coming from the branch of Aboo Lahab. This will makes them think that if the physical relationship to the Prophet would ever help, it would have helped Aboo Lahab and Aboo Talib.

Then the second part of the Duaa highlights another important quality. The servants of the compassionate do not wish to be a source of guidance to their children only. They are not selfish people who live for their families only, but they also say

واجعلنا للمتقين إماما

And make us lead others to your way. Make us a source of guidance to others as well. Not only we want exercise this within the boundaries of our immediate family, but we also want to be leaders to others to your way.

Let us look at the word Imam. Every one loves to be an Imam, even the wrong doers and the ones who have nothing to do with Islam. People run for elections just to be Imams. Many people use Islam just to become an Imam and we know Islam is to be served and not to be used. But they just want to use Islam as a vehicle to become an Imam. So let us make few clarifications here about this particular Duaa.

First of all, we have two kinds of Imams. There are Imams of guidance “أئمة الهدى” and there are Imams of misguidance “أئمة الضلال”; one kind lead to Jannah and the other kind lead to hell fire.

Allah S mentions both in the Koran; The Imams of guidance Allah mentioned in Surat Alsajda “We have made them Imams to guide others in obedience to our orders when they proved patience and trust in Allah’s Ayat”

Allah S says about the Imams of misguidance “We have made them Imams to guide others to hell fire and in the day of judgment they do not get any protection, and they are followed by a curse in this life and in the day of judgment they are from the ugly ones”

Of course believers are praying to be Imams of guidance. But how, how can we make sure that we are Imams of guidance, not Imams of misguidance. There are many things that we have to insure in order to determine what kind of Imams are we:

The first thing is to look deep inside ourselves and sincerely examine our motive and intensions. Why do we need to be Imams? Is it because we always love to be in the front page? Is it because we always love to hold the microphone and speak? Is it because we love to always be in the spot light? Or is it that we love Allah and we want to go to Jannah.

This is very fine line, but it is the fine line that draws the boundary between hell fire and Jannah, between being an Imam of guidance or being an Imam of misguidance.

It is the design of Allah that Imamship or leadership has to come with power. All in one package. It is impossible to separate them from one another. Prophet Mohamed had a lot of power and honor and all the Imams of guidance had lots of power and honor. It is a very high level test, when you become an Imam, how to stay away from the evil of power and the evil of spot light that comes with it. There is absolutely no separation between political Imamship and spiritual Imamship. They are all come in one package. Both come together. No one can claim that Prophet Mohamed or the Pope had no political power.

Now, who gives power to the Imam? The followers give him power. The more followers you have the more powerful Imam you are. This is why in the some the excessive Sufi movement, many people pretend to be Wali, a friend of Allah, with secret special powers to attract followers and gain control over them.

Now we can't judge intentions. We are ordered to take people for their face value. We can judge actions and words but we are totally forbidden from judging intentions. So how can we tell if an Imam is an Imam of guidance or an Imam of misguidance based on his intentions?

It is simple, we look at the way this Imam has achieved his power. If this Imam is using dirty politics, backbiting and hitting under the belt to gain and hold on to power, then he is an Imam of misguidance. If this Imam is using lies and false claims to gain and hold on to power, then he is an Imam of misguidance. If the Imam is using false theology to gain power, then he is an Imam of misguidance.

Then who are the Imams of guidance then, any Imam of guidance must be a follower of the Super Imam of guidance, which is Prophet Mohamed PBUH. If this Imam is following the ways that prophet Mohamed PBUH has followed and respecting the rules that Prophet Mohamed PBUH has respected, not using backbiting, not using dirty politics, not making up false theology, not claiming himself a Wali of special powers and connections with Allah, but he is calling people to follow the theology, path and practice of Prophet Mohamed PBUH, then this Imam is an Imam of guidance.

Another criterion is the respect of priorities. For example, an Imam who misses the prayer to attend a meeting is not an Imam of guidance. An Imam who practices the Sunnah and leaves the Fard (obligation) is not an Imam of guidance. For example, someone who is growing a beard, but his tongue is like a sword. A sister who is not wearing Hijab but she is giving a lecture about Islam. Another example is the Khawarij who had no problem killing the companions of Prophet Mohamed, but when a Kafir person passed by them, they said

“وَأَنْ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجْرَهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلغَهُ مَأْمَنَهُ”

If one of the people who associate with Allah other deities pass in your neighborhood, then protect him so that he gets a chance to listen to the words of Allah and then let him leave with peace. Wow, Masha'a Allah, you are killing the Muslims and protecting the Kafir.

This is like someone who is praying Sunnah prayer but not the Fard. You might say, who is going to do this non sense. Just look around you, you will find people who will do the Sunnah and let go to the Fard especially if that particular Sunnah brings attention and recognition to them. Such a people are Imams of misguidance. Why?

Why? What is the logic behind that? Why do we say that these people are Imams of misguidance? For a very simple logic. Those kind of Imams earn love and respect of other ignorant Muslims by being active in the volunteer activities, or Sunnah activities, as a result, people follow them and use them as role model, then when they violate the Fard people also follow them and in this way they are Imams of misguidance.

Omar Ibn Alkhatib R used to say, I seek the protection of Allah from the evil produced by a vocal well speaking hypocrite. Why? Because this vocal hypocrite has the power of words and speeches that he is going to deceive people with. He also used to say, I seek the protection of Allah from the evil produced by an ignorant worshiper. Why? Because this worshiper impresses people with his dedication and worship, then he gains the power and the respect of the people who are going to follow his example and because he is ignorant, he is going to make mistakes and these mistakes are going to be followed by a lot of people.

Similarly, we seek protection from Allah from the evil produced by any ignorant leader who practices the Sunnah and ignores the obligation. How could he be a leader then if he is ignorant, in our time, people become leaders because they have means of power, either the ability of giving good speeches, or because of the financial muscles, or because of luck or for many other reasons.

Then what should we do if we come across leaders of misguidance?. We live at a time where we have lots of misguidance Imams around, what do we do? simple, we take the good and leave the bad. We filter their example, we copy and support them in the good things and we stay away from the bad things. We deal with them just like we deal with fish because they are fishy. We eat the meat and we leave the sharp bones because it will hurt our stomach.

What if a person has a weakness and he is still interested to be an Imam. Do Imams have to be perfect? Of course no and people who have weaknesses can still be Imams, How? Very simple. By realizing their weaknesses and by periodically reminding people not to follow their examples. Such Imams are indeed Imams of guidance. I remember one Imam who was very fat. He failed to control the temptation of eating. In every Khotbah, he reminds people not to follow his example. He says, I am in violation of the Sunnah of eating. It is one of my weaknesses, please do not follow my example. Take the good in me and leave the bad. Whatever good Allah has blessed me with, follow it as an example, whatever bad things my evil soul is imposing on me, do not follow it. And in doing that, this Imam is indeed an Imam of guidance even though he has deficiencies.

What prevents Imams of misguidance from doing that is the arrogance and ego. Instead of admitting their weakness publicly and tell people not to follow their example. No, they make silly ridicules arguments to twist facts and to deny the deficiency. Who said that this thing is Fard? Who said that this thing is Haram? And they falsify the religion of Allah and misguide people to show themselves as the perfect leaders.

Every one of us is a leader whether he likes it or not. The Prophet Mohamed PBUH said every one of you is a Shepard and every one of you is responsible of what is under his/her control. The man is the Imam of his house and he either guides or misguides his own wife and children. And this is the biggest crime, for a man to mislead his own family. To misguide them by being either a bad example or by not providing to them the required knowledge or by installing into them wrong dreams. Instead of installing into them the dream of Jannah and provide them with the knowledge required to achieve the dream.

No instead, he installs into them the materialistic dreams; you have to be rich and powerful to enjoy life; you have to have the power of education and degrees; ...etc. Then what are the good dreams that we need to install in our children; you need to be rich and powerful to serve Islam, if you do not use your money and power to serve Allah, then this money and power will be a reason for you to go to hell fire. Allah provides us with power and money to see how are we going to use them to serve him, not to only to serve ourselves, then you recite to him/her the verse in Surat Alqasas: Seek in what Allah has given you the reward of the hereafter and do not forget your personal share, and do good deeds to thank Allah for what he has given you and do not use your money and power to cause corruption for Allah hates the ones who cause corruption.

Your share is secondary. But the hereafter is the main use. Allah did not say and use money to serve yourself and do not forget the hereafter. No, this is our attitude, which is very wrong. The correct thing is dedicate what Allah has given you to the hereafter and do not forget your share in this life. Do we do that when we dedicate to Allah and his religion only the left over of our time and money.

We set the example to our children without knowing. If the children see a father who is fully dedicated to work and fun, but very little remembrance of Allah and very little service to Islam. Then what kind of example the children are going to follow. If they see a mother who is dedicated to gossiping with friends, watching TV and shopping, then what kind of example this is going to

be. Being an Imam of misguidance is not restricted to the situation of a community leader no, we can be Imams of misguidance in our own house and we do not feel it.

I feel very sorry for many American Muslim children who do not have an example of at least one parent to follow. In United States, this is the dead end to those children because their connection with Islam is going to be much less than their parents. Back home, it was not a dead end because there was other examples to follow in the society. Somehow a good friend at school or college or at work, and it is very likely to happen. Reformers are every where in the Muslims societies. But in United States, this is very unlikely. The chances are very slim that this child is going to run into a reformer who is going to change his/her life and make them more serious Muslims than their parents.

This is just a reminder for myself and for my dear beloved brothers and sisters to judge ourselves before we are judged by Allah. For if we judge ourselves, we will not punish ourselves, we will just repent, but if we wait until Allah judges us, then it is going to come with a lot of pain and punishment.

These are the eleven features of the servants of the compassionate, and after identifying these eleven features, the Allah S states the reward for them

أولئك يجزون الغرفة بما صبروا ويلقون فيها تحية وسلاما

Those will have as a reward, the highest place, the chamber in paradise, and they will be met by greetings and peace.

خالدين فيها حسنت مستقرا ومقاما

They will dwell there for ever, and indeed it is the best place to be in and dwell in.

قل ما يعبأ بكم ربي لولا دعاؤكم فقد كذبتم فسوف يكون لزاما

Allah would not mind, would not care, would not be affected, does not care about you except for those who pray to him. He is wealthy, rich and self sufficient and he does not need you or anybody else. But those who ask Allah, he turns to them and answers their call while those who do not and give the lie to the religion, it is inevitable that they will meet their due punishment in the day of judgment.