

The Great Humane Eminent Scholar

Mohammad Amin Sheikho

(His soul has been sanctified by Allah)

Islamic Education for Youths

Level Three



Checked and Introduced by
The Researcher and Thinker
Prof. A.K. John Alias Al-Dayrani

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Level Three

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Authored by

The Great Humane Eminent Scholar

Mohammad Amin Sheikho

(His soul has been sanctified by Al'lah)

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Contents

Offering	6
Free Valuable Gift	7
Introduction	8
Part of Memorization and Interpretation	12
Lesson One.....	14
Surah Al-Layl (Part One).....	14
Lesson Two.....	21
Surah Al-Layl (Part Two).....	21
Lesson Three.....	28
Surah Al-Layl (Part Three).....	28
Lesson Four.....	34
Surah Al-Shams (Part One).....	34
Lesson Five.....	41
Surah Al-Shams (Part Two).....	41
Lesson Six.....	48
Surah Al-Shams (Part Three).....	48
Lesson Seven.....	59
Surah Al-Shams (Part Four).....	59
Lesson Eight.....	65
Surah Al-Balad (Part One).....	65
Lesson Nine.....	78
Surah Al-Balad (Part Two).....	78
Lesson Ten.....	89
Surah Al-Balad (Part Three).....	89

Lesson Eleven	96
Surah Al-Fajr (Part One).....	96
Lesson Twelve	108
Surah Al-Fajr (Part Two)	108
Lesson Thirteen.....	118
Surah Al-Fajr (Part Three)	118
Lesson Fourteen	126
Surah Al-Fajr (Part Four).....	126
Lesson Fifteen.....	134
Surah Al-Ghashiyya (Part One)	134
Lesson Sixteen	146
Surah Al-Ghashiyya (Part Two)	146
Lesson Seventeen.....	158
Surah Al-A'la (Part One)	158
Lesson Eighteen	177
Surah Al-A'la (Part Two)	177
Lesson Nineteen.....	184
Surah At-Tariq	184
Part of Stories	196
Lesson Twenty	197
The Story of Our Master Noah (pth) (Part one).....	197
Lesson Twenty One	208
The Story of Our Master Noah (pth) (Part Two)	208
Lesson Twenty Two:.....	220
Smashing the Idols	220

Lesson Twenty Three:.....	233
The Plot to Murder an Eminent Officer	233
Lesson Twenty Four:	240
A great Epic Against Deprivation and Inhumanity (Part One)	240
Lesson Twenty Five:.....	253
A Great Epic Against Deprivation and Inhumanity (Part Two)	253
.....	253
Lesson Twenty Six:	270
The Sentence of Cutting off the Thief's Hand	270
Endnotes.....	276

Offering

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

From the Divine Heaven of the great Prophet Mohammad (cpth: Communication with Al'lah and Peace are Through Him) the sympathetic, the lenient and merciful who offered his soul and life for his people ...

Perfect and complete communication with Al'lah is through him, and the blessings of Al'lah are upon his family, his pure companions and those who succeeded him with goodness, purity...

We offer this new blessing program:

Free Valuable Gift

Islamic Education for the Youth

Level Three

To our dear students to get and stand on the way of the holy prophet (cph) [1], yearning for success, profiting high knowledge and interested in perceiving the reality.

This book is for free, not for sale

Introduction

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

Praise be to God, the Provider of the worlds, perfect and complete communication with God is through the best of the Creatures, our Prophet Mohammad who was sent as the great Mercy to the worlds and also through his family, his companions and anyone who follows his guidance till the Day of Resurrection.

My honorable teacher,

This blessed program is prepared for teaching students and providing them with the highest culture based on the knowledge which is derived from the word of God the Almighty and from the holy Prophet's (cpth) explanation of Al'lah's words. By this Divine knowledge, the student will be prepared for disciplining himself according to the high moralities and virtues, furnishing it with Divine perfection to achieve success in this world and in the hereafter.

The importance of this subject "Islamic education" is that it is derived from the interpretation of the holy Qur'an by the great humane eminent scholar M. A. Sheikho whom God the Almighty bestowed His light upon, due to his closeness to God, his great love to the Prophet (cpth) and his high mercy, got from God the Almighty, to his brothers in humanity. He is the light shining the way to the generations to lead them to real happiness through the Book of Al'lah and the light that guides human beings by removing them from darkness to Al'lah's Light.

Dear teacher, you will find in this program these basic important points:

Firstly:

The illustration of the perfection of God the Almighty, the clarification of His compassion to His creatures, His justice in His creatures, the disproof of all the negative ideas which are settled in people's minds and their negative speeches which contradict the Justice, Compassion and all Perfection of God. God says: "**And**

(all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do.”

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 7[2], Al-A’raf (The Heights), Verse 180*

Secondly:

The clarification about the perfection of God Messengers (Communication with Allah and peace are them) that God the Almighty witnesses their holiness, purity and their impeccability in His holy book and makes them as great examples to the human beings to follow them, and disproving any falsehood or interpretation which are against their exaltation and high rank. That is according to His high saying: **“They are those whom God has guided. So follow their guidance”**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 6, Al-An’am (Livestock), Verse 90*

Thirdly:

A call for us to apply God legislation (The instructions of the Holy Qur’an) and to be devoted wholeheartedly to God the Almighty. In addition to warning human beings of following their spirit’s forbidden desires hoping good rewards from God, God says: **“It will not be in accordance with your desires (Muslims), nor those of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), whosoever works evil, will have the recompense thereof, and he will not find any protector or helper besides Allah.”**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 4, An-Nisa’ (Women), Verse 123*

And the holy Prophet says: **“A courteous, is he who subjected his spirit and works for after death, while the incapable is he whose spirit follows its desires hoping good rewards from God”** [reported by Attirmizi].

Fourthly:

Guiding students to the right belief steps according to what the holy Prophet (cph) had explained to his noble companions from the holy book of God the Almighty. So no one's heart can be associated with the gaiety of faith without being upright to the commands of God and having an inner prohibiting sanction in himself against committing evil. God the Almighty mentions that in His holy saying: **"...and whosoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart ..."**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 64, Al-Taghabun, Verse 11*

Fifthly:

Venerating and exalting the holy Prophet (cph), clarifying his greatness according to his rank of his closeness to God then guiding to the way of attaining his real love and explaining what the fruits of this holy love are: such as getting closer to Al'lah the Almighty and gaining in heart the perfection stain from God the Owner of all Sublime Perfections. God says: **"...So those who believe in him (Mohammad cph), honour him, help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful."**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 7, Al-A'raf (The Heights), Verse 157*

So for that reason, all the dearest brothers "teachers" should study this program (book) comprehensively before they teach it, noting that it is prepared in a very easy way. The teacher should explain the holy Verses firstly in Arabic language if he can and if the students know some Arabic that will help the student to understand the meaning of the verses then the whole fortress completely.

Some stories of the Eminent Scholar M. A. Sheikho are mentioned in it to enrich the atmosphere with sublime guidance during teaching. These sublime stories teach the student how to think, how to be brave, wise and unselfish, and illustrate to him that God

grants the real knowledge only to he who uses sincerely his thinking in getting close to Him and helps others as much as he can. God the Almighty provides him with the Divine knowledge and helps him. God provides human according to the degree of his humanitarian hard work, and God is the most Giver, He is the Owner of the great favour.

Introduced by
Prof. A. K John Alias Al-Dayrani

Part of Memorization and Interpretation

The Holy Qur'an separates the Right from the Wrong

The Holy Qur'an explains the way of happiness and sadness for human being to differentiate between good and bad.

The Holy Qur'an contains the following:

The denotation of; "There is no God except Al'lah".

The explanation of the true way and warnings from the wrong ways.

The Almighty God said **{O mankind! Verily, there has come to you a convincing proof from your Lord, and We sent down to you a manifest light. }**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 4, An-Nisa' (Women), Verse 174*

Dear Student:

This Qur'an is the rescuer light from forfeiture and blindness, and the only way which takes you out of the darkness of ignorance into the lightness of knowledge and education. The holy Qur'an contains the right knowledge and the logical, intellectual guidance for the way of humanitarian rank.

By applying Qur'an's instructions, the happiness will be approached and the diseases and afflictions will be disappeared, that surely could happen because Qur'an has been sent down by your Provider the all-Compassionate the all-Merciful.

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Lesson One

Interpretation of Fortress 92 (The Night)

Surah Al-Layl (Part One)

I seek refuge in God from the cursed Satan

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

1. **“Behold the night as it lets fall its darkness,”**
2. **“And the day as it appears in glory.”**
3. **“Behold the creation of male and female.”**
4. **“Indeed, the ends you strive for are diverse,”**
5. **“For him that gives in charity and attains piety”**
6. **“And believes in the Best:”**
7. **“We shall smooth the path to ease;”**
8. **“But for him that gives nothing and thinks himself self-sufficient”**
9. **“And disbelieves the Best:”**
10. **“We shall smooth his path to difficulty.”**
11. **“His riches will avail him nothing when he breathes his last.”**
12. **“It is for Us to give guidance,”**
13. **“And truly the latter (the wrong way) and the former (the right way) belong to Us (by providing you with power and might),”**
14. **“Therefore I warn you of a Fire blazing fiercely,”**
15. **“None shall reach it but those most distressed,”**
16. **“The ones who deny (the truth) and turn away (from God),”**

17. “But those most devoted to Al’lah shall be far removed from it,”

18. “Those who spend what they have for an increase in purity,”

19. “Not in recompense for someone’s favor,”

20. “But seeking the Countenance of their Lord, the Most High,”

21. “And soon they will be well pleased.”

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Having clarified in ‘Morning Bright’ Fortress that God (glory to Him) keeps providing for humanity, watching them and overwhelming them with His Care and Tenderness, the Almighty then revealed this Fortress so as to show you, human, the way that leads to your happiness, and so as to guide you to the acts that will result in benefits for your life and for the life to come.

God begins this Fortress with a group of universal signs in order to acquaint you with the Grandeur of the One Who guides you, and to illustrate His comprehensive Favor towards you. He says:

Verse no. 1

1. “Behold the night as it lets fall its darkness,”

2. “And the day as it appears in glory.”

The “**night**” is meant as the darkness which creeps from the east to cover the earth, increasing little by little until it has spread over everything and veiled us all, so that we stop performing our work and go to find rest, surrendering to sleep in order to regain our energy, having become tired and exhausted.

As for the “**day**”, it is the light which comes with the sunrise to uncover all of our Provider’s Boons that we can see. We then go to work having reacquired our liveliness and got rid of the tiredness we had been feeling. It is as if we have been born once again, and have started a new stage in our life.

I wonder! Who has created this array for us? Who created the night for rest and gave the day its light? Who gave the earth its spherical form? Who lets it revolve, causing the night and the day to be created so that we can advance in our lives, perform our work and enjoy the graces of our Provider?

The meaning of these two Verses is not restricted only to this; it has many other senses which are known to nobody except Al'lah.

For example, when the night lets its darkness fall, it creates silence and quiet which help us to get some rest and surrender to sleep, as we have mentioned in 'Ad-Duha' Fortress.

The “**night**” also causes moisture and coolness, which have great benefits for both humans and animals as well as helping in the growth of plant life.

The night has various advantages: whatever you know of them, you can be sure that there are many others, far from your perception.

There are also various meanings folded under the Verse “**And the day as it appears in glory**”.

For example, during the day, all of the beings which your Provider has created for you come into view. Its heat and light also make the plants grow, the seeds spring forth from the ground, the flowers become fully formed and the fruit become ripe. Indeed, none can count the benefits of the day except their Creator.

If you think deeply of that, you will be guided to your Creator and will know a little of His Care and His Favor for you.

After mentioning the night and the day and the firm rule of their creation, God shows us another of His Signs when He says:

Verse no. 3

3. “Behold the creation of male and female.”

This Verse reveals to us that God has created all kinds of animals, insects, birds, fish, plants and humans in pairs. If you look around

yourself carefully, you will find that this system includes even inanimate objects and everything that you see.

The Almighty Al'lah made a male and a female of everything and created a harmony and an attraction between them, and then gave each of them what is appropriate and what it requires. This was to make life run in good order, to make all beings continue to survive, and so that there would be complete grace and charity for you.

What great mercy the Creator has for us! What great favor He has obliged us with!

Verse no. 4

4. “Indeed, the ends you strive for are diverse.”

This Verse clarifies that creatures have different functions and that nothing has been created in vain. Each creature has its own activity and its own function. For example, the camels carry our belongings, the horses and the mules draw ploughs and vehicles, the bulls plough the fields, the sheep supply us with wool and milk, the hens produce eggs, the hyenas clean the wild of carrion so as to keep the environment disinfected and fresh of air, the dogs guard our houses, the cats rid the house of insects and mice, the bees make honey and help in pollinating the flowers, and so on.

Thus, each creature has its own function and the proper physical characteristics to allow it to perform this function, in addition to appropriate instincts to drive its tendencies in this life.

All these creatures work abreast in order to keep this universe moving in the discipline which we now see, to ensure happiness for you, and to guarantee the continuation of life.

I wonder: who has identified every creature and its own specialties? Who has supplied them with the equipment that will help them to achieve their function?

Who has made this entire universe as a single unified entity made up of interconnected parts, and has given it such amazing perfection?!

Was it not the Owner of Compassion and Tenderness?!

Was it not the Almighty Al'lah, the Owner of Majesty and Glory?!

Should you not think of this, so that you can recognize His Might?
Should not you remind yourself of His Kindness and Graces?!

Should not you submit to His Orders and avoid His Prohibitions,
which only target your well-being?!

After the four Verses with which the Almighty began this noble
Fortress, He (glory to Him) wanted to show us the way that leads
to real happiness and a good life. He says:

Verse no. 5-7

5. “For him that gives in charity and attains piety”

6. “And believes in the Best,”

7. “We shall smooth the path to ease;”

Your Grand Provider and High Creator did not create you for
nothing. He revealed to you how to enjoy a happy life and draw
advantages to yourself.

God began with the Verse: **“For him that gives in charity and
attains piety”** in order to inform you that – after acquiring the
belief of God in your mind through contemplation of this universe
– the first step you should adopt is the rendering of good actions
and charity.

This applies to the rich person who spends the money which their
Provider granted them in charity, the strong person who helps
weak people, the dignitary who uses their position to serve people,
the scholar who teaches others what they know: for anyone that
renders good deeds whenever they can, working within their
abilities, their charity will lead them to piety.

As previously mentioned, **“Piety”** is the entrance of the spirit into
the Presence of its Provider and Creator. However, the spirit
cannot enter into God’s Presence unless it sacrifices something that
it possesses, for one of spirit’s rules is that it must rely on good

deeds in order to feel reassured and confident with itself. If it becomes sure that its deed is good and if it feels pleased with its charity, it will willingly draw near to its Provider.

Thus good work is the first thing which we should do after we acquire intellectual belief, because it is the means to help the spirit draw nearer to its Creator.

You may ask: what is the result of piety? The Almighty revealed that in His saying: **“And believes in the Best”**.

The **“Best”** is the guidance brought by the Holy Qur’an.

Entering into God’s Presence makes you become illuminated by His Light, and this illumination uncovers for you the goodness and happiness that are encompassed by His Commands.

If you see this, you will ascertain the Favor of your Provider, and thus become grateful for His Kindness to you. You will also give thanks to God’s Envoy (cpth) for the efforts he made in order to help you follow this guidance.

However, with what shall your Provider repay you if you make your best sacrifices to attain piety and follow the way of charity and humanity?

God has told you that He shall return charity for charity. He says: **“We shall smooth the path to ease.”**

That means that God will make your life full of ease and pleasure, and such ease will not only be restricted to your worldly life. Indeed, you will continue to enjoy this throughout the life to come, which will be even more easy and lasting.

Exercises:

Memorize Surah Al-Layl with your teacher and comprehend its noble meaning devoting your attention to that while you recite it.

Questions

- 1- Mention some benefits that the human gains from the Night?
- 2- Al'lah the Almighty Says: **{Behold the creation of male and female}**, what does this Verse indicate to?
- 3- What is the meaning of the word (**piety: Al-Taqwa**)?

Lesson Two

Interpretation of Fortress 92 (The Night)

Surah Al-Layl (Part Two)

In the previous Verses, the Almighty has shown us the way that leads to our pleasure; in the following Verses He warns us of the way that leads to a life full of distress and difficulties. He says:

Verse no. 8-10

8. “But for him that gives nothing and thinks himself self-sufficient”

9. “And disbelieves the Best,”

10. “We shall smooth his path to difficulty.”

The Almighty began these Verses with the Verse “But for him that gives nothing and thinks himself self-sufficient.” He does so in order to acquaint you with the misery that results from a failure to do good deeds.

Sacrifice and charity help the spirit to become illuminated by God’s Light, whereas failing to help the poor and needy makes you ungenerous towards your spirit. This failure causes the spirit to be shackled and hampers it from advancing in the way of piety. Therefore it thinks that it has no need of approaching God or attaining His light.

The noble saying denotes: **“Poverty is about to lead to disbelief.”**[3]

‘Poverty’ here does not mean lack of money, but means a dearth of good deeds.

However, what shall follow such shunning for those who dispense with turning to God?

I say that blindness and perversity shall follow them. Through them, the spirit will become unable either to distinguish between evil and virtue or to witness the realities of its actions.

Consequently, it denies the truth due to its blindness and its straying from the straight path.

God says: “**And disbelieves the Best:**” and the word “**Best**” refers to the guidance which the Holy Qur’an brought, which is so-called because it presents the best way for people to enjoy a good and happy life.

In fact, anyone that becomes ungenerous towards themselves – failing to make the necessary sacrifice for their heart-eye to be opened so that they will recognize their own advantages and disadvantages – will not realize the good that is contained in the Holy Qur’an; nor will they appreciate this guidance and the Godly Favor folded therein. On the contrary, you will see that they prefer the conduct of people of unbelief and shunning, and incline to those of corruption and disobedience.

For example, if such a person hears about the unveiling of women, they will forget God’s Saying in His Holy Book: “**Prophet: say to your wives, your daughters, and the wives of true believers to draw their veils close around them. That is more proper, so that they do not get recognized and so that they do not get molested. Al’lah is Forgiving and Merciful.**”

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 33, Al-Ahzab (The Combined Clans), Verse 59*

This person will also forget the reason behind the battle against the Jewish tribe of Bani Qainuka'a. They will consider the unveiling of women to be the correct practice, claiming that veiling is an old, traditional practice.

They will also reject the prohibition on lending money at interest, under the pretense that it stimulates economic activity.

However, if this person were to give to charity and become pious – that is to say, if they were to perform good works and draw near to their Provider – they would see that unveiling the face of a woman disjoints family relationships and breaks up marital links, as well

as leading to immorality and depravity in the upbringing of children and many other social ills.

If they were to give to charity and become pious, they would also understand that interest – whether it be a little or a lot – is most often the cause of merchants' bankruptcy, generates serious economic problems, and leads to a slump in trade. It makes the poor even needier and makes them dependent, and when poverty increases, trade activity lessens and it is difficult to sell goods and services. As a result, the rich will be reduced to poverty, and misery will spread in all classes.

Thus you will find that those who oppose deny the truth. Their thoughts disagree with what is right and their behavior is far from humane. Besides, their only purpose in life is to fulfill their own whims and lowly desires.

What shall their deeds entail for them?

Will their Provider leave them alone, without doing anything?

Is not the Almighty Merciful towards humanity, even if they deviate from the right path and cling to this earthly life, succumbing to their mean lusts?

The Almighty clarified that He does not leave such a person alone or neglect him, for He (glory to Him) is Merciful.

Out of His Compassion, He exerts pressure on such a person, so that they may resort to Him to be cured of their disease and to render their heart pure of malice and its wicked tendencies. God says: **“We shall smoothen the path to difficulty.”**

That is, God will fill their life with distress and difficulty. Therefore, you will see that this person is sometimes sick and sometimes anguished, and they will be distressed even if they obtain all worldly treasures.

Indeed, they will always live in suffering, misery and hardship. God says: **“He that gives no heed to My Warning shall live in woe...”**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 20, Ta Ha 'Ta-ha' (Pure), Verse 124*

However, if they die without repenting to God, what shall this person face?

I say, they will move from such a bitter life – filled with affliction, grief, and anguish – on to suffering the torment of the life to come, which is still harder and lower.

God says:

Verse no. 11

11. “His riches will avail him nothing when he breathes his last.”

That is, when a person dies and is buried in their tomb, what can their riches possibly do for them? Will their wealth follow them, to save them from the woe that will afflict them? Will they not wish that they had been charitable in this worldly life, and that they had avoided falling into such an abyss and suffering such great torture?

Anyone that refrains from charity only deprives themselves of blessings, for the failure to perform good actions leads to distance from God, in turn leading to blindness and denial of the truth. Nothing follows denying the truth except aberration, which causes people to end up in the Fire, where miserliness and the accumulation of money will avail them nothing.

Those who do good do it for themselves, and those who commit evil do so at their own peril.

Having shown us the way that leads to bliss and the way that leads to fire and distress, the Almighty God wanted to illustrate to humanity that we are completely free in our choices, and that He did not bind our will. The choice between the path of what is right or the path of error and delusion is ours alone, and comes down to our own will. God says:

Verse no. 12

12. “It is for Us to give guidance.”

God shows you the way that leads to your benefit and bliss, just as He exhorts you against what causes your misery. Then it is you alone who chooses the way you wish to follow. You are certainly not forced to follow a certain way or to perform a certain deed. God says: “**No compulsion is in religion: Truth is distinct from Error...**”

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 2, Al-Baqara (The Cow), Verse 256*

The Almighty then tells you that He directs you and supplies you with power according to your choice and determination. He says:

Verse no. 13

13. “**And truly the latter** (the wrong way) **and the former** (the right way) **belong to Us** (by providing you with power and might),”

If you choose the first way – that is, the way of giving and piety – God will help you fulfil your purpose and will provide you with the power to attain the fruits of your actions. Similarly, if you choose the other way – that is, the way of distance from God and a failure to give – the Almighty will also supply you with the strength and power to discard the wicked desire and the hidden evil that is settled in your spirit, but your actions will bring you nothing but misery and difficulty.

Thus the creature has the freedom to choose, but steering and sustenance belong to Al’lah. God says: “**Of the Bounties of your Provider, We bestow freely on all these as well as those; the Bounties of your Provider, none are deprived of.**”

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 17, Al-Isra’ (The Night Journey), Verse 20*

Praise is to God in all cases.

Exercises:

Memorize Surah Al-Layl by the help of your teacher and collaborate with your friends to learn it by heart, contemplate sincerely its sublime meanings.

Questions:

1-Explain the Nobel speech of the Prophet (cph): **(Poverty is about to lead to disbelief)?**

2-Mention some of the bad dangerous results of dealing with the interest (on money) and explain how it negatively affects the society?

3-How do the latter and the former belong to Al'lah? Explain that in detail.

Lesson Three

Interpretation of Fortress 92 (The Night)

Surah Al-Layl (Part Three)

Verse no. 14

14. “Therefore I warn you of a Fire blazing fiercely,”

In this noble Verse, the Almighty wants to warn us against adopting the way of distress and to inform us of the fate of the evildoers. This is why He mentions that there is another life after the present one, which includes a blazing Fire.

This Verse reveals God’s Compassion and Sympathy towards us. He warns us of this Fire so that we can avoid it, and that is because of His Clemency and tenderness towards us.

Then, God revealed His Justice, saying:

Verse no. 15

15. “None shall reach it but those most distressed,”

According to this Verse, we say that it is absolutely false to claim – as some people do – that the Almighty may punish the charitable and let the wrongdoer live in comfort. God (glory to Him) is a just Provider, and this Verse declares that none will suffer the intense heat of this Fire and the torment of its burning except the distressed sinners; that is to say, those who cause distress to themselves. They exhaust their spirits with their indulgence, thus depriving it of the bliss which God prepared for them in the other abode, and making it suffer torment and bitter treatment.

However, what makes them wrong themselves and cause such distress and affliction for their spirits? God says:

Verse no. 16

16. “The ones who deny (the truth) and turn away (from God),”

We see that denial of the truth and the guidance brought forth by the Messenger and turning away from God – that is to say, neglecting to perform communication with God – will make a person lose their rank and become immersed in wicked yearnings; this will lead to their becoming distressed and tortured. Certainly, your Provider wrongs nobody.

Verse no. 17

17. “But those most devoted to Al’lah shall be far removed from it,”

In Arabic, “**devotion**” is called ‘taqwa’ which means ‘avoidance’. Therefore, a devoted person is one who performs communication with God, through which they enter His Presence and derive light from their Provider. Through this light, they avoid practising forbidden desires or evil actions.

This light also helps them to see the way of goodness and happiness, and therefore this person will begin to do what will purify their spirit and then increase its purity. God says:

Verse no. 18

18. “Those who spend what they have for an increase in purity,”

As previously mentioned, spending money doing good works makes the spirit confident with itself and certain of its benefaction. This helps it to enter into its Provider’s Presence feeling pleased with its behaviour. Through such entry into God’s Presence – that is, through communication with Him – the Godly Light cleans the surface of the spirit and cures it of its defects and diseases. The spirit thus returns pure and immaculate, having put on the garment of perfection and virtue, and now being coloured with a stain from Al’lah which is better than any other; thus it becomes happy and blissful.

To show that the foundation of such purification is devotion in actions which are clear of any blemish or ill intention, God says:

Verse no. 19

19. “Not in recompense for someone’s favor,”

That is, when those who are most pious give alms and sacrifices, they are not seeking any worldly purpose or repaying someone for their prior charity or favour. Nay! It is the perfection which they have derived from their Provider through their closeness to Him and the sublime morality they have acquired which make them faithful in their actions, and which make them seek nothing except a meeting with their most high Provider. God says:

Verse no. 20

20. “But seeking the Countenance of their Lord, the Most High”

That is, they hope and aspire to see their Provider: the supreme Provider Whose Bounty and comprehensive Favor have neither end nor limit.

Verse no. 21

21. “And soon they will be well-pleased.”

It is clear that if you render good deeds and adopt this path, you will be glad and satisfied with the great donation that your Provider will bestow upon you.

Thus, the groundwork is to achieve piety; that is to say, to ensure that your spirit is always near to its Provider and to attain a permanent link with Him, the Almighty.

If you draw near to God and perform communication with Him, you will be illuminated by His Light and will be kept far from affliction. If you draw far from Him, on the other hand, you will remain blind and distressed. Sacrifice and charity are the means to attain that piety and closeness.

God says: **“He that does good does it for his own self, and he that commits evil does so at his own peril. Your Lord is never unjust to His servants.”**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 41, Fussilat (Explained), Verse 46*

Self-Activity:

I have to devote a period of time everyday to myself as the prophet (cpth) recommended, it starts one hour, less or more, before the sunset, that is to contemplate how the shining light of day replaced with the darkness of night which creeps smoothly and quietly little by little from the east full of moisture, silence and coolness until it spreads overwhelming everything and covers the earth's surface. Notifying how this changing happens gently which sure indicates to the existence of The Almighty God Who supervises and controls this marvellous universe.

After that, I get up to perform Almaghreb prayer reciting within it this holy fortress (Al-layl) or some of its Verses with full comprehension of their sublime meanings.

Also, I have to do so having about one hour in the morning after Alfajer prayer continuing to the sunrise, this is just to think deeply how this darkness turned into lightness smoothly and quietly, and how this grand sun rises little by little until it fills the sky with a golden brightness and glow, what a Merciful Divine Hand, He is God Who revolves the earth making the sunrise and sunset!!, what this Godly Might which holds the sun with its brightness and rotates the earth around its axis in tenderness,!! After this blessed meditation, I pray Ad-Duha prayer. Actually our Master Ibrahim, Master Mohammad and all the prophets (cptt) [4] contemplated and thought deeply of the sings of this universe seeking to teach people how to attain the true certain belief. God Says **{...and glorify the Praises of your Lord, before the rising of the sun and before (its) setting** (*Fortress Qaf, Verse 39*)

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- Every creation has a specific function or activity in this life, it does its function or activity perfectly. Mention a creature name that is not mentioned in the previous lessons and explain its function. Contemplate why the Almighty God has created it.
- 2 The rich person who spends money, which his Provider has granted him, in charity, the strong person who helps weak people,

the dignitary who uses his position to serve people and the scholar who teaches others. Where do all these charities lead their owners to?

3-Why does the Almighty God call the guidance of the prophet (cpth) **{the Best}**?

4-It is mentioned within the interpretation of the holy God Saying: **{It is for Us to give guidance}**: that the Almighty God guides you to your own good where you will find happiness also He warns you from the way of misery. So, what must the human choose after all that guidance?

5- The Almighty God Says **{Therefore I warn you of a Fire blazing fiercely, None shall reach it but those most distressed,}**. What do you understand about the meaning of this Verse: **{None shall reach it but those most distressed}**?

Lesson Four

Interpretation of Fortress 91 (The Sun)

Surah Al-Shams (Part One)

I seek refuge in God from the cursed Satan

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

1. **“Behold the sun and its brightness.”**
2. **“Then the moon as it follows it (the sun)!”**
3. **“Behold the day (the rivers of blessings) as He reveals (them).”**
4. **“Then the Night as it enshrouds (them)!”**
5. **“Behold the heaven and how He built it.”**
6. **“Then the earth and how He spread (blessings upon) it!”**
7. **“Behold the spirit and how He formed it to perfection,”**
8. **“And inspired it with knowledge of its immorality and its piety.”**
9. **“Successful are those who purify it;”**
10. **“And unsuccessful are those who corrupt it!”**
11. **“(The tribe of) Thamud has denied (their Prophet) in their transgression.”**
12. **“When the most wicked man advanced (in impiety).”**
13. **“The Envoy of Al’lah said to them, ‘It is Al’lah’s she-camel! And (prevent her not from having) her drink!’ “**
14. **“However, they disbelieved him, and bereaved her. Thus, for their sin, their Provider took away their blood and razed them.”**
15. **“Does he (the transgressor) has no fear of its consequences?”**

§§§§§

The overall meaning:

In this Fortress, God the Almighty wants to exhort us and warn us not to deny the truth, as He wishes to acquaint us with the punishment of those who deny the truth, and let us know about the intense torment that will afflict those who transgress in this regard.

One of the laws and rules of the spirit is that it will not pay attention to any exhortation – nor will it desist from its error – unless it ascertains the strength and superior power of the one who exhorts it.

The Almighty thus introduced this Fortress with a series of Verses which acquaint the spirit with two things: firstly, the Might of its Creator, and secondly, His Clemency, Compassion, Tenderness and continuous Favor. God says:

Verse no. 1

1. “Behold the Sun and its brightness.”

“**Its brightness**” refers to its emergence; its daily rise into the sky above us, having left us at sunset on the previous day.

This word also refers to the blessings which the sun brings into existence, and the benefits which come from its heat, light and other qualities, with which it was endowed by God.

This blazing globe, this shining lamp has been supplying the whole world with heat and light for thousands of years, throughout many generations of human life. Even now it continues to burn, with no lessening of its great power.

The properties contained in the rays of the sun are helpful for the life of humans, animals and plants.

The sun’s location in space is at a suitable distance from the earth; there is a positive relationship between the sun and the earth that causes the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter.

The sun has innumerable benefits and advantages. If you study them, you will find that they are endless and limitless.

All this is folded into the Verse “**Behold the Sun and its brightness**”, and only Al’lah knows all the signs contained in the sun.

Without the sun no plant can grow, no crops can be harvested, no fruit can ripen, and neither human nor animal can live.

Without the sun no seawater will evaporate, no winds can blow, no clouds will be formed, and neither snow nor rain can fall from the sky.

Without the sun, no seasons will be created and there will be no generation of either night or day.

Oh, Student! Look at the creation and composition of the sun, and then ask yourself:

Where does it derive its heat and light from?

If the earth was to approach the sun – including all of its seas, rivers, plains, mountains, soil, metal and stone – it would all melt away in a single moment; nay, rather it would all evaporate and turn into smoke.

I wonder: where does this sun take its fire from?

What happens inside the sun, making it send forth its rays to you, providing you with such amounts of heat and light?

Reflect on the regulation of its heat, and the continuity of this regulation! There is radiation constantly within its quarterly and annual periodic systems as it passes through the constellations, and there is no increase or decrease in this radiation within its established routine.

Had its heat increased or decreased from its normal temperature, the system of the earth would have become deranged, and life would have been rendered impossible.

Oh, human! Consider the appropriate distance between the sun and the earth: if the earth changes its orbit in any way, so that it is even one mile closer to the sun, the sun's heat will burn up every human, animal and plant on the globe. Also, during its yearly circulation through the constellations[5] , if the distance between the sun and the earth at the top of its orbit was to increase by so much as a single mile, the surface of the earth would become frozen, and it would no longer be habitable.

I wonder: who has placed it in this appropriate location, and brought it into existence in such a context?

Contemplate gravity, this connection between the sun and the earth without which there would be no circulation and no life; without it you would not have experienced the seasons or night and day; nor would the earth have yielded up its various crops of plants and fruits.

Meditate on the sun's rays, and their heat and light, and how they cause the legumes to grow and the cereal to mature.

See how they color the fruits and flowers and give them their special smells, tastes and qualities.

Is it not fitting for you to think of all of this and to ask yourself to search for whatever has formed and created this sun?

Who has joined it to the earth and allowed them to move together?

Who continues to supply the sun with so much heat and light?

Who has put it at such a proper distance from the earth?

Is not that Peerless Originator Cognizant and Wise?

Is not that Provider Who supplies it a Mighty One?

Does this sun not guide us to Al'lah, the Omniscience, and the Omnipotence?

Having drawn our attention to the sun – which is a rich abode for thinking and a wide field for deep looking and consideration – God wanted to point out another sign. He says:

Verse no. 2

2. “Then the Moon as it follows it (the sun)!”

The Almighty wants us to notice the moon which appears and rises over us.

Let us think of this moon, this great body which swims in space, this mass which is thousands of times bigger than the most sizable mountain on earth!

I wonder how does it swim?

What prevents it from falling down?

What keeps it moving in its trajectory, without disorder or disturbance?

Let us ponder on this luminous planet:

What makes it the source of such a gentle light, which is shed over the whole land in the pitch-dark night in such a way that it relieves fear and suffering from people’s hearts, puts the sick at ease, and allays their pain?

Who has made its rays from such subdued lighting, without glow or heat, so as to help people relax when they have their utmost need for rest? Who has made it circle the earth?

Who keeps it joined to the earth without separation?

Who has made it pass through its phases, one after the other, growing gradually moment by moment and day by day?

Who makes it appear like a small, arched crescent in its first days, and then turns it into a full moon in the middle of the month? Who causes it to pass back through its phases until it wanes and goes out of sight?

Who lets it move according to such a regular cycle of movement?

During its course, it does not come either one moment before or after its defined time; nor does it deviate from its orbit even one hair’s breadth.

Then, when it completes its circulations, it turns back into a nascent moon to indicate the coming of a new month, so that we can compute the years and distinguish between the months and the days.

Is not the moon one of the most marvelous signs of God?

Verily, there are uncountable signs in the moon that point to its Grand Creator, Who has made it upon the basis of such finesse, accuracy and perfection.

Self-Activity:

- Memorize Fortress Al-Shams very well with your teacher in your school and cooperate with your friends and family at home trying to memorize it very well and to understand its great interpretation.
- God wants to draw your attention to Surah Al-Shams by mentioning it in the holy Qur'an in order to acquaint you with (Him) your Grand Creator and to attain true belief through your continuous serious contemplation of its Verses, so keep thinking. Also the moon, this luminous planet...which led our master Ibrahim (pth) [6] nearer to God and he believed (by his noble heart) that "There is no god but Al'lah" through his deep thinking of the planets, the moon and the sun... all the prophets and the messengers (ptt) [7] did the same, and their companions followed them too, they knew heartedly their Almighty Provider and drew nearer to God throughout this universe, therefore dear student don't waste your precious time and try to attain this sublime knowledge, because getting knowledge in the age of youth is like carving on a stone, will be steady in heart and last forever.

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- Explain, what would have happened if the sun had got closer to the Earth by changing its orbit to be one mile nearer to it?
- 2- Mention some benefits that the human gains from the moon?

Lesson Five

Interpretation of Fortress 91 (The Sun)

Surah Al-Shams (Part Two)

Dear student: After the Almighty reminds us of the sun and the moon so that we know the wonders they include and the benefits they produce, He draws our attention to the two miracles of the day and the night. He says:

Verse no. 3-4

3. “Behold the day (the rivers of blessings) as He reveals (them).”

4. “Then the Night as it enshrouds (them)!”

The word “**day**” does not refer only to the time during which sunlight spreads across the world, but also refers to the goodness which comes from everything. In detail we say:

The word “**day**” in Arabic is ‘nahaar’. It is derived from the verb ‘nahara’, which means to flow powerfully and increasingly. An abundant and increasing water flow is therefore called ‘nahr’ in Arabic, meaning ‘river’. Thus this phrase does not indicate one single thing, but rather indicates the flowing blessings that come increasingly and continuously from God.

For example: the fruits and their successive production in both summer and winter; the grain and vegetables and how they continuously flow to you from God; the air, and how it is so refreshing; the springs and how they regularly supply the earth with water; and so forth.

In general, if you look with more comprehension, you will see everything as a river that keeps flooding you with great blessings from God.

Accordingly, the word “**day**” refers to everything you see and how it continuously flows from God, and to this persistent production and the consequent unceasing benefits.

If you look thoroughly at things from this perspective, you will perceive a part of the meaning of the word “**day**” which no explanation nor expression can express, and you will know what blessings this word contains, with which God overwhelms you.

The Almighty Al’lah wants to draw your attention to the abundant flow of goodness of every sort and every kind that He always provides you with, so that you will know its source. In this way you can recognize your Provider and appreciate the Charity of your Creator.

As for the statement “**as He reveals (them)**”, it refers to the way in which God brings these blessings from the unseen world into this existing one. For example:

Look at the wheat and see how your Provider brings it out before your eyes. It grows, and then it forms foods which gradually become full-grown and ripen, until they are ready to be eaten.

Look at the grapes and see how their bunches come out of their buds, and then grow little by little until their taste becomes sugary having once been sour.

Reflect on the milk: how it comes out, pure and fresh, from between bowels and blood-streams.

Look also at the flowers: how they smell of sweet scents and take on their blooming colors, having passed through phases and stages where they have no color or smell!

All of this can be understood from the statement “**as He reveals (them)**”

The whole Verse means:

Look at these flowing boons in everything, and think of how they appear when God brings them into view and reveals them.

Now we move on to the statement “**as it enshrouds (them)!**”, and say that the word “**Night**” does not only mean the time when there is no sun, as the common people understand; however, in this case it refers to the situation of the earth when nothing can be clearly

seen, and its associations: silence, quietness, moisture, coolness and other phenomena.

“as it enshrouds (them)!”: The night veils the boons which God has created for you, covering them in its darkness. It brings them its cool and moist air, and gives effect to certain agents and influences in the bodies of humans, animals and plants.

If there were no night, no plant would grow and no fruit would mature; nay, they would be burned by the heat of the sun and become unable to grow.

You can see that fruit which is directly and continuously exposed to the rays of the sun is small and does not have a pleasant taste, unless it is protected by the shade of leaves. This is because of the continuous effect of the sun’s heat and the searing of its rays.

Had the night not brought its influences to bear on the plants as it has, you would not have enjoyed them and their graces.

This is only one of many aspects of the night which draw our attention.

Should you not contemplate the night to see how it causes the regularity of this life? Should you not think of the night so that you may appreciate its benefits, and thereby turn to appreciate its Creator and His Care and Kindness to you?

God then spoke about the heaven and earth, and to make us think of them; He says:

Verse no. 5

5. “Behold the Heaven and how He built it.”

The heaven is the firmament which surrounds the universe on all sides. I wonder:

Who has built it in this way?!

What is this great Might that has arranged it?

What is this wise potency that created it in such a situation?!

Who has decked it with bright stars at night and joined them to each other, so that they form constellations swimming together without separation?!

Who has placed a glowing lamp up there that shines during the day, and a luminous moon that lights up the night?

Who holds its stars in this limitless space, although several of them are many millions of times bigger than the earth?

Who directs all these planets in a way in which none clashes with another, or deviates a hair from its own orbit?

Can anyone imagine the expansion of this heaven?

Can anyone find an end or a limit to this? Absolutely no.

God urged us to contemplate and think of the heavens when He says: **“Look again and again! Your sight fails to reveal any flaw to you and will be weak and defeated.”**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 67, Al-Mulk (UniVerse Possession), Verse 4*

If you use your thought well, you will know that heaven has a Grand Creator, an Omnipotent Steering Force, and a Knowing Provider.

If you are unable to conceive the expansion of this heaven – although it is no more than one of the Almighty’s creations – can you then imagine the endless Greatness and Majesty of your Provider?

How Mighty is this God Who has created the earth and the lofty heavens!

Now look at yourself: have you any power or might?

What a poor, weak creature you are, and how Wide and Grand is this God, Who created this heaven and all that it contains, and Who even created you!

God then draws our attention to the earth. He says:

Verse no. 6

6. “Then the Earth and how He spread (blessings upon) it!”

The meaning of the word “**Earth**” includes how it moves through the universe, just as it also refers to all the mountains, seas, plains, rivers, minerals, stones, animals and plants that it contains.

The statement “**how He spread (blessings upon) it!**” refers to the situation of the earth, to all the things that your Provider put upon it, and to its amazing organization and perfect creation.

It asks: what is this great power that placed the mountains onto the earth?!

What is this great power which founded the plains and the seas on the earth?!

Who has allowed these springs and rivers to run across it?!

Who has put such an amount of salt into its seas, so as to protect its water from being corrupted and to prevent the reproduction of mosquitoes and other insects?!

Who has put metals under the ground so that they can be used for our livelihood?!

Who has created soils and stones on this earth?!

Who has infused the soil with different elementary substances to be absorbed by the plants?

Who has placed water reservoirs in the two polar areas, and then in the high parts of mountains?

Who has given their sources appropriate proportions, so that they supply us with the water collected therein continuously, all throughout the year so that this water is never interrupted and never comes to an end? [8]

Who has created the many kinds of animals on earth, and employed them all and their functions for the sake of humanity so

that blessings prevail, order is maintained, and life continues to flourish?

Who has created varieties of crops and fruit on earth, which are essential for humanity's life, and who has given them such benefits and such varied tastes?

Oh, human! Should you not behold the earth and think of its organization and perfect discipline?

Should you not see how Al'lah placed everything onto it, so that you can ascertain the Greatness of your Creator, and the Clemency and Mercy of your Provider?

Self-Activity:

I should keep contemplating and thinking about all God's signs (wonders) in this universe in the morning before the sunrise and in the evening before the sunset that is to acquaint myself with the Might of its Creator and appreciate the charity of our Provider for the innumerable and limitless benefits which result from the sequence of day and night.

I prepare myself by reading and contemplating the interpretation of one or two Verses from the holy Qur'an to purify my spirit and be able to draw it nearer to its Provider.

Questions and Exercises:

1-What is the aimed wisdom of that the Almighty God has begun some of the Holy fortresses "Surahs" with universal signs (wonders)? What is the interpretation of the Almighty God Saying **"Behold the day (the rivers of blessings) as He reveals it (them)."**?

2-Write a text and mention in it the phases which the moon passes through during every month, and why we see it in different shapes. It begins as a small arched crescent then it grows gradually little by little to be a full moon and finally it returns again to be a small arched crescent. How does it pass through all these stages which we have mentioned before? Then clarifies how the moon disappears in one night and nobody can see it?

Take your time ... Observe the moon again and again and try to write the answers of these Questions, alone without any help from anybody or from any scientific references. That is because the knowledge resulted from observation and the contemplation is more valuable and better than that resulted from hearing or reading, therefore the Holy Qur'an orders the human to investigate and to attain the true belief and Divine knowledge through his own contemplation and thinking of cosmic wonders.

Lesson Six

Interpretation of Fortress 91 (The Sun)

Surah Al-Shams (Part Three)

After the Almighty reminded us of the heavens and the earth, to appreciate His favor toward us, He reminded us of ourselves. He says:

Verse no. 7

7. “Behold the spirit and how He formed it to perfection;”

To acquaint you with the spirit, we say:

Humans are composed of three elements: a spirit, a soul and a body.

In Arabic, the word “spirit” means a thing which has magnificent value and rank, which lead to people competing for it.

Accordingly, the spirit is the most valuable element of our composition.

In some detail we say:

The spirit is the feeling identity of humanity and is settled in the chest. Its rays spread to all the other parts of the body through the nerves. This spirit, confined in the body, recognizes the things that surround it through the senses. It sees with the eye, hears with the ear, smells with the nose, feels and touches with the skin and tastes flavors with the tongue, which is also used to express thoughts and ideas.

Here are some examples: if one stands at the seashore, watching the sea he will undoubtedly make this person revere and glorify the scene before them. This submission and glorification is sensed by the “**spirit**”.

If we see someone dear to us whose hand is bleeding because it is badly wounded, we will feel sorry because of this situation and

will sympathise with them. This pain and grief we feel are those of the **“spirit”**.

If we hear that one of our dear relatives has returned safely from a long journey, we feel pleased and happy.

This pleasure and happiness are related to the **“spirit”**.

Thus, the spirit is the essential element of humanity. It glorifies and submits, grieves and becomes annoyed, delighted and rejoiced, feels contented and angry, and it tastes, enjoys and suffers.

It is the center of existence.

The **“spirit”** is what is addressed in the Qur’an, and is charged to follow the straight path. It is the element which feels pain during treatment in order to be cured, or which enjoys staying in Paradise, wishing never to be removed from.

The body consists of flesh, nerves, bones and blood. It is the garment of the spirit and its vessel.

As for the soul, whose ray comes from God into the body, it is the moving power that sends life into the body, so that the body can fulfill the demands of the spirit.

That is but a little of what we understand by the word **“spirit”**.

“And how He formed it to perfection!”: This statement refers to the perfect situation upon which the spirit has been created.

The words **“how He formed”** draw our attention to that Grand Might and Wise Hand which set such preparation in place for the spirit, and created this body for it upon such perfect form and wonderful composition.

The eye see, the ear hears, the tongue tastes and speaks, and the nose smells: all of these appendages help the spirit to recognize the things around it.

The stomach digests food, and the liver secretes bile, stores the proteins and sugar, and then releases them in appropriate amounts as necessary.

The kidney filters the blood, the heart regulates its circulation, and the lungs control respiration. The red blood cells are like workers: they take up the noxious gases from the body and throw them into the lungs, and then return carrying oxygen, which is a necessary gas for combustion and for life.

The white blood cells are stationed in their positions like soldiers garrisoned in castles. They fight microbes and excrete poisons to kill them, in addition to carrying out other functions.

If you begin to think of the body in this way, you will perceive an amazing constitution and a marvelous creation.

We mention this only briefly, for to explain it would take a long time. Each of these organs would need long pages dedicated to explaining and detailing its components and functions in full.

I wonder who has connected these members with one another! Who has made them all work without pause, so as to ensure subsistence for humanity?

Who has made you, human, in such circumstances, and who has furnished you with such a consummate appearance?

Who has given the spirit the senses by which it recognizes the things that surround it?

Who has supplied the spirit with its faculties of thinking, remembering, imagining and understanding?

Who has endowed it with the mind by which it can distinguish between vice and virtue, and between what is useful and what is harmful?

Who has instilled instincts in it, and given it natural responses of fear, happiness, joy, sadness, satisfaction and anger?

Who has given it feelings of pleasure and pain?

Who has brought the spirit from nonexistence into existence and made it the noblest and the highest of creatures, even though it started out as nothing worth mentioning?

Is it not fitting for you, human, to study and contemplate all of this, so that you may recognize the Wise Hand which made you and the Great Power which created you and brought you into this state of existence?

Having reminded us of the signs which we see in this universe, and having acquainted us with our spirits, the Almighty tells us that He did not create us in vain; nor did He leave us knowing nothing: rather, He has shown us the way that leads to happiness and success, and has informed us of what will lead to our benefit and righteousness. He says:

Verse no. 8

1. “And inspired it with knowledge of its immorality and its piety.”

“**Inspiration**” is acquainting the spirit with something through God. You say, “Al’lah inspired me with the way” or “He inspired me with the answer.”

“**Immorality**” refers to the acts that produce evil and bring out damage and corruption.

“**Piety**” in Arabic is ‘taqwa’ which is derived from the verb ‘ittaqa’, meaning, to avoid, or to evade. This word is used when one is carrying out an action that makes them avoid harm that would otherwise have been caused by something, keeping them safe from its damage. For example, if the rays of the sun became very hot and we held up an umbrella or parasol to protect ourselves from this heat, we would call such an action ‘taqwa’. Also, if we wanted to come down from the roof and we went down a ladder, we would call such act ‘taqwa’, for we would have protected ourselves from the damage that would have befallen us if we had thrown ourselves directly down to the ground. ‘Taqwa’ is also used in a metaphorical sense in the context of a person leading their spirit to become illuminated by God’s Light, which then will allow it to witness the evil hidden behind disobedience. This will help such a person to avoid falling into wrongful actions by helping

their spirit to view the goodness that is hidden behind obedience and good deeds. Such a person will become careful not to neglect carrying out righteous actions. According to this meaning, the word ‘taqwa’ in Arabic translates into **“piety”** in English. Accordingly we say:

When Al’lah the Almighty created the human spirit, He granted it yearning and taste. Through this, God completed His Grace and perfected His Favor and Charity towards humanity.

Without yearning, people would not taste any delight, know any gift or find any pleasure in this life. Without yearning, a person would be made of stone.

This yearning can be obtained in one of two ways: a harmful and damaging way, that brings misery upon its follower and corruption upon the whole of human society, or a useful and advantageous way, which draws happiness and pleasure on its follower and utility and goodness upon society.

For further explanation, we give an example:

Suppose that a man sees a fruitful cactus tree and he feels that he has an appetite for one of its fruits and his spirit inclines towards it. In order to fulfill his desire, he has to choose one of two options:

Firstly, he can get the fruit in the right way – that is, to pick it using the leather gloves that are designed for that purpose, and then to wash it, pare it and put it into his mouth. By using this way, he will be delighted with this fruit and will enjoy its taste. In addition, the way in which he obtains and eats it will be totally removed from any feelings of pain or any damage.

His second option is to stretch out his hand like an unthinking child and pluck the fruit without using a glove, and then to put it into his mouth without peeling it. In this case, his enjoyment will be mixed with pain, as his momentary pleasure will be followed by the continuous prickle of the spines of the fruit, hurting his fingers, hands, and lips. He is certain to suffer his share of pain due to his

hastiness and imprudence, as punishment for his nonobservance of the right way when fulfilling his desire.

So it is with money:

People gain money either by following a straight path – for example, by engaging in a high profession and practicing it honestly and faithfully, until it brings them money – or by following mean and devious ways, such as embezzlement, stealing, cheating, or deceit. All of the latter entail harm for him and corruption for all society.

This applies also to the yearning for women or for men, for the aspiration to prestige and authority, for the taste for food and drink, and many other desires. All of these can be obtained in one of two ways. One is useful and wholesome, and the other is harmful and deadly.

However, when Al'lah created the spirits, He did not leave them helpless or ignorant of the way that would lead to what is good and pleasurable for them. He colored them with the stain of righteousness and virtue and gave them a perfect nature.

Through this, they can recognize truth and virtue and know the straight path which leads them safely to their desires, helping them to avoid any harm or misery along the way. They are able to perceive the evil way that leads to wantonness and vice.

That is what we can understand from the Verse: **“And inspired it with knowledge of its immorality and its piety.”**

In fact, all humanity has the ability to discern the truth from the untruth, and to distinguish between virtue and vice. There is nobody who does not have that inner moral court through which they can judge the actions carried out by them and by others. According to the goodness or the evil that they notice in particular actions, they add them either to the group of virtuous deeds or to the group of evil and mean ones.

The noble Hadith denotes: **“The licit is plain, and the illicit is plain.”** [9]

In another Hadith, the Prophet (cph) says: **“And consult your heart, even if the tempted one gave you a legal opinion several times.”** [10]

Another Hadith reads: **“What is wrong is what arises in your chest and which you do not like people to know.”** [11]

Thus, this lofty disposition with which Al’lah has obliged humanity is what gives them the ability to distinguish between good and evil, truth and untruth, and vice and virtue; therefore they can judge their conduct in every deed at the first blush.

For example, you can see that the dishonest salesperson has a palpitating heart as they sell their wares. They hide their dishonesty from people for fear that they may discover it. On the contrary, you see that an honest counselor has a peaceful heart and is free from any worry. This is because the former is aware of their deviation from the right path – or you could say, their immorality – while the latter is aware of their high conduct – that is to say, their piety and avoidance of anything which would cause harm and damage to people.

After the Almighty has revealed some Verses to us at the beginning of this Fortress, indicating His magnificence and great Favor, and having demonstrated to us that He has acquainted the spirit with what causes it to stray from the straight path and what leads it to piety and what is good, He sent us the following Verse in order to inform us that the attainment of goodness can be achieved only by cleansing the spirit and purification. He says:

Verse no. 9

9. “Successful are these who purify it.”

“To succeed” in Arabic is ‘aflaha’ which means ‘to cultivate’; that is to say, to attain something good having sought it, and to achieve happiness having rendered good deeds in its pursuit. For example, you can say that the commander succeeded in repelling the enemy, the workers succeeded in removing the rock, or the farmer succeeded in his farming, and such like.

“To purify” means to cleanse the spirit of evil and defects.

Purifying the spirit is accomplished only by the right communication; that is, through the spirit’s link with God and its nearness to Him.

If a person turns their spirit towards their Provider, the Godly Light will flow into it, penetrating every one with its atoms.

Through this Light, wickedness will be wiped out and abject desires will disappear; thus the spirit becomes without vice and obedient to God. At that time, humanity will seek only high things and incline only to virtue.

If a person directs their spirit towards Al’lah from their earliest years, they will ensure that it is protected and sinless, and that no malice or evil will ever be produced therein. They will then achieve pure growth, unmixed with illness or disobedience.

On the other hand, if humanity forgets their Provider and turns away from Him, then it returns to Him in repentance and draws near to Him, their spirits will regain their purity and reacquire their good disposition. God says: **“Say: ‘My Provider has enjoined justice. Make your directions straight (towards Him) who never you prostrate and call on Him with true devotion. As He first created you, you shall return’.”**

The Holy Qur’an,

Fortress 7, Al-A’raf (The Heights), Verse 29

To use an example, in such a case the spirit is like a room that you have built and have made windows and doors for, so as to let the light of the sun’s rays enter. As long as you expose the room to this light, it will remain pure of putrefaction and clean of germs. However, if you deprive it of light and the rays of the sun, microbes and rot will grow therein. If you then re-expose it to the sun, it will become pure and clean once again.

Similarly, as long as a person continues to enter into the Presence of their Provider, they will remain pure and inerrant. The more

they enter into their Provider's Presence, the more pure and chaste they will be.

Thus, the Almighty did not create one person good and another evil, but granted all people the same good disposition, but nearness to or distance from God is what creates the distinction between them. The more a person is close to God, the more pure they are, and the more pious a person is, the more immaculate they are.

It is thus clear that anyone who purifies the spirit will succeed. That is to say, they will gain happiness, and all of their acts will bring them more blessings. They will only perform noble and virtuous deeds, and all of their actions will be useful. They will be lucky all throughout their lifetime.

Verse no. 10

10. "And unsuccessful are those who corrupt it!"

To be "**unsuccessful**" means disappointment and failure in achieving the desired aim.

The word "**corrupt**" has the opposite meaning to the word 'purifies'.

Malice will be generated in the spirit of anyone who shuns Al'lah. It will whisper evil and vice to them. If they draw far from God and corrupt themselves – that is, if they immerse their spirit in vice and allow it to commit bad actions – failure and loss of all that is good will be the consequence.

Such people think that deceit creates benefits for them, but the fact is that it makes people dislike them and leads them to losing out. They think that adultery makes them feel happy, although it results in nothing but infectious diseases and shameful outcomes, and furthermore, is followed by poverty and need.

Thus you see that anyone who plunges their spirit into vice – without purifying it by drawing near to God – passes from one distress to another and from one misfortune to another. Misery will

be their share in this world, and they will suffer an even greater torment in the other abode.

People who are near to God enjoy perfect happiness, whilst the opposers suffer from grief and wretchedness.

Self-Activity:

- Memorize Fortress Al-Shams very well with your teacher in your school and cooperate with your friends and family at home trying to memorize it very well and to understand its great interpretation.

Questions and Exercises:

1-God Says: **{Behold the spirit and how He formed it to perfection}** what is the meaning of: **{to perfection}** and why do The Almighty God call it **(The spirit)?**

2-Explain and distinguish between the spirit and the soul?

3- Mention some practical examples to explain the meaning of **“piety: Al-Taqwa”**?

4-When the Almighty God created the human spirit, He the Almighty put in it the yearning and tasting ability which are out of God’s favor and blessings on us, that is because without the spirit’s desire and yearning, human would not taste and experience any delight or pleasure and would not find any enjoyment in this life, then human would be like a stone. So, how can (this humanity’s spirit) act and what is the way it must follow in order not to disobey God within practising its desires?

Lesson Seven

Interpretation of Fortress 91 (The Sun)

Surah Al-Shams (Part Four)

After the Almighty God has drawn our attention within the beginning of this Surah to some great cosmic signs (wonders), He the Almighty out of his Compassion and Mercy upon us has wanted to warn us of losing our life in vain and to advise us to evade the path of distress and malice which leads to inhumanity, therefore He put in our hand a real example of people who didn't think of these cosmic signs (wonders) which if they had thought about, they would have led them to be acquainted with their Creator and having the true belief, but they indulged themselves in this inferior life, God Says:

Verse no. 11

11. “(The tribe of) Thamud have denied (their Prophet) in their transgression.”

”**To deny**” “**To deny**” means to refuse to believe something despite knowing its truth.

”**Thamud**”: these were the people of our master Saleh (pth).

The Arabic word for “**transgression**” is ‘tughyan’, which means the exceeding of boundaries. It is derived from the Arabic verb ‘tagha’, ‘to transgress’, which means ‘to go beyond a limit.’

The word ‘tughyan’ can be used in Arabic for exceeding both physical and metaphorical boundaries.

For example, when the sea rages and its waters flood the shore, in Arabic you may say, “The sea ‘tagha’ over the shore”, and if someone exceeded the boundaries of the law and deviated from the path of humanity you would refer to them as a ‘transgressor’.

The preposition ‘in’ (translated from the Arabic ‘bi’) in the phrase ‘in their transgression’ indicated the reason that they denied their Prophet: namely, their unreasonable transgression. This means that

the people of Thamud did not believe God's Envoy (pth) because of their transgressions. They rejected his revelation and did not pay attention to his warning or see the evil and destruction that was folded behind their deeds.

From here, it becomes clear that the lecherous wanton cannot see the truth of the Godly Orders and the blessings that are hidden under them, just as they cannot see the realities of the forbidden things and the harm and evil which they cause.

They can only see pictures. They sense their wantonness, but cannot perceive the evil hidden therein.

They notice the straightness of the believers, but do not witness the advantages of their deeds.

Such people will never discern the facts unless they straighten on the basis of the Commands of God.

In fact, a person will not desist from their denial, whatever miracles or signs they see. Wrongful deeds stand as a veil between the spirit and the facts.

The Almighty cited the people of Thamud for us by way of example. Those people asked their Prophet to bring a she-camel forth from the rock as a miracle to prove the truth of his mission. The Almighty Al'lah brought forth the she-camel with her baby as they had asked, and made them share their water with her. God says: **“He (Salih) said: ‘This is a she-camel. She should have her share of water as you have yours, each drinking on an appointed day’.”**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 26, Ash-Shu'ara' (The Poets), Verse 155*

Although they had seen this sign, which was as clear as the shining sun, they did not appreciate it or care about it. More than this, the most viperous and black hearted one among them advanced on the she-camel in an attempt to encroach upon her. God says:

Verse no. 12

12. “When the most wicked man advanced (in impiety).”

They were blind to the destruction that they were wooing with their actions. The Envoy warned them, but they did not give ear to his warning. They deprived the she-camel of her baby and rebelled against the Commandment of their Lord. God says:

Verse no. 13-14

13. “The envoy of Al’lah said to them: ‘It is Al’lah’s she-camel! And (prevent her not from having) her drink!’ “

14. “However, they disbelieved him, and bereaved her. Thus, for their sin, their Provider took away their blood and razed them.”

Thus we find that the lecher who is immersed in their forbidden lusts is nothing but the person with the most courage among people to exceed God’s Bounds and to despise His Orders.

However, what shall follow this choice to despise the Orders of God?

What shall that lechery and that daring in exceeding God’s Bounds gain for this person?

There is no doubt that perdition and ruin will follow them. God says: **“Thus, for their sin, their Provider took away their blood and razed them.”**

The Arabic word corresponding to the statement **“took away their blood”** in Arabic is ‘damdama’. This verb is composed of two words: the first is ‘dum’, which means ‘blood’ in Arabic, which is the liquid wherein the soul flows; the second is ‘duma’, which means ‘went and ceased’.

Therefore the verb ‘damdama’ tells us that God released their life’s blood when He sent out a cry that brought out their souls and dried their blood.

“To raze” in Arabic is ‘sawwa’, which means ‘to bring something to the level of the ground’, and also ‘to equalize’. The phrase **“and razed them”** means that Al’lah brought that entire tribe to the level of the ground, turning its members into bodies that were as motionless as the ground.

After the Almighty sent us this story, showing us the end of Thamud and the punishment of all those who denied the Envoy of God, He wanted to send us a warning in the following Verse. He says:

Verse no. 15

15 “Does he (the transgressor) has no fear of its consequences?”

That is: do those who deviate from the right path and sink into their wicked desires not fear the outcomes of their deeds and the ultimate punishment of their lechery?

Do they not take a lesson from what happened to the people of Thamud?

Do not they know that wantonness and exceeding God’s Bounds are always followed by destruction?

Finally, we say in short:

If anyone thinks of the universe – as we indicated at the beginning of this Fortress – until they recognize their Provider through contemplation of His Signs, and then purifies their spirit of its dirty desires by approaching Al’lah, such a person will succeed and gain blessings. On the other hand, anyone who shuns Al’lah and corrupts their spirit by immersing it in lechery will have misery as their fate, and will incur nothing but pain and failure. God says: **“Whoever does good, it is for (the good of) his own-self; and whoever does evil, it is against it (own-self). The reafter to your Provider you shall all be brought back.”**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 45, Al-Jathiyya (Crouching), Verse 15*

Self-Activity:

1-I should have an inner moral court, as the noble prophet (cpth) recommended, that is to judge my action before sleeping every day to repent of any hesitation in my way to God or any fault I have done.

2-Avoid having bad and immoral friends, and if you have you must leave them immediately.

3- Avoid committing God's prohibitions and forbidden desires or evil actions.

4-I have to be righteous as much as I can; obeying God's order, having my prayers performed and reading my Qur'anic rituals.

5-Help the others and treat them kindly and be charitable as much as you can.

Questions and Exercises:

1-What is the reason behind Thamoud people's denial of our master Saleh's Message?

2-How did the Almighty God destroy the tribe of (Thamoud)?

3- Who is the most transgressing person as he exceeds God's boundaries violating His orders?

4- What does the Almighty God illustrate for human In His saying in the end of Surah Al-Shams: **{Does he (the transgressor) has no fear of its consequences?}.?**

Lesson Eight

Interpretation of Fortress 90 (The Universe)

Surah Al-Balad (Part One)

I seek refuge in God from the cursed Satan

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

1. **“I do not swear by this homeland (the universe),”**
2. **“And you yourself are a resident of this homeland”**
3. **“Nor (do I swear) by the begetter and what he begets:”**
4. **“We have created the human in a womb.”**
5. **“Does he think that none has power over him?”**
6. **“I have wasted great wealth: he boasts.”**
7. **“Does he think that none observes him?!”**
8. **“Have We not made two eyes for him,”**
9. **“A tongue and two lips,”**
10. **“And granted him the two heights (two breasts)?”**
11. **“So, would he not break into the obstacle?.”**
12. **“What enables you to perceive what the obstacle is?”**
13. **“It is freeing of a neck,”**
14. **“Or feeding, on a day of privation”**
15. **“ An orphan with claims of relationship,”**
16. **“Or an indigent wretch cleaving to the dust (out of misery).”**
17. **“Then he becomes one of those who believe and exhorts others to fortitude and mercy.”**
18. **“Such are the people of goodness and prosperity”**

19. “But those that deny Our Signs are the people of wretchedness”

20. “The Fire will close over them”

§§§§§

In this noble Fortress, the Almighty Al’lah wants to clarify that good works are the way that leads to belief. He wants to tell us that belief is the means by which we are assisted in acquiring virtuous moralities and high humanist manners, while disbelief and shunning are the reasons for lowness and degeneration, and lead to a descent into gulfs of misfortune and error.

At the onset of this Fortress, the Almighty mentioned a group of Verses that indicate the greatness of the universe and its accurate creation, because appreciating the universe and observing its strict creation inspire us to glorify its Creator and Former. This glorification of the Grand Creator makes us listen to His Speech and follow His Guidance and supreme Revelation.

Therefore, the Almighty says:

Verse no. 1

1. “I do not swear by this homeland (the universe),”

A “**homeland**” is a residence or dwelling, so the homeland of every person is the place where they dwell. In accordance with the Perfection of God – which covers everything in this universe and every creature, whether on earth or in heaven – if we take a more intense, careful and comprehensive look, we shall see that the entire universe is actually a single homeland that forms a residence for these creatures. Each type has their own dwelling within it, and each group among them has their own abode therein. For example, the surface of the land is the abode of humanity, while its interior is for ants and insects. The seas are homes for fish, while the endless and vast space above is the homeland of the swimming stars.

Accordingly, the whole universe is a single homeland. If we observe it thoroughly, we will revere and exalt our Creator and realize His Majesty.

In this Verse, the Almighty is making a comparison to further acquaint us with His Grandeur, saying: **“I do not swear”**, which is a statement addressing humanity. Whatever of the world’s greatness you see, know that your Creator is greater, and there is no limit or end to His Might.

The Almighty addresses you by saying: “Although this great universe amazes the mind, I still do not swear by it, for the thing by which we swear must be great. Think of this entire universe, and the management of its affairs, and the fulfillment of everything that happens within it, and even how it was brought into existence in perfect creation. All of this is so easy and simple for Me, and it is not worth comparing it with My Might and Majesty.” Having given us the first Verse which helps us to recognize this universe and appreciate our Creator, the Almighty tells us that He was not speaking about something that we cannot see. He is talking about what is before our eyes, which everybody can view. God says:

Verse no. 2

2. “And you yourself are a resident of this homeland (world).”

That is: you, human, are dwelling and living in this homeland. You see the signs it contains and witness the creatures around you, so – if only you think – you can recognize your Creator Who has created this world and made it a homeland for these creatures.

To draw our attention to the system by which creatures multiply in this homeland (or world), the Almighty says:

Verse no. 3

3. “Nor (do I swear) by the begetter and what he begets:”

The Almighty God did not bring the creatures to this world all at once, but He made their exodus successive and sequential, and put rules and laws in place for this. He arranged it in a way that shows

Godly Wisdom, Might and Compassion. This was to give a lesson and a sign to humanity, so that we might be guided to our Creator and know our Originator and Provider, if only we contemplate this a little.

The Verse **“Nor (do I swear) by the begetter and what he begets:”** indicates two aspects:

The word **“begetter”** refers to the parents through whom a child is born and brought into this existence.

The statement **“and what he begets”** implies the child and the stages of life and development through which it passes up till the time when it is born.

In fact, every living creature comes into existence by means of two begetters, a male and a female. I wonder:

Who made everything in pairs?

Who made one of them male and the other female, and planted sympathy, harmony, cordiality and attraction between them?

Who gave them instincts and qualities and put mercy, tenderness and affection in them, thereby making one of them a mother and the other a father, male and female?

That is just a little of what we understand by the statement: **“Nor by the begetter”**.

Now, in regard to the statement **“and what he begets”**, we inquire: who put the child in its father’s loins?

Who then carried it to its mother’s womb and set to watching over it and rearing it?

Who turned the semen into a clot of a blood, and then turned the clot into a lump of flesh?

Who fashioned the lump into bones and then clothed the bones with flesh?

Who created a stomach, liver, heart, and intestines for this new creature?

Who formed nerves, vessels, limbs, and proper systems for it?

Who composes the human of such faultless composition?

Can a drop of unworthy fluid or a minute germ change or develop by itself to become a complete human being? Must there not be a Provider that supplies it and keeps His Eyes on it?

Was it your father or your mother who created you? Must there not be a Great Creator Who created you and took care of you until you became as you are now?

And now, having attained full manhood or womanhood, is it fitting for you to turn from your Creator and forget His Charity towards you? Should you not ponder your origin, and think of where you were created from, when a period of time once passed when you were nothing worth mentioning?

Do you not remember the day when you were a powerless creature and an insignificant germ?

Should not you think of yourself when you were swimming inside a drop of semen with millions of millions of germs, invisible to the naked eye?

Will you recover your senses and remember the Potency which created you, and the Wise and Merciful Hand that looked after you and provided everything for you?

Should you not know that there is a Grand Creator, an Omnipotent Director and a Merciful Provider?

To remind us of the firm abode where we were brought up as semen, when there was nobody to protect us except our Creator, and none to supply us with what we needed except our Provider, the Almighty says:

Verse no. 4

4. “We have created the human in a womb.”

The word “womb” in this Verse is the place of assemblage. The “**womb**” is a proper medium containing all the conditions necessary for the life of the embryo.

In the womb, there is a suitable temperature for the baby’s life, and the blood brings it all the nourishment and essential gases that it needs.

In the womb, the embryo is carried on the placenta so that the blood will be prevented from entering its mouth. I wonder:

Who has found such conditions inside the womb, requisite for life, and made it into a safe lodging and a firm home for you, to serve until you become a complete human being of perfect creation?

Are you going to forget all of this Kindness and Godly Care after you have achieved your full growth, and become a person of power and prestige?

Do you think that there is no power in the entire world that is greater than yours?!!

God says:

Verse no. 5

5. “Does he think that none has power over him (to provide for him)?”

Indeed if anybody ponders their growth inside their mother’s belly and contemplates the days of their early childhood – if they think of this again and again, asking themselves about the Care which watched over them in the past and continues to watch until now – their spirit will bow in submission to its Provider and surrender to its Creator. This person will ascertain that if their Provider did not supply them with power and oblige them with blessings and prestige, they would be powerless, poor and insignificant. They are nothing without God, and there is no power or might except by Him.

However, humanity's degeneration and decline from an elevated rank result from the neglect of contemplation of ourselves and the signs which God created in this universe, the preoccupation with food and drink, the absorption in worldly concerns, and the desire for material wealth.

People have become ungrateful disbelievers, not seeing the grace of the Donor and thinking that they have obtained and earned what they have through their own power, their own thinking, their own endeavor, and their own hard work.

Verse no. 6

6. "I have wasted great wealth': he boasts."

Here, to "**waste**" means to 'spend'.

The phrase "**great wealth**" refers to large sums of accumulated money which have been stuck together.

That is what most people are like. They say, "I have wasted so much money on this building" or "I have bought this cloth for x pounds", instead of saying, "Had Al'lah not obliged me with His favor, I would have remained hungry and penniless' or 'Had Al'lah not granted me the power to earn a living, I would have been homeless, living in the open with no home or lodgings."

How far from God are those who do not respond to His Revelation!

How great is the ungratefulness for the Benefaction of He Who keeps supporting us with His Grace, and Who never forgets us!

To remind us of a bit of that Favor, the Almighty says:

Verse no. 7

7. "Does he think that none observes him!"

That is, do those who live in luxury think that they supply themselves with life? Do they earn what they earn by their own power and effort?!

Do they think that there is no one that attends them or continually provides them with strength and life?

The Almighty turned our eyes to the appendages and senses through which we are able to attain what we have.

God says:

Verse no. 8-9

8. “Have We not made two eyes for him,”

9. “A tongue and two lips,”

I really wonder: really wonder: how easy is it for a person to work or earn an income in the case that they have a severe disability? If they have no lips and no tongue, can they talk, or even utter a single word?!

We know that the different consonant sounds and the voice emanate through the joining of the two lips with the assistance of the tongue, and that is how the human is able to speak.

If it had not been granted such tools, the human species would have been like a speechless animal, yelping or mewling. However, the flexibility of the lips and their ability to contract and extend, as well as the various movements of the tongue to all sides (up and down, right and left): all of this help the human to talk and express the inclinations and thoughts that cross its mind. They are also useful in eating, chewing and swallowing food, so that we can enjoy good health and activity.

God then draws your attention to the nourishment that He supplies for you during early childhood, when you were suckling tasty milk from your mother’s breasts. He says:

Verse no. 10

10. “And granted him the two heights (two breasts)?”

The word **“heights”** refers to high places which save people and protect them from drowning in the floods that are caused by heavy rains and the inundation of low places.

The word **“heights”** also indicates the uplands.

However, according to the context of this Verse, this means the high part of the woman’s chest which helps the baby when it cries out for food. Thus this physical feature saves the infant from hunger and satisfies its needs.

The word **“heights”** as it is used here is meant to refer to the breast of the mother.

Out of God’s Favor for humanity, He created milk in the breasts of the mother for the sake of the infant, to fulfill its need for food and drink. He then taught this child how to access this food.

Having revealed some Verses which acquaint us with ourselves and show us the Charity of our Creator towards us, the Almighty wanted to clarify the way that leads to belief in order that we acquire humanist qualities. He says:

Verse no. 11

11. “So, would he not break into the obstacle.”

The Arabic word for **“obstacle”** is ‘aqabah’, which is a rough mountainous path that blocks a person’s way; however, if they pass it, they will attain ease and comfort.

“So, would he not” serves the purpose of urging and exhorting someone to perform a particular action.

The word **“obstacle”** here is meant to refer to the performance of a good deed, which is difficult for the spirit at first. For example, a human spirit naturally likes money and does not like it to be lost. However, when it sees that spending a sum of money will bring great benefit for it, spending money becomes easy, and the spirit does not delay in doing so.

Furthermore, the spirit favors rest over exerting effort or doing hard work. However, if it finds that tiring effort will be reciprocated with its own perpetual rest, it becomes willing to sacrifice its momentary ease for the lasting comfort it will later attain.

We can see from the above mentioned that the spirit considers all good actions difficult at first. However, the spirit can learn that all of God's Commands result only from His Love for the human spirit and are designed to generate its own advantage. When the spirit performs these actions in compliance with these Commands, these deeds will result in good things and ease for the spirit, as they will be followed by everlasting comfort and happiness.

Therefore, the Almighty God, Who created you and let you dwell in this homeland (the universe), when you were nothing worth mentioning before this; this Merciful Provider, Who took care of you when you were an embryo inside your mother's belly, and did not stop the flow of His Benevolence over you until you became a little child – nay, until you became a complete human being; I say, this kind Creator, Who made two eyes, a tongue, and two lips for you, and Who granted you the two heights: He advises you and admonishes you to perform good actions. He invites you to enter His Presence out of His love for you and His Sympathy for you. If you obey Him, you will join the people of happiness and will be together with the true, the martyrs, and those who became worthy of God's Donation.

The doer of good and the doer of evil are not alike to Al'lah, for He is a Just Provider.

He rewards everybody according to the helpful acts they accomplish and according to what they deserve.

That is what we can understand from the Verse: **“so, would he not break into the obstacle.”**

To inform you of the importance of this obstacle, He says:

Verse no. 12

12. “What enables you to perceive what the obstacle is?”

Then He spoke about this obstacle in some detail, saying:

Verse no. 13

13. “It is Freeing of a neck,”

“**Neck**” here refers to humanity – or you can say it refers to every living creature.

“**Freeing**”: here, this word means saving or helping.

The “**Freeing of a neck**” means providing relief for any creature in trouble, and lending a helping hand to anyone that is suffering from some affliction or going through some kind of distress. This is because distress is like a rope that is wrapped around the neck of its owner, so that when you save them it will be as if you are freeing their neck from this rope, and relieving them from binds and restrictions.

For example, when you dispel somebody’s worry or meet their need, or when you free them from capture, or discharge them from debt or save them from drowning or quench their thirst: if you complete any of these actions, you will have broken the obstacle and freed a neck.

Thus the phrase “**freeing of a neck**” encompasses a wide range of actions. It covers every act of deliverance, help or chivalry, just as it covers every living being – even down to the level of a little cat, an insignificant ant or a withered plant.

However, the noblest deed you can achieve is when you find a person that has shunned the path of belief and has fallen into errors which will drive them to misery and Fire, and when you make all efforts to save this person from their disbelief. If you are able to attract them to belief through kind treatment and reasonable guidance, and if you can help them to distinguish between their advantage and disadvantage so that they believe and find the way

of happiness, then it will be as if you had freed their neck from wicked desires and the snares of Satan, as you will have allowed them to proceed freely in the way of belief.

In this case, you will also have freed their neck from another thing: the torment of Hell-Fire; you will have transported them to basking in the Gardens of felicity and Paradise.

Such a deed – if you are lucky to perform it – is regarded as one of the greatest deeds before God, and this is the task of the Prophets and Envoys.

Self-Activity:

- Memorize Fortress Al-Balad very well with your teacher in your school and cooperate with your friends and family at home trying to memorize it very well and to understand its great interpretation

Questions and Exercises:

- 1. The Almighty Says “I do not swear by this homeland,” What is the homeland and Why does not the Almighty God swear by it??**
- 2. Why did not the Almighty God bring the creatures to this world all at once and what is the wisdom behind bringing them through successive generations (through marriage)?**
- 3. What does this Verse indicate “We have created the human in a womb.”?**
- 4. What are the things that absorb human thought causing him to shun God’s path, consequently they lead him to distress, degeneration and lowness?**
- 5. The Almighty God Says “And granted him the two heights” What are these two heights which God offers human and guides him to?**

Lesson Nine

Interpretation of Fortress 90 (The Universe)

Surah Al-Balad (Part Two)

Having clarified that human should have good deeds such as providing relief for any creature in trouble, and lending a helping hand to anyone who is suffering from afflictions or going under some kind of distress, then the Almighty Al'lah has showed us that guiding people to the right way, the straight path the path of Paradise is the most beneficial and advantageous deed, however there is another action that can help you to break the obstacle in order to move beyond it and on to your own welfare, it is lower in rank than the deed we have just described. This action is:

Verse no. 14

14. “Or feeding on a day of famine,”

This is when people suffer from severe hunger.

Providing people with food during times of war or famine is a superior deed which brings the doer nearer to Al'lah. It is below the deed of freeing a neck in rank, for it revives people and saves them from death.

Moral Story:

A Miraculous Feat of Strength

The Almighty says: “...**They give preference to others, even though they are in need the mselves...**”[12]

The heat of the midday sun had gradually lessened during the afternoon; it was now early evening and a welcome breeze had sprung up. The great master — who was about 60 years old at the time — was still in his room on the upper floor of the house where he had spent a relaxing, contemplative afternoon. His room adjoined a corridor which led to the main door of his Arab-style house. Um Fathi, his wife, had begun to clean the passage when suddenly she heard a knock at the door.

She called out to her husband: ‘Abu Fathi, there’s someone knocking at the door!’

The master stood up and went to open the main door, while his wife remained standing nearby behind the door of the guest room. He stood at the door looking at the visitor, and realised it was someone he had never seen before. The man standing there before him addressed M. Amin hesitantly, as though certain matters weighed heavily on his mind... but it was his impoverished condition and obvious dire need which had compelled him to ask for help. As the wise master looked at the man God revealed to him, within an instant, the true extent of his need and suffering: the profound misery and despondency which arise from poverty and lack of income was displayed clearly on the stranger’s face.

The Almighty says: “**You will recognize them by the obvious signs: they do not trouble people by begging from the m.**” [13]

Those people deserve to receive all possible assistance. The light of this master’s heart and his nearness to Al’lah granted him the vision to be fully aware of the reality, so we are given a warning from the Tradition of the Prophet: “**Be cautious of the believer’s insight, as he sees by God’s Light.**”

M. Amin hurried to help the man in his time of need and raise him out of his state of deprivation and penury, but there was no help to be found in his pocket as there were only a few coins: this amount could never satisfy M. Amin's customary levels of kindness and generosity. Furthermore it would do little to alter the obvious desperate condition of the pauper standing before him, or even allay his hunger temporarily. An idea came to him, so he emptied his pocket of every last coin and gave the money to the wretched man standing before him, saying in a gentle voice laced with extreme mercy and kindness, 'Please take this money and go to bring a pack animal here to my house, while I bring a sack of wheat to help feed your family to prevent them from starving to death.'

The desperate man accepted the money gladly: the master's gentle words were like water to a thirsty, wilted plant and he seemed rejuvenated as he grabbed the coins and rushed away from the house. His helplessness and weakness had suddenly turned into strength and vigour and he hurried away to return with a donkey to carry the promised sack of wheat.

In as much as M. Amin's words were soothing and comforting the heart of that wretched man they came as a hard shock to his wife! She could hear her husband's words as she was close tending the garden and watering the plants and flowers.

She could not believe her ears! She stood dumbfounded, unable to concentrate on the task at hand, and even stopped breathing for a few moments, as she remembered what effort she had done into cleaning the wheat. It had taken her three whole days of exhausting, back-breaking toil to clean that sack of wheat which weighed nearly 120 kilograms. For not only did it need cleaning but it then had to be spread out to dry in the courtyard, and afterwards she had put it with her own hands into this large sack to be ready for grinding. And now, with a mere knock at the door, it would be given away and all her hard work would have been in vain.

‘Oh, please,’ she thought, ‘let him take whatever he wants but not this sack of wheat... No! I have worked so hard... I’ve given my heart and soul to the task of preparing it... I’ve sweated like a labourer for three whole days.’ A few moments passed as she pondered this predicament, then she snapped out of her reverie and thought about what should happen now

With great determination, she rushed down to the ground floor where the sack of wheat was lying in the store room. A few moments later, M. Amin entered the room heading for the sack of wheat. When she saw him her suspicions were confirmed and she was overcome with fury which had settled deep in her heart, and expressed itself in her strong reaction to his decision which had affected her so strongly. She was determined to defend the sack of wheat and face her husband displaying her tough, steely will. Then she said in a tone of voice that registered her strong disapproval of his actions: ‘Abu Fathi, take anything you want for him except that sack of wheat!! Upon my blood... upon my soul...’ She was so upset that it seemed she would not allow this sack to leave the house even if she sacrificed her life for it. Yet when the humane, merciful and generous master saw her determination and objection to his carrying out this good deed, his innate sense of goodness became aroused to the point that he was even more determined to carry out his good deed; he cared for nothing around him, and would not be thwarted by any emotion however intense it might be.

He was more determined than ever to carry out the humane deed of releasing that miserable man from his poverty and deprivation which would ensure God’s Satisfaction with him, so he wasted no more time and dashed off immediately to put his thoughts into action.

But how was he going to pick up this heavy weight? He bent over the sack, put both arms around it, and undeterred by the enormous weight he stood up with new found strength, denoting the compassion, generosity, zeal, and love for rendering good and magnificent deeds, that were enfolded within his spirit.

He drew up to his full height hugging the large, weighty sack close to his chest. But what was this? It is virtually impossible for any man, however strong he might be, to carry such a load in this way: normally it would have to be carried on a man's back.

Incredible! This man was almost sixty years old and he was hoisting a 120 kilogram sack of wheat, a feat that even the strongest champions would find difficult to achieve. What kind of steady will and extreme resolution prevailed over this man's superhuman physical state giving it the strength to carry out this heroic performance? The picture was quite remarkable, but true!

That amazing sight had really startled and overwhelmed his wife so her determination was swallowed up in an instant, as a drop of water is lost in the sea, thus weakening her intention and scattering her determination in every direction. She knew for certain that there was no way to deter her husband: the deed would be done even if it cost her blood... soul... life... for how could she stand firm before the unleashed forces of a stormy sea?

M. Amin was rushing forward carrying a sack which weighed 120 kilograms, and if she tried to stop him she would surely be knocked down and crushed to death under the combined weight of the sack of flour and her husband. So, she retreated slowly and stood with her back against the wall... amazed, astounded, and silent... she realized that her outburst had served no purpose, so she calmed down. Still hugging the weighty sack M. Amin went up the first three steps, then walked a few paces on the landing before climbing ten more steps till he reached the open door of the house.

He staggered out to the road where he put the sack down in front of the door, as the beggar appeared approaching the house, followed by a drover leading his donkey; when he arrived they both lifted the sack on to the back of the animal, making sure that it was properly balanced. The pauper then departed after offering heartfelt words of thanks and saying goodbye to the kindest, most open-handed man he had ever met during his life. The generous, pure master returned to his room feeling extremely happy after

carrying out that heroic performance in applying Al'lah's Command, and not giving way to the discontent that had been expressed by his wife. Al'lah's Satisfaction and the importance of charity had been uppermost in his mind. He was amazed that he had been able to lift up the immensely heavy sack with relative ease and climb thirteen steps carrying such a weight!!

Sometime after this incident, when money became available, M. Amin bought another sack of wheat to replace the one that had been given away, and fortunately for Um Fathi this wheat had already been cleaned and dried. Mohammad Amin went to lift it as he had the previous sack but failed to lift it off the floor... in fact he could not move it at all!

With what kind of love for good, and zeal for attaining God's Satisfaction, had his pure and honest spirit been endowed to enable him to achieve that incredible feat?

Truly this super power is the fruit of the truthfulness and desire of Mohammad Amin's spirit to achieve the Approval of Al'lah the Great, Who says:

“The righteous will surely drink from a cup mixed with overwhelming delight. A spring from which Al'lah's servants will drink their fill, causing it to gush forth abundantly. They fulfil the vow; and they fear a Day of widespread woes. They willingly give food, for the love of Him, to the poor, the orphan, and the captive,” (and when they do this they say to themselves; their intention:) **“We feed you only for the Sake of God; we seek neither recompense nor thanks from you.”** [14]

Truly, that faithful man enriched the earth with deeds of glory and sublimity, the veracity of which has been proved by his miraculous performance.

In his presence blessings always prevailed!

The Almighty listed the people you can feed for you, in order; He says:

Verse no. 15

15. “An orphan with claims of relationship,”

The Almighty refers to the orphans first because they are poor and helpless. They have no father to sympathize with them, and they need charity more than those who have reached adulthood.

As for the specification that they are one of your relatives, this is because a person can know the needs of their relatives best; nobody knows the requirements of poor people better than their close relatives.

However, as used in this Verse, the word “**orphan**” is not limited to the little fatherless children, but includes any helpless person, as noted previously in al-Duha Surah (Morning Bright).

This feeding should embrace every single person who finds that they have nobody to help or support them.

Besides this, the word “**relationship**” is not only restricted to relatives, but involves all believers. This is because all of them are related to you – nay, they are the people closest to you.

Thus, after you have been charitable to those people mentioned above, you can then be charitable to all other people, and sympathetic to all who are needy. God says:

Verse no. 16

16. “Or an indigent wretch cleaving to the dust (out of misery).”

The “**indigent**” means the needy, who have no power or strength to drive poverty away from themselves or to get free from the state in which they suffer. This word implies people who are sick or poor, who have many children, or who are powerless, or weak because of senility.

The statement “**cleaving to dust**” refers to everyone that is penniless.

When we say that a person is cleaving to the dust, we mean that they have nothing.

The indigent referred to in this Verse need not be relatives or believers. This relates to any poor person, even if they are not Muslims.

The Prophet (cpth) said: **“All creatures are dependents of Al’lah. The more beneficent to His dependents one is, the more beloved to Him he will be.”** [15]

The Almighty wants us to be beneficent in all our acts, but what is the result of good actions?

After breaking the obstacle, what will our situation be?

The Almighty elucidated that in His Saying:

Verse no. 17

17. “Then he becomes one of those who believe and exhorts others to fortitude and mercy.”

According to the denotation of this noble Verse, faith is the fruit of good work, and it can be acquired only by charity.

In more detail, we say:

If a person looks at this universe with an attitude of contemplation and penetration, their vision and thought will lead them to perceive the greatness of the universe, its perfect construction, and its accurate creation; this will guide him to believe that there is a Grand Creator, a Wise Provider, and an Omnipotent God of this world. This kind of belief – which is acquired through considering and looking at matters, and is reached through thought – is called mental belief.

This type of faith does not keep humanity away from the Fire or allow them to enter Paradise unless it is accompanied by the performance of good deeds, specifically by avoiding that which is forbidden, following the Godly Recommendations, and treating all creatures with kindness in so far as possible. Thus after attaining

intellectual belief, if one renders good actions which please God – as we have mentioned in the preceding Verses – the spirit will become confident of itself and assured of the Satisfaction of God.

Through this confidence and assurance, the spirit will draw nearer to Al'lah. The good action will be like a wing to carry it into God's Presence.

When it enters God's Presence, it will watch God's Tenderness and Clemency and will witness His Compassion and Benefaction for itself.

The spiritual viewing and moral witnessing that is achieved by the spirit at this stage produces a spiritual belief for the viewer, and this kind of belief is what is referred to in the noble Verse: **“Then he becomes one of those who believe”**. This kind of belief is the reliable, required belief. This is the only thing that can save the believer from Fire and allow them to enter Paradise.

This belief produces love and infatuation with Al'lah in the spirit of those who achieve it. Through such love, an amount of Godly Perfection will be printed upon the spirit, which colors it with supreme qualities. In this way, it derives mercy, tenderness, justice, and favor from Al'lah, and its tongue will utter nothing but words which bring blessings and refinement. Therefore God says: **“and advise fortitude and advise mercy.”**

Such a believer will begin advising people to be patient and will acquaint them with God's Commiseration and kindness for them, so explaining that the troubles and the affliction that He drives to them are only intended to be a spiritual cure and moral medicine, which will clear the spirit of its sins and release its defects and diseases. This will allow people to be worthy, and qualify them to enjoy the honor and donation prepared for them by their Provider.

Such a believer will also begin to admonish people to be merciful, clarifying that Al'lah loves those who are merciful and that He repays charity with charity.

After He has elucidated to us that breaking the obstacle is the means to achieve belief, and that this belief uplifts the believer and makes them a perfect person of noble merits, God wishes to acquaint us with the fate of this noble person, and the recompense they shall get from their Provider for the deeds they have rendered. He says:

Verse no. 18

18. “Such are the people of goodness and prosperity.”

The statement “goodness and prosperity” in Arabic is ‘maymanah’ which is derived from ‘yumn’ which in turn means, abundant goodness and blessings, Here, it refers to the permanent Godly Favor with which their Provider rewards the faithful believers in return for their good actions during their life.

Guidance and abidance:

If you speak kindly using a good guiding word, God will repay you with a great reward...

Like that, if man pays charity and renders good efforts and actions to help others, surely the reward will be grandeur and greater than can be imagined.

You should have devotion in submitting to God’s order in all your deeds.

Make your intention of your deeds pure seeking only God's content, then your good deeds are acceptable by the Almighty God.

The Almighty God has put in our custody and responsibility many orphans, needy, powerless and senility who need our help, you have to hurry in lending them a helping hand.

Questions and Exercises:

1- Why did the great scholar M. Amin determine to give the big sack of wheat to the needy, beggar despite his wife opposition?

2- The Almighty God says: “**An orphan with claims of relationship,**” Why does the Almighty God appoint the charity to be for the relative orphan at first. Is the word orphan restricted only to the child who lost his parents?

3- What is the result of the good actions and charity that human renders and where do they lead him finally?

4- The Almighty God says: {**Such are the people of goodness and prosperity**} what is the meaning of “ **goodness and prosperity** “ in this holy Verse?

Lesson Ten

Interpretation of Fortress 90 (The Universe)

Surah Al-Balad (Part Three)

Having clarified the good and righteous deeds, in the previous Verses, which lead human to happiness and felicity, however the true believers strive a little in this life, in return for that God will repay them with great rewards.....but those who desire the lowly life depriving themselves of the graces and blessings of true belief in God and of rendering good actions those are the people of wretchedness and meanness, therefore the Almighty God says:

Verse no. 19

19. “But those that deny Our signs are the people of wretchedness.”

This means that those who turn away from their Provider to the point that they become blind-hearted and commit evil actions in their life shall see the outcomes of their wrongdoings in the other abode. They will see an evil omen in their evil deeds for the misery, the torment and the unhappiness they will draw upon themselves.

For example, when a hard-working student knows the results of their examinations, they feel optimistic and glad, because the efforts they exerted throughout the year have led them to success and excellence.

Meanwhile, the student who is slack and lazy is pessimistic on the day of their results, as they know that their lack of effort will bring only failure down upon them.

The former is pleased and optimistic about what they will gain from their efforts, while the latter is annoyed and pessimistic about their future prospects.

That is what we understand from these two Verses.

The Almighty demonstrated to us the torture which the unbelievers will suffer in the hereafter. He says:

Verse no. 20

20. “The Fire will close over them.”

Here, the “**closed**” fire is a fire which will consume the unbelievers and surround them on all sides. It will close over them and leave them with no way to escape it, making them abide therein forever.

To give some examples of the reasons for the unbelievers to dwell in Fire, we say that the people of this world can be divided into four groups:

1- There is one group who began to examine the universal signs in their childhood, and continued until they were guided to their Creator. They have been entering into their Provider’s Presence since their early years, and never cease witnessing Him for even a twinkle of an eye throughout their lives.

Due to their continuous nearness to their Creator, their spirits remain pure. They are not blemished with the germ of wicked desires because they are protected from falling into any wrongdoing. This is the state of the Prophets. They started their lives in belief and grew up in states of nearness to God, never turning away from Him. Therefore the Godly Light has always been coming to their hearts and keeping their spirits pure, both before and after they were commissioned with their message; this is why they were impeccable.

The Almighty ascribed impeccability to His Envoys, saying: **“...Rather they are but servants raised to honor. They do not speak till He has spoken and they act by His Command.”**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya’ (The Prophets), Verse 26-27*

Addressing His Envoy Mohammad, He also says: **“Truly We have opened up an explained opening for you in order that**

Al'lah will forgive your past and future sins,": this Verse is telling Messenger Mohammad: by your lofty entrance into your Provider's Presence since your early years, He manifested His Light upon you, which revealed the facts of everything to you. In this way, Al'lah forgave you – that is, He protected [16] you – so that you did not commit any wrongdoing, either before or after your commission; you are always absolutely pure and infallible.

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 48, Al-Fateh (Explained Opening), Verse 1-2*

For this reason, the immaculate spirits of Prophets and Envoys do not need to be cured. They are always free from any torture, both in this life and in the life to come.

All of the troubles they encounter in this world, and any harm or opposition that their nations do are mere causes leading to the revelation of the honor of their spirits, their perfect tenderness and mercy, their noble qualities, and their humanity.

2- The second group is also made up of people who believe in their Provider and achieved nearness to Him and a link with Him. However, they do not reach the same level as the first group. Their entry into His Presence and their link with Him are not continuous, but are present only from time to time rather than being ceaseless, as in the case of the former group.

These people are restrained from committing any breach and from falling victim to wicked desires so long as they remain near to Al'lah. However, when they turn from Him they may stumble and fall in error. In this case Al'lah will chastise them for their deeds, driving calamity and trouble to them in correlation with their actions. The intention is to provide a motive for them to return to their Creator, directing them faithfully to Him.

Through this direction, their spirits will become cleansed of what had been attached to them. They will recover from their faults so that when they die, they will be without sin.

Thus, the affliction that comes upon them in this life is nothing but the Favor and Compassion of God.

Their bodily diseases are only a reason for their spirits to be cured of their incorporeal ailments and deathly germs, thus qualifying them to enter Paradise and enjoy the grace and the boons which their Provider has prepared for them.

3- The third group again includes people who believe and attain a link with their Provider and direct themselves towards Him, but in this case, the link is feeble. The occasions of their separation from God are more frequent than the times that they are near to Him. Hence, the germs of their evil yearning will not disappear from their spirits, meaning that they are not completely purified. When they die, the dirt of their offenses will remain attached to their spirits, as they have not truly repented to Al'lah.

Because of this, these people will not be able to enter Paradise unless they get rid of their imperfections. Their spirits must become clear of all mean desires. For this reason, the Fire is necessary for them, as it will be the best cure and medicine for them.

They will throw themselves into it and will suffer its severe burning, and will then seek protection from their Creator. At this point, their belief and the link which they previously acquired in their lifetime will be a way for them to approach God.

This approach will allow their spirit to be cured and purified, and they will be cleansed of the malice which led to their torment and burning. Thereafter they will be sent to Paradise.

The noble saying denotes: **“That whose heart has involved a little bit of belief will come out of Fire.”** [17]

4- The people of the fourth group are unbelievers who turned wholly away from their Provider during their lifetime.

If the people in this group fail to achieve a link with their Provider during their life, after death they will emerge from their tombs suffering from great spiritual torture. They will appeal to their

Provider for help, but He will give orders for them to be driven into Fire. There they will surrender to its burning, hoping to forget the unbearable spiritual pain they feel. In this way, the torment of burning will help them to forget their stern spiritual torment.

However, since these people did not believe while they were alive, they do not know how to approach God. Their appeal will not be properly directed to God and, therefore, will not help in cleaning their spirits of their mean contents. For this reason, they will remain in Fire, and abide therein forever.

Now we must explain the meaning of the entrance into Al'lah's Presence, which cures the spirit of its defects and diseases. We say:

Entering into Al'lah's Presence requires having some knowledge of God's Compassion; that is to say, one must achieve spiritual witnessing or tasting of the Godly Mercy, Sympathy and Tenderness.

The faithful person who has attained knowledge of God in their life – that is to say, who has witnessed or tasted part of that Godly Mercy – will not feel ashamed of any wrongdoing or breach in the life to come. The Godly Compassion will grow greater before their eyes on that day, to the point that It makes them see that all of their sins are insignificant and negligible, however gross they may be. By witnessing this limitless Compassion, the assurance of the Kindness and Affection of Al'lah will overpower any other of this believer's feelings, and so they will enter the Presence of God.

This entrance clears the muddy spirit so that it becomes pure.

For the unbeliever who has not attained any spiritual taste or any knowledge from witnessing the Mercy of the Provider, everything that they experience in the other world merely acquaints them with the truth. The factual reality in which they live and suffer and the drive to be treated in the Fire will acquaint them with the Compassion of their Provider.

However, this acquaintance – which is not associated with spiritual witnessing or tasting – cannot release the shame of the spirit of its

sins so that it can approach its Provider. Since the unbeliever has not rendered any favor in their previous life, on which they can rely as a means to help their spirit draw nearer to its Creator, you will find that they are shackled by their shame and absorbed by their pain.

They will be unable to enter into their Provider's Presence in order that their spirit can recover from its disease, and therefore they will abide in that torment forever.

Thus true direction towards Al'lah (or, you could say, the correct communication which the believer performs in life) gives the spirit a taste or knowledge – that is to say, a witnessing – of Al'lah's Mercy and His supreme Attribute. That is why this is the means for the spirit to recover from its imperfection.

The more perfect communication a person achieves, the more illuminated they become, and the more virtuous and sinless they will be.

Anyone who is able to attain this knowledge or tasting of the Compassion of the Provider and His Perfection during life has the ability to do good, and they have truly succeeded.

As for anyone who helps you draw nearer to God and who acquaints you with Him, you owe them your gratitude throughout your life, and you will never be able to repay them with charity equal to theirs. You should therefore ask God to bless them, for He is the Best One, Who rewards and repays charity with charity.

Praise is to God, the Provider of all worlds.

Self-Activity:

Memorize Fortress Al-Balad very well with your teacher in your school, keep reciting it in your prayers, and appeal to God to bestow right good deeds upon you and rescue you from the torment of the fire.

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- Why are the noble prophets and envoys, peace and blessing upon them, protected from the torment in both this life and in the life to come?
- 2- Write a constructive text explaining through it the reasons which lead the disobedient into the fire in the Day of Restriction.

Lesson Eleven

Interpretation of Fortress 89 (The Coming Appearance)

Surah Al-Fajr (Part One)

I seek refuge in God from the cursed Satan

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

1. **“And (behold) the dawn (the coming appearance);”**
2. **“And the ten nights;”**
3. **“ Then the even and the odd;”**
4. **“Then the night, when it flows!”**
5. **“In these, is there an adjuration for a rational person?”**
6. **“Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with (the tribe of) ‘Ad,”**
7. **“(The people of) Iram, the many-columned city,”**
8. **“Whose like was never again created in any land?”**
9. **“And with (the tribe of) Thamud, who brought rocks to the valley?”**
10. **“And with Pharaoh, the owner of the stakes?”**
11. **“These (all) transgressed all bounds in the lands,”**
12. **“And made them teem with corruption,”**
13. **“Therefore your Provider poured a scourge of punishment down upon them.”**
14. **“Your Provider is Ever Watchful.”**
15. **“As for the human, when their Lord tries them by bestowing favors and blessings on them, do they say, ‘My Lord honors me?’**
16. **“And when He tries them by restricting His provision towards them, do they say, ‘My Lord degrades me?’”**

17. **“No (you do not)! Rather you show no kindness to the orphan,”**
18. **“Nor do you urge one another to feed the poor.”**
19. **“And you consume inheritance greedily,”**
20. **“And you love riches with inordinate love.”**
21. **“No! For when the earth is gathered together entirely and finally,”**
22. **“And your Provider comes, and the angels in row upon row;”**
23. **“And Hell, on that Day, is brought near: on that Day human will remember, but what will remembrance avail them then?”**
24. **“They will say, ‘Ah, would that I had put forward (goodness) for my life (that was to come)!’**
25. **“However, on that Day their torture will not be inflicted upon them by anyone (other than themselves); “**
26. **“Nor will any bind their bonds upon them.”**
27. **“Oh, spirit in rest and satisfaction!”**
28. **“Return to your Provider, well-pleased and well-pleasing.”**
29. **“Enter into My servants,”**
30. **“And enter My Paradise.”**

§§§§§

In this noble Fortress, the Almighty Al’lah wants to warn humanity of the consequences of their conduct and the outcomes of their actions.

He reveals to them that if they do not return to their senses and desist from their errors, destruction and distress will be their reward, just as happened to the nations cited by Al’lah as examples. However, if they turn from their negligence and avoid

their bad end before they die, they will live an easy and comfortable life, and their spirit will be happy and jubilant when it returns to its Provider after the current life, because of the good deeds it has rendered.

Learning lessons from the affliction that descended upon the nations that were destroyed is not accomplished without belief, and believing in the Day of Account is associated with and depending on believing in God. Therefore the Almighty began this Fortress with Verses which acquaint humanity with the Creator Who brought them into this current existence, and Who is, at the same time, the Originator and the Director of the entire universe. If a person then thinks of the universal signs which are before their eyes, they will believe in their Provider. This belief will lead them to abide by God's Orders and refrain from transgression and straying from His Path. This will allow such a person to take off the beastly garment which they had been wearing, and turn into a real person of humanist qualities and actions.

It is only then that they will draw what is good to themselves, and drive away the loss which is about to afflict them.

Out of God's Love for you, human, He addressed you by saying:

Verse no. 1

1. "(And (behold) the dawn (the coming appearance);"

The word "**dawn**" imports the gradual and successive appearance which is coming. It also indicates everything that comes from nonexistence into existence consecutively and continually.

Accordingly, the meaning of the word "**dawn**" is not restricted to the light which appears at the end of the night, but includes everything that the Almighty uncovers for you, for your benefit and your life, from the world of what is hidden to the world of being and what is in view.

For example, this includes the buds, the flowers and the fruit which appear on trees, and also the plants which grow from seeds which

were buried under the soil and all the leaves, fruit and blessings which come out of them. That is to say, everything which is essential for your life and your continuous existence which appears gradually from the unseen world and emerges into the world of witnessing and viewing, slowly coming into existence over time, little by little, is folded under the word “**dawn**”.

The conjunction “**and**”, which is the letter ‘wa’ in Arabic, precedes the word “**dawn**” and so draws the attention to the greatness of this phenomenon. It turns you to the accurate formation and the amazing arrangement of all that is brought into view, to the Wisdom of their Creator, and to all of the miracles that can be perceived within them and which point to their Maker.

This Verse denotes:

Oh human! Behold the world, then think deeply of all the substances and the fruit which successively appear and gradually emerge to ensure your life and subsistence!

Consider the continuous movement and current arrangement through which the plants grow and fruit is produced at the appointed time.

Had there been no Creator that creates, the course of life would not have continued and the constant emergence of things and all of creation would have stopped; indeed, the whole world would have vanished.

Think of all of this, and then you will be guided to the Creator.

After drawing our attention to the blessings which He brings into existence for our sake, the Almighty wanted to tell us that His Direction is based on a great discipline which also deserves contemplation. It refers to the Originator, Who makes everything excellently and forms them upon the utmost degree of perfection. Therefore He says:

Verse no. 2

2. “And the Ten Nights;”

Through this statement God wants to tell us that the creation of blessings and fruit is connected and depends on a system of “Ten Nights” without which no plant can rise, no crops can be produced, no attar can be smelled and no fruit can ripen.

This statement means that the production, steering and creation which follow in succession in the most perfect form and the most admirable way are achieved through these “**Ten Nights**”.

At the epoch of the great scholar M. Amin Shikho, one day one of his students asked the great scholar M. Amin Shikho (God has sanctified his secret) about the meaning of these Verses {1- And (behold) the dawn (the coming appearance) 2- And the ten nights 3-Then the even and the odd 4-Then the night, when it flows!}

And that had been before the eminent scholar illustrated this blessing interpretation which you are studying now. The great scholar said to him: “I will answer your question in the next week if the Almighty God wills”.

Then he appealed and supplicated wholeheartedly with a great eagerness to the Almighty God to make him witness the meaning of these noble fortress, after a week the student returned again to ask the great scholar about the meaning of these Verses, but the great scholar answered that he had not been inspired the meaning yet by God and he would answer him the next week if the Almighty God willed, however the great scholar remained in his supplication strongly and faithfully for the whole week until the stated date from the next week has come within the same question from the student, the great scholar answered again that God didn't pour down the meaning in his heart yet, and promised to answer him in the next week, accordingly three weeks has passed throughout his thinking of these noble fortress (Surah), his appealing and supplication before Al'lah was greater than the extension of the spacious universe, within his great sincerity and love to the Almighty God and his highly exalted approach to the victory Giver, the All- Knowing and the All-Majestic the Almighty

Allah, He the Almighty revealed the sublime Divine meanings of these noble Verses for him to witness deservedly their complete realities and descended its sublime meaning in his honorable heart, so when the exact date came he met the student and said: Oh my son if you brought an empty glass of water in that night it would be filled with my tears as I witnessed the meaning of these noble fortress (Al-Fajer Surah) by the Almighty God's Light. And continued his speech explaining to him these Divine meanings of this holy Surah, the meaning we have mentioned above about ***{And (behold) the dawn (the coming appearance)}*** and the rest of the interpretation of this Surah, saying:

“And the Ten Nights;”

To provide further illustration of this we say:

It is noticeable that the duration of the night is not constant, but increases and decreases at different times of the year.

We can see that the length of the night differs from day to day, but becomes equal in the length of the day on a certain day in spring, namely, the 22nd of March. On this day, both the day and night last for twelve hours.

After this, the night begins to decrease by one minute – or somewhat more or less – until it reaches its minimum length on a certain day of summer. This day is the 22nd of June, when you can see that the summer night is very short.

After reaching this minimum limit, the night begins to lengthen little by little, until it again becomes of equal length with the day, on the day of the autumn equinox, the 22nd of September.

Then it continues to increase, until it reaches its maximum length on the 22nd of December during the winter. On that day, you can see that the night is very long.

Once again, the night then shortens until the spring equinox arrives, when the night lasts as long as the day, as it did before, and so the cycle continues.

Now, over the course of one year, if you add up these minutes and seconds of increases in the duration of the night to the decreases in its duration as the seasons change, you will find that the total number of minutes of change is equal to one hundred and twenty hours: that is to say, ten nights.

Through this differentiation in the duration of the night, the plants enjoy the rays of the sun during the day – each according to its nature – so that they come into being and appear in a regular way marked by unified perfection; thus life on earth is well organized. This fixed system produces the seasons, and without it the climatic zones would become different and life would be disordered, even becoming impossible.

I wonder, who decreed this course for the earth and moved it in such a regular way? Does this system not include an indication that there is a Wise Creator and Omnipotent Provider?

However, the production of these blessings – necessary for human life – which are folded under the word “**Dawn**” also depends on factors other than the four seasons, as expressed by the words “**Ten Nights**”. The Almighty also mentions these elements so that we will think of them and scrutinize them. He says:

Verse no. 3

3. “Then the even and the odd;”

”**The even**”: this pertains two things; in this Verse it refers to the earth, which is associated with the moon.

The moon is connected to the earth. Wherever the earth moves, the moon follows, always accompanying the earth, orbiting around it and never leaving it. For this reason, the Almighty calls them “**even**”.

As for the word “**odd**”, it refers to the sun: the blazing body which supplies the earth and its moon with light, sending its bright rays to them.

This Verse says: you, human! Behold the moon and its correlation to the earth, and then ask yourself:

Who has joined it to the earth and related them to each other so that there is no separation between them?

Ponder the moon's circulation around the earth, and the phases through which it passes during each lunar month!

Think of its effects on the sea and its waves, and how it causes the sea to rise and fall as it waxes and wanes!

Notice its role in the growth of plants and crops!

Consider carefully the benefits of this planet (the moon) and the Power that fixes it in space!

Consider that Grand Might which connected it to the earth!

Once you have done this, move your attention from the moon to the sun, and think of how it supplies the whole galaxy with light and heat!

Think of its effects on the seawaters and how it vaporizes them and causes the rain to fall, which in turn causes the plants to grow!

Does not this prove the existence of an Arranger Who has arranged everything, and of a Creator Who has created perfectly?

To acquaint us with the earth's revolve which brings us the night, and with the part played by the night in generating these boons, God gives us the following Verse so that we may think of this sign – in addition to the previous signs – so that our belief will grow deeper and deeper, until we completely surrender to our Creator. He says:

Verse no. 4

4. "Then the night when it flows (depart)!"

To 'flow' is to run gently.

The night encircles the globe in gentleness and imperceptible motion, travelling around it during a twenty four hour period,

moving without cessation. I wonder: who has created this darkness and made it circulate the earth continuously?

Who allowed it to cause the effects which it causes?

What would the state of humanity be in the case that the earth had revolved too slowly or too quickly?

Suppose that the night was to last for many hundreds of hours or for only two or three hours. In this case, would any crop be able to grow? Would any person or animal be able to live?

This order, which is established on the basis of such perfection, is certainly a clear indication that there is a Mighty God and One Who is Wise and All-Knowing.

Having drawn our attention to these universal miracles whose perfect system and marvelous arrangement are undeniable, the Almighty says:

Verse no. 5

5. “In these, is there an adjuration for a rational person?”

To **“take an adjuration”**: to swear. When a statement is preceded by an adjuration it is supposed to be emphatically true and beyond doubt.

An “a rational person” is that which keeps something under control, and here it is specifically referring to ‘thought’. In fact, if a person takes the benefit of their power of thought, they will be able to keep their actions under control and will be prevented from falling into error, aberration or perversity.

With this Verse, the Almighty addresses humanity, saying: “After I have revealed Verses to you which direct you to the direction of this great universe, if you actually use a bit of your ability of thinking, human, can you swear that there is no Organizing Creator and All-Powerful, Wise Provider of this universe?”

Thought is a precious jewel with which the Almighty graced humanity. It is the basis of attaining knowledge and the only means to achieve belief.

Anyone who neglect their ability to think to subside and become inactive, and allow their desire to overcome their thinking will be like a brute beast which knows nothing about anything other than eating and drinking.

How far from the humanist rank such a person will be! How ignorant of humanism they will be!

Oh, human! Think deeply of what is around you so that you may be guided to your Creator and derive a light from His Light, which will help you to advance in the darkness of your life. At that time, you will see the way of your happiness and will be able to distinguish between your advantage and your disadvantage.

Self-Activity:

1- I should always think of the cosmic signs (wonders) because they are the means which guide us to achieve the true belief in the Almighty God, also I should resort to Him before and during my thinking and appeal wholeheartedly and faithfully to Him the Almighty asking Him to reveal the reality of the statement (**There is no God but Al'lah**) and make me witness it heartedly, thereby our Master Mohammad (cpth) and the great scholar M. A. Sheikho (his soul has been sanctified by Al'lah) will be as an enlightening Real Sun which lightens my way and reveals the Divine knowledge. Human is a thinking creature. Anyone who neglects his ability to think, consequently will be inactive depriving himself from Divine exaltedness and highness because the Almighty God has graced humanity with the ability to think that they can attain higher rank of approaching God and render good actions to approach nearer to Him, however the prophet (cpth) contemplated and thought about the cosmic wonders (signs) such as the sun and moon, the day and night ...etc. Which are certainly clear indications that there is Mighty God, the One Who is Wise and All-Knowing and that is the way to attain true belief.

So, observe the sun everyday to see the sunrise and the sunset and how it changes its place in unlimited accuracy...and contemplate that the length of the day and the night is not constant but increases and decreases regularly, all that indicates that there is Wise Creator and Omnipotent Provider Who controls and organizes all the universe making its production just to serve human out of His Mercy and Sympathy.

2- Memorize Fortress Al-Fajer very well with your teacher in your school and cooperate with your friends and family at home trying to memorize it very well and to understand its great interpretation, then try to discuss this interpretation with whom you love.

Questions and Exercises:

1- The Almighty God says {And (behold) the dawn (the coming appearance)}, what does this Verse indicate?

2- What was the answer of the great scholar to the student after he was revealed and witnessed the Divine realities and meanings of Al-Fajer Surah?

3- The Almighty God says: **{In these, is there an adjuration for a rational person}**, what is the meaning of this Verse?

Lesson Twelve

Interpretation of Fortress 89 (The Coming Appearance)

Surah Al-Fajr (Part Two)

Dear student:

Thought is a precious jewel with which the Almighty graced humanity. It is the basis of attaining knowledge and the only means to achieve belief.

Anyone who neglects their ability to think to subside and become inactive, and allows their desire to overcome their thinking will be like a brute beast which knows nothing about anything other than eating and drinking.

How far from the humanist rank such a person will be, however if you fail to use the power of thought and incline to this world without recognizing your Creator – Who brought you into being on this land and allowed all the creatures to be at your service – then listen to what happened to the oppressive nations.

God exterminated them and left no trace of them, save some ruined monuments. This is so despite the fact that they had superior power and greater architecture than your nation. Therefore He says in admonishment:

Verse no. 6

6. “Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with (the tribe of) ‘Ad;”

The Almighty does not intend to ask a question by saying “**Have you not seen**”, but aims at reminding humanity of this event so as to let it settle in our minds, in order not to follow the conduct of those people.

“**Ad**” is one of the ancient Arab nations who dwelt in Al-Sham Countries in the north of the Arabic Island.

They set up buildings on the land and employed all their power to do so. When our master Hud (pth) was sent to them as an Envoy

from their Provider, they opposed him. The noble Verse indicates this when God says: **“They said: ‘Oh Hud! You have brought us no clear proof. We will not leave our gods for your saying, nor will we believe in you’.”**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 11, Hud, Verse 53*

Therefore, the Almighty let loose on them a raging wind in disastrous days that snatched their souls and left them dead on the ground, as though they were the arched trunks of palm trees.

To allow you to imagine the power and the skill that they had in building, the Almighty says:

Verse no. 7

7. **“(The people of) Iram, the many-columned city,”**

That means that if you want to know where they lived and the power that they had, you should see **“Iram, the many-columned city”**.

“Iram” is meant to be Damascus city. It was so-called because it had been the center of power for this nation and the capital of their kingdom.

In Arabic, the word **“Iram”** is derived from ‘Aroomah’ which means the origin of something or its place of birth.

The authority and influence of those people came out of Damascus and covered all the countries under their control. Besides this, the Almighty called Damascus **“Iram”** because the Muslims will go there on the day of Armageddon. This place will be their location. That is what the Prophet (cph) talked about when he said: **“The refuge of the Muslims on the day of Armageddon will be on a land called Al-Gutta where there is a city called Damascus. On that day it will be the best home for the Muslims.”** [18]

“The many-columned city” means a city with huge pillars.

Indeed, if you look at the huge columns which the excavations are finding in Damascus all the time, you will understand the lofty position which this city once enjoyed in its construction and size, just as you will be able to imagine the power which this group of people had during that era.

God wanted to tell you about the bliss in which this nation lived, and therefore He says:

Verse no. 8

8. “Whose like was never again created in any land?”

In fact, Damascus is regarded a paradise on earth, with its fresh air, abundant water, temperate climate and various seasons on one hand, and its rich land, fertile soil and numerous trees on the other.

There is no other location on earth that has attractions on all sides to the same extent as Damascus.

However comfortable your life is, and whatever affluence you enjoy, you can be sure that there were people before you who enjoyed their life as much as you do, and even more.

However, when they disobeyed the Envoy of their Provider and got involved into what was prohibited for them, nothing could help them: neither their constructions and cities nor their gardens and palaces were to any avail. Everything was lost to them and given to other nations by Al’lah, the Almighty.

After reminding us of the woe that afflicted those people, God reminds us of the people of Thamud.

He says:

Verse no. 9

9. “And with (the tribe of) Thamud, who brought rocks to the valley?”

”**Thamud**” is another ancient Arab nation who also lived in the north of the Arabian Island between Al-Hijaz countries and Al-Sham countries.

The Almighty God sent them our master Saleh (pth) as an Envoy in order to warn them of their error, and to call them to worship Al’lah and follow His Orders. However, this tribe asked him to bring a she-camel out of a mountain to prove the truth of his mission. God responded to their request and did as they had asked. However, despite this miracle, they caused grief to the she-camel – as previously mentioned in ‘Al-Shams’ Fortress – and did not observe the Command of their Lord. Moreover, they plotted to kill His Envoy. Al’lah foiled their plans and saved him, along with the believers who followed him (pth). A cry rang above these oppressors had left them crouching in their dwellings. This Verse was revealed to remind humanity of how these people, too, met their end. The statement “**And with Thamud**” means: behold also, human, what had happened to the people of Thamud!

The phrase “**who brought rocks to the valley**” is in reference to how the people of Thamud had cut rocks into pieces and then brought them into their valley.

A “**rock**” is a large, hard lump of stone.

A “**valley**” is the low place between mountains or hills that forms a watercourse or a river bed. The Almighty uses the words “**brought rocks**” in order to show us the power and the might of those people and how great and huge their buildings were.

The words “**to the valley**” refer to the place where they built their firm constructions.

They built them in the valley, which is a location marked by fresh air, different varieties of trees and abundant flowing water.

When these people opposed the Envoy of their Provider – thereby deserving to be destroyed – despite the great power they had, they could do nothing to protect themselves; nor did their wonderful buildings and towering castle help them at this time.

The Almighty cites another example for us when He says:

Verse no. 10

10. “And with Pharaoh, the owner of the stakes?”

The word “**stakes**” is used to indicate anything that is stuck into the ground to help to fix and stabilize something else.

In this Verse, the word “stakes” specifically refers to the foundations of the great buildings which Pharaoh had established in Egypt which are known as the Pyramids. These towering Pyramids were built using rocks of tremendous dimensions, to the extent that each was nearly as large as an entire room in the houses that people live in nowadays.

For them to stand firm, those Pyramids need to have deep roots in the ground to act like stakes for them.

Despite the fact that this king was very powerful and had great authority in the land, and despite his possession of these buildings, death took him away utterly when he deserved destruction, and nothing could help him.

Therefore, when you, human, remember what happened to ‘Aad and Thamud, remember the end of Pharaoh, too, so that you may take warning from this and learn a lesson from the consequences of their actions.

To acquaint us with the bad actions which entailed the destruction of these nations, the Almighty says:

Verse no. 11-12

11. “Who (all) transgressed all bounds in the land,”

12. “And made them teem with corruption.”

”**Who (all) transgressed all bounds**”: they exceeded all humanist boundaries in their actions.

To understand the word “**corruption**” mentioned in this Verse, which is the opposition of the word valid for example: the water is

corrupted means that the water is invalid to use, and we have to distinguish between it and the word 'disservice'. We say:

To do a disservice is to cause damage to others through a particular action. For example, anyone who lets water fall from the gutter of their rooftop over the wall of his neighbor's house is doing a disservice to their neighbor through such an action.

Also, a person who raises a high building which allows the women of the houses next to it to be seen, and which blocks the sunshine, light and air is also causing damage to their neighbors. Thus any act that causes damage to one's spirit or to other people is considered a 'disservice', and to backbite the others also considered a 'disservice'.

As for corruption, it is the action which drives people to practise actions that result in damage and harm to themselves and to others at the same time.

To elucidate further, we say:

Any man who lets his wife, sister, or daughter walk in the streets without veiling her face is causing corruption by such a deed. That is because he is inspiring people to commit adultery, which will result in great harm for women, men and children, and even for human society as a whole in all its aspects: social, health and moral.

In no time such a woman will fall into the trap of moral degradation and become like a curse that no man would wish to take as his wife.

This will lead to great damage to her, and will make her suffer misery and need. Then, when she grows old, she will remain single and alone, with no sons or daughters to sympathize with her.

This also applies to the man. As for the children, how miserable their state will be! That is, if indeed they remain alive.

This is only one aspect of the outcomes of unveiling women. There are many others, such as teardown the relations among members of

peaceful families living at ease, sowing seeds of dissension between husband and wife, breaking up and destroying marriages, and the like.

Similarly, putting on golden jewelry and wearing silk clothes, and putting up palaces and deluxe buildings are actions of corruption.

Through such actions, the rich provoke the poor to imitate them. However, since the poor do not have enough money to undertake such projects, they will end up hurting people by cheating, lying or swindling them in their dealings with others, and will begin to use unlawful methods to gain more money.

As a result, they will often fall into miserliness and tightfistedness, so that they will deprive their relatives and others besides them from their entitlements. Such are the actions which the rich corruptor inspires the poor to fall in.

Returning to the Verse we are explaining, with respect to these nations mentioned by God as examples, we say that nothing drew woe upon them other than walking in the way of corruption.

Those who had been indulging in a life of luxury set to practising these deeds, which in turn tempted the lower classes of society. They let women display their charms, raised high castles, and constructed amusement centers and parks.

They did everything that could whet people's appetites. In this way they caused corruption to become widespread across the countries of the world.

That is a little of the meaning that is folded under the statement: **“and made it teem with corruption.”**

At this stage, the Almighty Al'lah destroyed them in order to put an end to their depravity and to cleanse the land. God says:

Verse no. 13

13. “Therefore your Provider poured a scourge of punishment down upon them,”

To “**pour**” is to let something come down strongly from above.

When the Almighty poured down torment upon these nations, they found no escape and no way to avoid what was sent to them.

The “scourge” is the whip. In this Verse, this word refers to the weakness of humanity, and the inability to bear even a little bit of torture.

The Almighty sent only a single scourge of torment and a light affliction down upon the people in question. Despite this, all of them perished and none could bear this woe.

The Almighty says: “**Such is the Seizure of your Provider when He seizes the townships that have become wrongful. His Seizure is painful, (and) severe.**”

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 11, Hud, Verse 102*

You who have shunned your Provider! Do you think that you would be able to flee from Al’lah or find any way to escape if you exceeded the bounds of what is lawful and created corruption in the land?

Next, the Almighty reveals to us that He is continually observing all humanity. He says:

Verse no. 14

14. “Your Provider is Ever Watchful.”

This Verse denotes: Oh human! Your Provider, Who supplies you with life, is always with you. He sees you and watches your state exactly.

At every moment, He drives to you that which befits your state. However, when you reach a point where warnings will not work for you anymore, and there becomes no way for you to be guided and no way for you to recover from your love for this world, destruction will descend upon you and terrible torture will smite you.

Self-Activity:

Try to bring some photos of the ruined monuments which were built by the ancient nations like the pyramids in Egypt which was built by pharaohs or the Petra city which was built by Thamud in the south of Al-Sham lands, those folks who had been indulging in a life of luxury and putting all their ability and thoughts in it shunning the Almighty Al'lah, those who came to this life without fulfilling the purpose of their coming into it, which is to believe in Al'lah then to render good actions, finally the result will be the Paradise with abundant of blessings and happiness in it. But alas those lost people built those buildings without any thoughts that death would take them away utterly, they didn't perceive that this life was not eternal and the life to come is the eternal one.

They were thrown out from the school of this life and the Almighty God keeps some of their ruined monuments just for us to take a lesson from those lost disbelieving nations.

Questions and Exercises:

1- The holy prophet (cph) said: **“The refuge of the Muslims on the day of Armageddon will be on a land called Al-Gutta where there is a city called Damascus. On that day it will be the best home for the Muslims.”**

Why did the holy prophet (cph) call the city of Damascus on that day **“The refuge of the Muslims”**?

2- What are the main reasons behind the destruction of the ancient nations such as A'd, Thamud and Pharaoh?

3- Explain and distinguish between the meaning of the word “disservice” and the word “corruption”?

Lesson Thirteen

Interpretation of Fortress 89 (The Coming Appearance)

Surah Al-Fajr (Part Three)

The Almighty wanted to uncover to us the reason that people shun their Creator, and our negligence of seeking to know our Provider – in spite of the fact that this knowledge will help us get rid of our beastly qualities and turn us into humane creatures, who are reformers not corruptors, and who are happy rather than miserable. For this reason, He says:

Verse no. 15

15. “As for the human, when their Lord tries them by bestowing favors and blessings on them, do they say, ‘My Lord has honored me?’”

To “test” something here is to uncover its reality. When you say: “God tested a person using money” it means that He granted money to a person in order to disclose their real qualities and whatever stinginess and attachment to this worldly life their spirit had been hiding, or its generosity and inclination towards donation, service, and charity.

Furthermore, when you say that: “Allah tested a person using advancement,” that means that He inducted this person into a high office so that this would bring out the liking for prestige and authority that had been settled in their spirit, as well as any other hidden desires or proclivity for mercy, humanity and an interest in the well-being of other people. If a person belonged to the latter group, they would regard their position as an opportunity to help those who are without anyone to protect them or help them.

Thus, the Almighty Al’lah examines people in this world, no matter what a person hides and keeps secret, their reality will surely appear one day nonetheless, and what is latent in their spirit will be uncovered.

The words “**by bestowing favors on him**” suggest that He will make a perfect donation to them for free, lacking nothing, be it in terms of health, wealth, food, drink, lodging, or any other kind of donation.

The phrase “**and blessing him**” refers to giving the person an ability to attain relish and pleasure in what their Provider exalts them with.

Al’lah the Almighty has created delicious fruit and given us a tongue by which we can find enjoyment in tasting their flavors.

Similarly, He has created fragrant flowers, and has given us a sense of smell with which we can appreciate this boon.

The Almighty has obliged humanity with untold graces, and granted us the ability to taste them in order to enjoy them and find zest in them.

In this noble Verse, the Almighty wanted to blame those who oppose Him for depreciating this donation and this Godly Care. He mentioned the Verse in the interrogative case to inspire people to inquire of what they hold hidden within themselves, so that they would be roused to test themselves. In this way, we will come to know our true state and the degree of our appreciation for our Provider’s Favor.

This Verse calls upon us as follows:

You, human! Search within yourself whenever God tests you and drives boons and graces to you.

Are you one of those who esteem the Favor of this Generous Provider?

Have you come to know that the source of all that is granted to us is Al’lah, alone?

When you drink water or eat fruit or some other food; when you enter your home or go to bed; when you sit surrounded by your family or your friends; when you walk in the street and see powerless and poor people, or those of lower rank than you in this

world; when you go to work and sit at your desk: in all these situations and in many others, do you recollect the Grace of Al'lah upon you? Do you feel grateful for the Generosity of your Provider and His Charity to you?

Do you admit that your Provider has obliged you with this, and that it comes solely out of His Compassion and Favor towards you?

The Almighty clarified this to us. Furthermore, in just the same way that He tests humanity in this world using its pleasures and bliss, He also tests them using various kinds of affliction that He sends to them, which then help to purify their spirits. God says:

Verse no. 16

16. “And when He tries them by restricting His provision towards them, do they say, ‘My Lord degrades me?’”

”His provision” refers to every blessing which God grants to humanity, including health, money, glory, and power.

This Verse is telling us: If Al'lah examines you by depriving you of some of His boons, by afflicting you with disease, poverty, humbleness or by dispossessing you of your authority, or by sending any other kind of trouble in your way, all of which would be in order to make you return to the right path and to release the wickedness and the deathly lust that have settled in your spirit: when this happens to you, do you try to recognize the reason for this distress so that you may avoid repeating your prior negligence?

Are you one of those who return to their Lord when affliction strikes? When you are in distress, do you say that your Lord has degraded you in order to save you from the wrong which you live in, and to make you change the devious conduct which draws evil and destruction down upon you?

The Almighty tests humanity either by giving and bestowal, or by exerting pressure and deprivation.

Have you examined yourself and applied these two Verses to your own life? Have you found yourself to be one of those who, when Al'lah examines your spirit, says "my Provider has obliged me" when you are the recipient of His donation, or "my Provider has abased me" when difficulty and hardship come in your way?

If you have not yet recognized He Who gives and deprives, and if your spirit has not yet approached the grades of true belief – achieved only when one ascertains that everything is directed by God's Hand, alone, and that there is no god except Al'lah – at this time, know that the reason behind your lack of success in attaining this belief is nothing other than your omission and your lack of enthusiasm in doing good actions.

God wanted to disclose this to you, and therefore He says:

Verse no. 17

17. "No (you do not)! Rather you show no kindness to the orphan,"

The word "No" indicates negation. It means that your spirit do not express the sentiment in the preceding Verse.

The Almighty has revealed to us the reason for disbelief. He says: "**Rather you show no kindness to the orphan,**" that is, you do not render good actions. You do not help or sympathize with orphans.

Verse no. 18

18. "Nor do you urge one another to feed the poor."

That is, you do not charge yourself with feeding the poor, or inspire yourself to do so.

"**The poor**" is meant to refer to anyone who is powerless or in need, unable to work due to illness or senility.

This Verse and the preceding one show us that a failure to do good works is the reason for the failure to acquire belief. This belief is

the belief which makes people recognize the One Who gives and deprives, and the Steerer Who manages everything in this universe.

In fact, when the spirit refrains from carrying out a good deed when it has the opportunity, or from sacrificing the money which is considered valuable, it becomes unable to turn towards Al'lah, the Almighty.

You will see that such a spirit becomes diffident towards its Provider, and is unable to draw near to Him.

The Almighty demonstrated to us that a refusal to sacrifice money or to carry out charitable actions does not maintain a person at the same degree of tightfistedness and miserliness, but rather it draws them down to an even lower and inferior degree than their current one. They will covet the worldly life greedily, to the extent that their chief concern will be only to obtain all of its pleasures, and to keep them away from others. That is why God says:

Verse no. 19

19. “And you consume inheritance greedily,”

The “**inheritance**” is the wealth which we see people pass down from one generation to the next.

The words “**consume**” here aim at describing the spiritual state of such a distant person. This person did not convince their spirit to carry out good actions, and therefore their attachment to this world grew, until it made them wish to collect whatever money and wealth they could see which is handed down among people, in order to keep it solely for themselves. Had it been possible for them, and had the circumstances been advantageous for them, they would have taken everything that others have, leaving them in possession of nothing. Because they fully indulged themselves in worldly desires, they became greedy, stingy and avaricious, having a desire to possess more and more until they became pathologically eager to have the possessions of all people.

I tell you that this situation has become more noticeable and is popular nowadays. You find that the seller will desire to swallow all of the buyer's money, and that the powerful heir will seek to lay his hands on the shares of his less powerful relatives.

Thus every person is now doing their best to wrest people's money from them as much as they can, whether their methods are lawful or unlawful.

God wanted to tell us that nothing will satisfy the gluttony of such a person, who has shunned their Provider and sunk into this kind of life. No matter how much they collect, and no matter what they possess, they will continue to crave even more. They will reach a point where they will not be happy for anyone else to have anything, and will prevent it if they can.

Therefore the Almighty says:

Verse no. 20

20. "And you love riches with inordinate love."

That is, due to your shunning of Al'lah, your love of riches will grow until you have put your hands on other people's belongings, wishing to leave them with absolutely nothing.

The failure to perform good actions will thus drive such a person far from Al'lah and separate them from belief. This distance will implant itself in the very love of their heart for this world and become integral to their absorption in this lower life.

God wants to reproach these kinds of people for their behavior, in order to deter them from such abject conduct. Otherwise, it will dishonor them and they will not reach the position of which they are capable. They will be separated from the lofty ranks for which they were created in order to ascend. Therefore He says in the next Verse: "**No! For when the earth is.....**"

"**No**" indicates deterrence. It is used to rebuke the addressee and to discourage them from their error.

It addresses us: “You, human! Beware of this kind of wrongful conduct and repent from your deviation. You have not been created to be like animals, caring only about your own advantage and wishing to appropriate everything that people have.”

These are not the manners of a humanist one.

We have been brought into this existence in order to perform good actions and to gain eternal life by helping our brothers and sisters in humanity. Through doing so, we will associate with people of Paradise in the next world.

Questions:

1- The Almighty God Says **“As for the human, when their Lord tries them by bestowing favors and blessings on them, do they say, ‘My Lord has honored me?’”** What is the meaning of the word **“tries”**? What does **“My Lord has honored me”** indicate?

2- The Almighty God says **“And when He tries them by restricting His provision towards them, do they say, ‘My Lord degrades me?’”** Why does God restrict His provision towards some people?

3- If the human sacrifices his beloved money in order to approach nearer to God, Where will his donation drive him to?

Lesson Fourteen

Interpretation of Fortress 89 (The Coming Appearance)

Surah Al-Fajr (Part Four)

Dear student:

We have seen that Surah Al-Fajr starts with the universal signs in the first Verses of it in order to acquaint us with our Creator and to enable us to know the consequences of the ancient nations who didn't contemplate and think about these signs, it also clarifies the reasons behind the human shunning his Creator and avoiding to know Him, however, he only throughout that knowledge can get out of his brute carnal rank and attain the humane rank before the coming of the Day of Judgment. God says:

Verses no. 21-24

21. "No! For when the earth is gathered together entirely and finally,"

22. "And your Provider comes, and the angels in row upon row;"

23. "And Hell, on that Day, is brought near: on that Day human will remember, but what will remembrance avail him then?"

24. "They will say, 'Ah, would that I had put forward (goodness) for my life (that was to come)!"

"No" indicates deterrence. It is used to rebuke the addressee and to discourage them from their error.

It addresses us: "You, human! Beware of this kind of wrongful conduct and repent from your deviation. You have not been created to be like animals, caring only about your own advantage and wishing to appropriate everything that people have."

These are not the manners of a humanist one.

We have been brought into this existence in order to perform good actions and to gain eternal life by helping our brothers and sisters in humanity. Through doing so, we will associate with people of Paradise in the next world. However, if you do not listen to your Provider's Recommendation and His Command; if you do not follow the way He set in place and revealed for you through the tongue of His Envoy; if you do not believe and trust in all of this: in this case, there is no doubt that you will have regrets, even if these regrets avail you nothing. You will perceive the great loss you have drawn upon yourself when you stand before your Provider to be called to account on that Day. God says: **“No! For when the earth is gathered together entirely and finally, * And your Provider comes, and the angels in row upon row, * And Hell, on that Day, is brought near: on that Day human will remember, but what will remembrance avail him then?? * They will say, ‘Ah, would that I had put forward (goodness) for my life (that was to come)!”**

The Verse **“...when the earth is gathered together entirely and finally,”**, tells us that after the earth is rocked in its last convulsions and after it is unrolled and its weights are brought out – that is, after people emerge from it and its function ends – it will be gathered entirely and finally. That is to say, its parts will be piled over one another completely, so the earth will never again return to its worldly form.

The Almighty mentioned what will happen after that, saying: **“And your Provider comes”**. The ‘coming’ mentioned in this Verse is not linked to any time or place, for the Almighty is Far above both time and place. This word means that He (glory to Him) is a Witness to you and to each deed that you are now carrying out. When the Day comes, your Provider will bring your acts before your eyes and show you the fruit of your labors in this world.

In another respect, this means that He will bring you what you need, and whatever treatment is necessary for you.

He will come **“, and the angels in row upon row”**: this statement indicates that the angels will be in groups, and each group will have its own function and duty.

When your Provider brings your actions before your eyes, and then brings the cure to fit your defects and diseases, the angels will stand in lines, with each line being assigned a certain aspect of your treatment.

“And Hell, on that day, is brought near”: Hell is the abode of therapy in the life to come.

The statement **“Hell ... is brought near”** suggests that on that Day, the evildoers will find themselves in a state that compels them to enter Hellfire for treatment. On that Day, their state will be like the state of a sick person who has seen the hospital and realized what their situation is.

The words: **“on that Day human will remember, but what will remembrance avail him then?”**

Mean that when a person senses the bad situation they have arrived at, and realizes their eternal loss and shame, the Fire will appear to them. At that moment, they will remember what the noble Prophet (cph) told them about this Fire. They will remember Al’lah’s Recommendations and the clear signs He had sent to them. However, their memory will avail them nothing on that Day, for by then such a miserable person will have lost their life and will have already wasted their precious opportunity, spending it in vain. What great sorrow they will live in when they realize that the period when they could have gained everlasting happiness has passed! Therefore, on that Day their memory will be useless.

“They will say, ‘Ah, would that I had put forward (goodness) for my life (that was to come)!”: at this time, they will feel great regret and their heart will break with sorrow. They will see that the only real life is the life of the other world, but alas! They will have lost their opportunity, and will have done nothing to allow themselves to enjoy it.

Verse no. 25

25. “However, on that Day their torture will not be inflicted upon them by anyone (other than themselves);”

That is, none will torture them. They themselves have incurred whatever takes place. The pain and the shame they will live in, along with their evil deeds which will be standing before their eyes, will cause them unbearable and insufferable agony in the depths of their spirit. Therefore they will rush to the Fire to throw themselves into it, wishing the pain of its torturous burning to help them forget their spiritual pains.

I say, the situation of this person on this Day is like the example of a child whose father warned it against touching a sharp blade. The child did not follow his father’s guidance and did what he had cautioned it against. The child tried to sharpen his pencil with a sharp blade, thinking that it would be better than the pencil sharpener which its father had advised it to use.

Unawares, the child mistakes the pencil for his finger, thus cutting it. The child will then begin to cry and to call on its father for help, appealing to him to bandage the wound and relieve the pain.

I wonder: has anyone caused this child the suffering which befell it at that moment? Of course not!

Nobody caused that agony but the child, who has drawn the pain to itself. Sterilizing the wound and dressing it will also cause pain for the child, but this is only done for the purpose of healing.

This example makes the truth clearer in our minds, even though the truth is far deeper than this. Anyone who disobeys Al’lah and His Envoy strays far indeed, and incurs a great loss.

The Almighty described the state of such miserable failure in some detail. He says:

Verse no. 26

26. “Nor will any bind his bonds upon the m.”

That is, on that Day none will confine that poor unfortunate people to the Fire; they themselves will remain therein voluntarily.

They will put up with the pain of burning and oblige themselves to bear their torment in order to forget their suffering.

Having described the state of the disobedient on Doomsday and their situation in the Fire, the Almighty wanted to remind humanity of the necessity of repentance and returning to Him, and urge us to seize the opportunity that we now have, so that we may save ourselves from the bad end we may face. He says:

Verse no. 27-28

27. “Oh, spirit in rest and satisfaction!”

28. “Return to your Provider well-pleased and well-pleasing.”

To understand the meaning of **“Oh, spirit in rest and satisfaction”**, we say:

If anybody observes the people of the current time, they can be seen to be engaged wholly in their worldly affairs, relying very much on this life. They build deluxe buildings and towering palaces, amass much wealth, and establish large factories. However, none of them thinks of death, although it is very close to them and in no time it will awaken them by knocking at their door.

This Verse is telling us: “Oh spirit, delighted with this worldly life and its charms, and immersed in desires and pleasures! Do you not know that after this life you will meet a weighty day, when neither money nor children will help you? Your abode after this world will be either in Paradise or in Hell, so put aside your slackness and turn away from your negligence so that you may return to your Provider, well-pleased and well-pleasing.”

To **“return to your Provider”** is to return to the Guidance of your Provider, Who sustains you with life and watches over your upbringing.

If people apply the Guidance of their Provider, which invites them to look into themselves and contemplate the formation of their limbs and to think of the universe and its creatures, then their spirit will sense the greatness of its Creator and Former, and this appreciation and understanding will inspire it to be straight upon His Orders.

It will avoid carrying out evil actions and become charitable to all creatures, and thus it will be pleased with its own works.

Besides this, it will be sure of Al'lah's Satisfaction with it, and so it will enter into His Presence. That is what the words "**well-pleased and well-pleasing**" are referring to.

Verse no. 29

29. "Enter into My servants,"

If the spirit was to adopt this path and draw near to its Provider, having full assurance of His Satisfaction with it, it would be colored with a stain of perfection and would acquire noble merits. Therefore this spirit would love people of perfection, and particularly those who guided it to Al'lah. Such a spirit would love him or her truly for the perfection it sensed in them, and this love would increase until it entered into their spirit and became coupled with it, in a bond of love and reverence.

Through the entry of this spirit into the spirit of its leader, it would consequently attain a bond with the spirit of the Prophet (cpth).

That is what we understand from the Verse, "**Enter into My servants**".

Verse no. 30

30. "And enter My Paradise."

When a spirit lives in such a state and attains this link, this link will lead it to be close to Al'lah, the Almighty. Thereby it will become immersed in a garden of bliss. This bliss will continue to

overwhelm it until the life to come, when it will enter the eternal Heaven. It will then relish that felicity forever.

Referring to God's Revelation thus rectifies the conduct of the spirit and makes it well-pleased and well-pleasing.

Carrying out good actions leads to closeness to Al'lah, and a bond with the people of perfection. In turn, this creates a link with God's Prophet (cpth). This connection with God's Prophet will then lead the spirit to enter into Al'lah's Presence.

Anyone who enters into God's Presence has achieved happiness and bliss, which are indeed the purpose behind Al'lah's creation.

God says: "Whoever does good does it for his own spirit and whoever does evil does it against his own spirit. Your Provider is never unjust to His servants."

The Holy Qur'an,

Fortress 41, Fussilat (Explained), Verse 46

Praise is to Al'lah, the Provider of all worlds.

Self-Activity:

Memorize Surah Al-Fajer fully, practise to recite it by heart with persistence to contemplate its sublime meanings, That is because the Holy Qur'an was sent down to us by the Almighty God in order to think about and to acquaint yourself with its supreme meanings, avoid His prohibitions and submit to His orders, then as a result you will live in happiness forever.

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- What will the opposing human remember when he realizes his eternal loss and shame, and sees the Fire? Will his memories avail him?
- 2- What is the meaning of the Verse: **“Nor will any bind his bonds upon them.”**?
- 3- The Almighty God says: **“Oh, spirit in rest and satisfaction, Return to your Provider well-pleased and well-pleasing.”** What is that satisfaction which has filled the spirit? And what is the meaning of the word **'Return'**?
- 4- What result can you get from This Holy fortress (Surah Al-Fajer)?

Lesson Fifteen

Interpretation of Fortress 88 (The Overwhelming)

Surah Al-Ghashiyya (Part One)

I seek refuge in God from the cursed Satan

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

1. **“Has the account of the Overwhelming (Event) come to you?**
2. **“Some faces on that Day will be downcast,**
3. **“Of standing deeds,**
4. **“Suffering a scorching Fire.**
5. **“And given to drink from a seething spring.**
6. **“There shall be no food for them, but food of bitter disgust:**
7. **“It will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.**
8. **“Some faces on that Day will be soft,**
9. **“Well-pleased with their labours,**
10. **“In a lofty Garden:**
11. **“Where they will hear no idle talk.**
12. **“Therein will be a flowing spring,”**
13. **“And couches raised high.**
14. **“And cups placed ready,**
15. **“And delights ranged in order,**
16. **“And inclusive bliss richly spread.**
17. **“Would they not look at the camels, (and consider) how they are created;**
18. **“And at the sky, how it is raised high;**
19. **“And at the mountains, how they are set up;**
20. **“And at the earth, how it is spread out.**

21. **“Therefore you remind them (Oh Mohammad), for you are one to act only as a reminder.**
22. **“You have no domination over the m,**
23. **“Save those that turn away and disbelieve.**
24. **“Al’lah will then inflict the greatest torment upon the m.”**
25. **“Indeed, to Us is their return;**
26. **“And then it is for Us to call them to account.”**

§§§§§

This noble Fortress aims to remind humanity of the Day of Resurrection, and to show what state people will be in on that Day.

Undoubtedly, we will come back to our Provider. If a person was an evildoer in the worldly life, they will stand humble and servile before the torture which will befall them. On the contrary, if they were charitable, they would stand up, happy and optimistic with the bliss and honor they receive. God says:

Verse no. 1

1. “Has the account of the Overwhelming (Event) come to you?

To ‘overwhelm’ is to completely cover or to overcome.

An **“Overwhelming Event”** could be any great and weighty occurrence which descends upon people, fully overwhelming the spirit and surrounding it so that it almost becomes impossible for it to think of anything else.

For example, one such overwhelming event would be a storm facing travellers at sea, which would alarm them and put them in fear of shipwreck and drowning.

Other overwhelming events would include flooding or a military attack by enemies. When such occurrences befall people, their spirits become focused on the stress caused, and surrounded by their own anguish. This takes place to the extent that the spirit becomes wholly absorbed in these events.

However, the Overwhelming Event referred to in this Verse is the resurrection on Doomsday.

God described this event as overwhelming because it will descend upon everything in creation, and everything that has come into existence from the beginning of creation till the end of this world, and nothing will be left unaffected.

It will cover people with its unpleasantness to the extent that people will become abstracted from and forget everything else.

This Verse is in the interrogative tense in order to emphasize its meaning, to establish the facts in the spirits of humanity, and to demonstrate the importance of that great Day.

It means: have you not attained knowledge of that Day? Have you not been acquainted with the news of the Overwhelming Event, which is surely coming and which will encompass every being in creation and occupy their spirits, making them forget everything else?!

Should you not think of that unavoidable Day, so that you may begin to make your preparations for it from this moment forth?

The Almighty described people's states on that Day to us. He first mentioned the state of people who commit bad actions. He says:

Verse no. 2

2. "Some faces on that Day will be downcast,

The word "downcast" indicates humiliation and subjection.

Verse no. 3

3. "Of standing deeds,"

That is, the works which those spirits have done during their lifetime will stand before their eyes on that Day, and will never disappear from their sight.

Why will these faces be downcast and bent?

They will stand in this way because they will view what is about to befall them, and what has been prepared for them.

The Fire will be there awaiting them, with hot and boiling water for them to drink, and food of bitter taste to eat.

I wonder, if a person views these things in front of them, will they not stand with bowed head, cringing, submissive and bent?

They will stand downcast because they are about to suffer a scorching Fire. God says:

Verse no. 4

4. “Suffering a scorching Fire.”

That is, they will be burnt and be engulfed in a scorching Fire.

Verse no. 5

5. “And given to drink from a seething spring.

That is, from a hot springs of boiling water.

Verse no. 6

6. “There shall be no food for them but food of bitter disgust:

The words “**bitter disgust**” suggests suffering and yielding. This is because the food which the people of Fire will have is painful, detestable and loathsome. However, despite their pain and detestation, their spirits will yield to it, because they will have no choice. This is like the example of a sick man who has to take unpleasant medicine.

Verse no. 7

7. “It will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.”

”**It will neither nourish**”: nourishment is not accomplished until a spirit becomes free and cured of disease, and this cannot be achieved except by entering the Presence of God. That is because nothing heals the polluted spirits from defects except God’s Light.

Therefore this food will not sustain them, since it cannot cure anyone. It is only a means of distraction with which the people of Fire distract themselves, so that they can forget their pains.

“...nor satisfy hunger”, because there is no nourishment in this food.

As for the people of Paradise, the Almighty revealed their state in that weighty position, saying:

Verse no. 8

8. “Some faces on that day will be soft,”

The term ‘soft’ expresses the luxurious circumstances of these people,

However, what is the reason for this luxury?

God clarified the reason to us, saying:

Verse no. 9

9. “Well pleased with their labours,”

This means that they will be pleased with the good deeds they have rendered in their life, for these deeds will now allow them to enter high Paradise. God says:

Verse no. 10

10. “In a lofty Garden:”

Regarding this point, it is necessary to shed light upon the state of people in Paradise and how they will enjoy themselves therein. This is important in order to recognize the limitless Favor of Al’lah, the Almighty, for humanity, as well as His great Graces. We say:

As previously mentioned, each person is composed of a spirit, a soul and a body.

We have explained that the spirit is the main element of a person. It is that which enjoys and suffers, and which tastes flavors and savors their pleasures.

However, in this world the spirit is confined within and surrounded by the body. It perceives only pictures, and enjoys delights by means of the physical senses from behind a veil.

This situation is not like that in the life to come. In the other abode, the spirit will envelop the body and surround it on all sides, as the flame of a candle completely surrounds its wick.

If we suppose that the wick of a candle is a body, then its flame and its light would be the spirit.

In the afterlife, the spirit will not view with the physical eye or hear with the physical ear. The whole spirit will be eyes and ears, and it will taste, smell and speak with its entire self.

That is the state of the spirit on that Day.

Accordingly, it will get more pleasure there than it does here. Its enjoyment now is but partial and indirect and from behind a veil, while on that day it will be complete and direct.

When the spirit wants to look at something in the life to come, it will be in no need of an eye, just as it will not need a mouth or teeth when it has food. Its rays will flow to food, and allow it to taste it and enjoy its flavors. It will have no need to chew it or cut it with the teeth.

Such being the case, its delight there will be greater than its delight in this world, and will be completely different.

In this world, people soon satisfy their appetites, whereas in the life to come nothing will restrict the spirit from enjoying and taking continuous pleasure in anything.

God says: **“This is a picture of the Garden which the ones who see by God’s Light have been promised: the rivers (of blessings) run (underneath it): eternal are its fruits, and so is its Shade (the Godly Manifestation)...”**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 13, Ar-Ra 'd (The Thunder), Verse 35*

And He (glory to Him) says: **“And abundant fruits, never-ending, and not forbidden.”**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 56, Al-Waqi'a (The Inevitable Event), Verse 32-33*

Similarly, a person's enjoyment of their spouse in Paradise will be spiritual. Their spirits will flow to one another and achieve pleasure without cessation or separation.

Accordingly, when in Paradise, a person will not need a bed to sleep in or a pillow to lie on, since their body will not feel tired or require sleep. The residents of Paradise will not desire a glass to drink from since the body will have no need to drink.

All the Verses included in the Qur'an in this respect indicate the qualities and the realities of things, and the bliss which people will enjoy as a result.

Returning to God's Saying, **“In a lofty Garden”** we say:

The word **“Garden”** is an expression of a place where a person feels spiritual happiness, veiled from others.

Every person in Paradise will live in bliss equal to the charity they have carried out in their life.

One's bliss will be hidden from others, and sensed only by themselves. The **“lofty Garden”** means the endless, high-ranked Paradise.

Verse no. 11

11. “Where they will hear no idle talk.”

The phrase **“idle talk”** means untrue speech.

Verse no. 12

12. “Therein will be a flowing spring,”

The word **“spring”** here refers only to the spirit.

In Arabic, the word **“spring”** also has the meaning of ‘eye’.

As previously mentioned, in Paradise the spirit will itself become an eye. Therefore it will always flow from one bliss to a higher and more wonderful one, without stopping.

Verse no. 13

13. “And couches raised high”

Here, the word **“couches”** refers to everything that people lie on in order to get some rest. In Arabic, the word for ‘couch’ also refers to ‘pleasure’. Accordingly, the word **“couches”** here indicates pleasant things which the spirits rely on in order to attain bliss.

Therefore, the phrase **“raised high”** means the high-ranked things which raise the spirit from one positive state to another superior one.

Verse no. 14

14. “And cups placed ready”

A ‘cup’ is a vessel which contains delicious liquid prepared for people to drink.

In Arabic the word ‘cup’ is ‘coop’ which is related to the verb ‘encabba’ meaning ‘apply to.’ Accordingly, the word ‘coop’ refers to anything which the spirit applies to.

The word **“cups”** here refers to the things which the spirit applies to eagerly due to the delight which they contain.

As for the word **“placed”**, it indicates unceasing desirability.

The phrase **“placed ready”** therefore indicates that people in Paradise will be fully healthy so that they can continuously enjoy what delightful things will be placed before them.

Verse no. 15

15. “And delights ranged in order.”

This Verse means that good, sweet, and desirable things will be placed before the spirit in succession, one after the other, to allow the spirit to pass and flow through them, so that it moves from one perfect attraction to another which is even more perfect.

Verse no. 16

16. “And zare bas (inclusive bliss) richly spread.”

In Arabic, the word “**zare ba**” is derived from the verb ‘zaraba’, which means ‘to put together’.

For example, we say: ‘sheep zareba’ to mean the place where sheep are put together.

However, in this Verse this word signifies the things where all delights and pleasures are included together.

“ **...richly spread**”: that is, the pleasures of these things flow throughout the spirit. They will spread within it and never separate from it.

In short, we say:

Humanity’s enjoyment of Paradise is based on realities, not images. For example, the pomegranate that is presented to the people of Paradise is comprised of the delineation mentioned in all the previous Verses and is referred to with the words: “**couches**”, “**cups**”, “**attractions**” and “**zareba**”.

Pomegranate and couches contains (that is, pleasures), cups (meaning that the spirit applies to it), attractions (meaning that it is sweet and delicious and the spirit passes to it), and “**zarebas**” (which is to say that it contains many delights which all flow together to the spirit and spread within it).

It is the same when it comes to enjoying women or men or any other kind of bliss. People’s enjoyment will depend on reality, and will be continuous and unceasing.

How happy will be the state of the people of Paradise! Glory to Him! What a Generous Obligor He is!

Guidance and abidance:

We must establish in our heart the fact that death encompasses every human willy-nilly, therefore human must contemplate this unavoidable end and prepare himself for that day through doing good deeds, however, The Almighty God has clarified to us the way to enter paradise and warned us not to disobey His orders. If we do so, we shall lead ourselves to fire. All what God has revealed is the serious fact, so all what you have to do is to decide to follow the way of attaining the true belief in God and rendering good deeds which lead to Paradise.

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- Why has God called the Day of Resurrection the Overwhelming Event?
- 2- As we mentioned previously in the above lesson that the spirits who have done bad actions during their lifetime their deeds will stand before their eyes on the Doomsday, and will never disappear from their sight so they become downcast. Why will these spirits be downcast and broken?
- 3- According to the interpretation of these holy fortresses we know that the food which the people of Fire will have is painful, detestable and loathsome. However, despite their pain and detestation, their spirits will yield to it, explain why?
- 4- Do the people of paradise need a bed to sleep and glasses to drink from?
- 5- What are the differences between the spirit enjoyment and pleasure in this worldly life and in the life to come. Which one is more delightful?
- 6- Illustrate the meaning of Garden (Janah)? Why has God called the spirit **“a flowing spring” in the life to come?**
- 7- Explain the meaning of the Verses which are mentioned in this Holy fortress: **“And delights ranged in order.” “And zarebas (inclusive bliss) richly spread.”**

Lesson Sixteen

Interpretation of Fortress 88 (The Overwhelming)

Surah Al-Ghashiyya (Part Two)

Having revealed to us the news about the Overwhelming Event, and having acquainted us with the states of both the people of misery and the people of blessings and happiness, the Almighty wanted to implant this in our spirits and establish these facts in our hearts. Therefore He sent us a group of Verses which tell us of His Grandeur and Magnificent Creation, so that we may think carefully of them in order to be guided to our Creator. If we do so, we will revere and appreciate Him and abide by His Words. This will lead us to happiness, which is Al'lah's utmost Hope for His creatures because it will help us to attain His Satisfaction. God says:

Verse no. 17

17. “Would they not look at the camels, (and consider) how they are created;”

The ‘looking’ meant in this Verse is that which is associated with contemplation and appreciation, for humanity is distinguished from the animal kingdom by virtue of the ability to look at things in this way.

The animal looks, and the person also looks. However, the animal's viewing of things is limited to their appearances. When an animal looks at something, it is unable to penetrate the images in order to recognize particularities. Nor does it pay heed to the way of creation. For example, when a bear sees a bunch of grapes, it sees it in a superficial look it does not think of how it arises from a hard woody vine, and then gradually grows. It does not contemplate the course of its bloom's pollination, or how its taste changes from sour to sweet, or notice its coloration, which gives a sign of its maturation and whether it is becoming ready to be eaten, or not.

This bear does not ponder the arrangement of the course of the life of the grape, or of the leaves which surround it and help in its maturation, or any of the other factors which contribute to its preparation or production.

All that the bear does is to rush upon the grapevines and devour the fruit that hangs upon them, for all that it sees is something that can be eaten.

That is the difference between the human and the animal way of looking. Animals are thoughtless and unable to attain further knowledge of their Provider. They cannot perceive different aspects of His Majesty and Grandeur in the same way as humans.

The animal remains at one degree of knowledge and never exceeds it, and therefore it remains an animal.

Furthermore, people themselves differ from one another in their way of looking at things. The more a person thinks, the more appreciation they will feel towards their Creator and the more they will glorify Him.

If a person looks at things only externally, in the same way as the beasts, they will then be on the same level as the animals – or indeed, an even lower level.

God says: **“Indeed the worst kind of all living creatures in Allah’s Sight are those who are (wilfully) deaf and dumb, who do not mind.”**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 8, Al-Anfal (Spoils of War), Verse 22*

The Almighty invited those who opposed His Envoy to consider the camel so that they might esteem its creation and know more about their Creator.

Indeed, if a person meditates on a camel, they will sense that there is wisdom and precision in creation. This will acquaint them with the Great Creator and Wise Maker. For example:

A person is unable to put their luggage onto a camel's back when it is standing up due to their short stature in comparison with the camel's tall body. For this reason you can see that the camel sits on the ground, unlike any of the other animals which carry people's luggage.

To help it to sit down, the camel is----- granted calluses on its chest and legs to prevent its body from leaning to one side and becoming unbalanced while it is trying to lower itself to the ground.

Also, if a camel's hoofs were like a horse's hoofs, a camel would not be able to stand up and support the heavy burden it carries, nor would its legs be able to hold fast in the ground while standing up or sitting down.

Meanwhile, its long and bending neck is the means by which it stands up and sits down. Its neck acts like the arm of a steelyard, whereas its head acts as its ovoid does.

A camel brings its head nearer to or further from its body to stabilize itself while it is standing or sitting.

If you observe the large round hoofs of this animal, you will perceive the Wisdom of God's Creation. The size of these hoofs helps the camel to walk in the sand, as they help it to carry its heavy body.

If these hoofs were as small as those of the horse, the camel's legs would not be able to bear the weight of its body, leading it to stumble and fall to the ground.

The camel's hump helps with the stability of its body. Besides this, the camel uses it to store fat to support it as it walks through the desert. There are also some hollows in its belly where water can be stored for many days, which is why camels can tolerate a lack of food and water.

The points we have mentioned are not exhaustive, but make up only some of the many illustrations of the wisdom of creation which are demonstrated by this animal.

If you speculate on them deeply, you will deduct that there is a Great Creator, a Wise Disposer, and Omnipotent Steering.

The Almighty draws our attention to another sign when He says:

Verse no. 18

18. “And at the sky, how it is raised high;”

The “sky” is the ceiling which surrounds the earth on all sides, and which contains the sun, moon, stars, and powers of gravitation.

Oh human! Have you once asked yourself about how the sky could be raised above us with no pillars or walls to hold it in position?

Consider the bright stars whose dimensions are many thousand times larger than the dimensions of the earth!

How do they swim in space without chains or cables to join them to each other?

Think of the power of gravitation which attach the stars to each other and ensure they are firmly connected, despite the fact that there are thousands of light years between them!

Meditate, human, on heaven, and then ask yourself:

Did it make itself? Alternatively, must there be a Mighty Creator that has made it and raised it high?

Think of the stars. Is there not a Steering God that has arranged them?

Is there not a Provider that supplies them with light, power and existence? Otherwise, how would they continue to shine throughout the ages, without becoming extinct or lessening in light or power?

Verse no. 19

19. “And at the mountains, how they are set up;”

To be “set up” is to be raised and firmly put in place.

Let us wonder: who has put various kinds of soil, sand and stone within the mountains? Who has made the individual mountains as one huge mass, with connected pieces and atoms?

Who has raised them above the surface of the land and lifted them high into space?

Who has fixed them firmly in the land and made them stable, so that they do not move or shake in spite of the movement and revolution of the earth?

Should not you think of the mountains and their height and greatness?

Should not you glorify their Creator, Who has established them in this state and clothed them with such greatness?

Verse no. 20

20. “And at the earth, how it is spread out.”

Who has spread out this land for you, humanity?

Who has given it its level surface?

Who has laid out these layers of earth, one beside another, so that they would be suitable for cultivation and farming?

Who has created the soil for your sake and comprised it with different substances?

Who has arranged the springs of water and spread them through every village, every island and every country – nay, everywhere – so that He deprived none of His creation of this favor?

Who has supplied the earth with everything that you need in order to live?

Do these signs within the camel, in heaven, in the mountains and in the earth not bespeak of a Mighty Creator that has created you and obliged you with His Boons?

Should you not think of His Potency and Might?

Should you not appreciate His Kindness and Charity towards you, so that you will listen to His Words and abide by His Recommendations?

After He has sent down a group of Verses that lead us to the Creator of the earth and the heavens, the Almighty addressed His noble Envoy (cpth) by saying:

Verse no. 21

21. “Therefore you remind them (Oh Mohammad), for you are one to act only as a reminder.”

To “**remind**” someone is to let them see something or hear some word that makes them remember something else they knew before. For further illustration, here are some examples:

A mother may see a person that resembles her absent son. Seeing this will make her remember her son.

A man may pass by a hospital where he was once subject to surgery. Seeing the hospital will make him remember his operation.

Another person may hear somebody say a particular word, which may connect their spirit with a vision that they once saw in their sleep, but have completely forgotten. The images of the dream will then follow one another in sequence and they will remember the entire dream.

Had they not heard this word, which was related to a part of their dream, they would never have remembered this dream at all.

In this Verse the Almighty Al’lah gives orders to His noble Envoy (cpth) to remind people – that is to say, to bring into their minds – of the different kinds of His Creation which they can see before their eyes, such as the signs previously mentioned.

The reason for such a reminder is that God wants to urge people to think profoundly while they look at things, so that they will believe in the Grand Creator and appreciate His Grace and Charity.

However, what is generated by believing in the Creator?

I say that it generates a feeling of fear of disobeying God, leading people to believe in Doomsday, the day of accountability.

This belief makes a person surrender to their Creator and abide by His Orders. This is how one really becomes a Muslim. In Arabic, the word ‘Muslim’ means one who spiritually surrenders to their Creator. The spirit’s observance of God’s Commands makes it become pleased with its deeds and confident of God’s Satisfaction with it. Therefore, it draws nearer to Him in its communication with Him; it senses the Divine Compassion, Justice and Might, which was previously believed in an intellectual sense.

At this stage, it will remember what had previously been printed on its surface, and then will remember more and more as it ascends the ladders of sublimity. This all takes place by virtue of the noble Envoy (cpth).

Accordingly, people will not remember unless they look at creation time after time with an attitude of contemplation and speculation, and none will remember except those who repent.

Verse no. 22

22. “You have no domination over them,”

In fact, the human spirit is absolutely free. The Almighty Al’lah has granted it the freedom of choice, and therefore nobody can control it. That means that nobody can turn the spirit from its own thoughts.

If it does not voluntarily think of the signs of the universe until it is guided to its Great Creator, it will never feel awe or fear of disobeying Him, the Almighty. No one can have power over it to stop it from doing something, or to turn it away from its own attachments and concerns.

Inference:

This means that neither a Prophet nor an Envoy nor a scholar nor a leader is able to guide anyone unless they themselves willingly listen to and ponder Al'lah's Verses themselves. This is always true, even if they were to continue reminding people for many hundreds of years.

God says: **“You cannot guide whom you please: it is Al'lah Who guides those who will. He best knows those who lead themselves (to the right path).”**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 28, Al-Qasas (Stories), Verse 56*

If a person voluntarily sets to thinking with the purpose of seeking to be guided, they will certainly believe and become illuminated by God's Light. However, if this is not their purpose, nobody will be able to guide them.

Nonetheless, the Almighty told His Envoy (cpth) how to behave with those who oppose Him. He says:

Verse no. 23

23. “Save those that turn away and disbelieve.”

Here, to **“turn away”** is to shun from Al'lah.

To **“disbelieve”** is to be ungrateful for the Graces of God. Undoubtedly, one who draws far from God is in danger because of their blindness and distance, and undoubtedly their disbelief will drive them to carry out bad actions.

Despite the fact that the Prophet (cpth) is unable to turn a person's spirit away from its aberration, he is charged with preventing such a person from hurting other people. He must deter them, and even punish them.

This noble Verse explains the legality of fighting and the purpose of enslavement, offering a tribute to the Prophet (cpth), and all of

the other ways to check the damage of the disbelievers and their corruption in the land.

Any rational person will take it upon themselves to be a guardian over their more ignorant sibling. They have the right to deal with them roughly out of their love for them and their interest in their sibling's benefit.

Finally, the Almighty revealed the fate of the disbeliever after death in case they continued to insist on disbelief. God says:

Verse no. 24

24. “Al’lah will then inflict the greatest torment upon the m.”

When they reach the other abode after their worldly life, they will suffer the greatest possible torment, which will be boundless in its intensity.

Verse no. 25

25. “Indeed, to Us is their return;”

The Almighty granted humanity the freedom of choice and then brought them to this world, allowing them to choose their own deeds as they saw fit. However, when they return to their Provider after death, He will take back that freedom of choice from them. He will then reciprocate and repay them in accordance with their spiritual state; that is, He will return good for good deeds and evil for evil ones.

Verse no. 26

26. “And then it is for Us to call them to account.”

”...to call them to account” is to give people what is theirs by right and to repay them for their deeds.

On Doomsday, the Almighty will repay every creature in full.

Al’lah will not wrong anybody by so much as an atom’s weight. You are sure to be rewarded for whatever deeds you may carry out.

God says: “**Then, whoever has done an atom’s weight of good shall see it, and whoever has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it.**”

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress, Az-Zilzal (The Earthquake), Verse 7-8
Praise be to Al’lah, the Provider of all worlds.*

Self-Activity:

In order not to be one of those who look at things only a superficial look, not recognizing its realities, therefore I should contemplate and think deeply of all what I observe, even before eating fruits or any kind of food I should start by God's name and contemplate its specifications and essences which God has created for my benefit and enjoyment, and if I see the Heavens, mountains, seas, trees and the woods, I have to contemplate and think deeply about these Godly signs (wonders) and appreciate their Almighty Creator and His Power. Finally I will believe in Him the Grand Creator, Merciful Provider and appreciate His Potency, Might, Grace and Charity toward us, therefore I should meditate and think deeply of all the cosmic signs, if I do so, they undoubtedly lead me to appreciate their Creator and Steering Provider.

Guidance and abidance:

Meditate an animal, other than the camels, in your surroundings, contemplate how the Almighty Al'lah created it and the perfection which is contained in its being, all its specifications and qualities which the Almighty has granted it in order to enable it to proceed its function in this life, If you speculate on them deeply and profoundly, you will deduct that there is a Great Creator, a Wise Omniscience Disposer.

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- Distinguish the differences between the animal' looks, and the person' looks? Why does the Almighty God want human to speculate everything around him in the universe?
- 1- Explain the meaning of this Verse: **“You cannot guide whom you please: it is Al'lah Who guides those who will. He best knows those who lead themselves (to the right path).”**
- 2- Why does the Almighty God describe the torment of the hereafter as the ever greatest torment?
- 3- How could the human attain the true belief in the Day of Account?

Lesson Seventeen

*Interpretation of Fortress 87 (The Most High, Glory to Your Lord
in the Highest)*

Surah Al-A'la (Part One)

I seek refuge in God from the cursed Satan

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

- 1. “Make (people’s spirits) glorify the Name of your Provider, the Most High”**
- 2. “Who has created (everything) and proportioned (it) well”**
- 3. “Who has estimated (a livelihood) and guided them (to it),**
- 4. “Who brings forth the pasture,**
- 5. “Then turns it to precious desiccated containers (dry yellow plants which still keep the vital benefits to be eaten in summer).”**
- 6. “We shall let you read so that you will not forget:”**
- 7. “Except what Al’lah wills. He knows what is open and what is hidden.”**
- 8. “We shall ease for you the smoothest path,”**
- 9. “Therefore give admonition if (or if not) admonition avails.”**
- 10. “He who stands in awe (of Al’lah) will remember,”**
- 11. “But it will be ignored by the most miserable one,”**
- 12. “Who will suffer the Greatest Fire,”**
- 13. “In which they will then neither die nor live.”**
- 14. “Indeed, successful shall be those who purify themselves,”**
- 15. “Who remember the Name of their Lord and so communicate with Him,”**
- 16. “Yet you (oblivious people) prefer the worldly life,”**
- 17. “Even though the life to come is better and more lasting.”**

18. “All of this is in the earlier scriptures:”

19. “The scriptures of Abraham and Moses.”

§§§§§

In this noble Fortress, the Almighty God wants to clarify to us that if we do not feel awe for Him, we will not recollect Him, nor will the admonition of His Envoys profit us. Consequently our spirit will not be qualified to enjoy the favor which Al’lah has prepared for us.

Moreover, in this case, such a person will prefer the present transient life to the life to come, and will pay no heed to their fate after death.

Therefore, due to the Clemency that this Merciful and Sympathetic God has for us, He sent us some Verses at the beginning of this Fortress which will implant this awe in our spirits. If we consider them carefully we shall fear to disobey our Provider, and then we shall remember God and His Graces, and we will succeed.

Firstly, to explain the first Verse, we say:

Verse no. 1

1. “Make (people’s spirits) glorify the Name of your Provider, the Most High”

The word glorify in Arabic which means “Sabeh” is derived from the word “Sabh” which generally means swimming or floating, we say the stars swim in the space, the fish swim in the sea, and swimming can be physical or spiritual and immaterial. For example, if a person looks at the glowing globe of the sun, and knows that it has been flaming and radiating for thousands of years and continues to do so up to this moment, then their spirit will glorify it and swim in its greatness, thinking and wondering. Similarly, if a person looks at the refulgent stars in space and knows that there are millions of millions of light-years between one star and the next, and that they are in attraction and connection with one another despite their tremendous dimensions and the

measureless distance between them, this person will also swim in their greatness and soar in their thoughts of that great power.

If they knew that the human race would need more than five million years to walk across the surface of the star, if this was even possible, although it occupies only a spot in the heavens, then their spirit would swim in the largeness of this illimitable heaven.

Thus spiritual swimming is accomplished through profound meditation on things.

In this noble Fortress, the Almighty orders His noble Prophet (cpth) to help people swim in the Name of their Provider – that is, to acquaint them with the Might of this Creator and His high Prestige – in order that **their spirits will swim and soar through this endless Greatness, and become immersed in this Potency, whose borders or limits cannot be apprehended by humanity.**

The word “**Name**” refers to all of the supreme Names of God, which indicate His Majesty, Potency, Compassion, Clemency, Wisdom, Omniscience and other Name Attributes.

“**...your provider**” is your creator Who supports you with life, existence and power.

“**...the Most High**” is the Highest One who is greater in all of His Names than any human conception.

Whatever you know of His Grandeur, He is even Grander and Grander. Whatever of His Compassion or Might you may perceive, He is in fact even higher than your perception.

In all of His supreme Attributes that you may recognize, He is greater and higher, for there is no end to His Perfection.

Accordingly, the Verse “**Make (people’s spirits) glorify the Name of your Provider, the Most High**” tells us: “show and tell people what you have been shown and have learnt of the Perfection of your Provider, so that they may draw near to that High Provider and their spirits may swim in His boundless Perfection.”

The way that leads to the recognition of the Perfection of God is revealed in God's Words:

Verse no. 2

2. "Who has created (everything) and proportioned (it) well,"

This Verse means that if you, human, notice the perfection in creation, you will know the Perfection of God.

As you think about creation and reflect on it, and feel that it is great, you thereby glorify the Creator and appreciate His Magnificence and Perfection. This is because creation leads one to its Maker.

To "**create**" is to bring something into being.

To "**proportion**" is to make creation balanced and without fault.

Thus this universe and everything in it has been created perfectly, lacking nothing, and free of any deficiency.

If you ponder this universe with its earth and heaven, its sun and moon, its mountains and rivers, its seas and lakes, its animals and plants, and its beasts and insects, you will see that everything that it contains is absolutely perfect.

No matter what you look at or scrutinize, trying to find a demerit, your sight will fail to find any imperfection, and will be humbled at its inability to find any fault in creation.

For further illustration, we say:

Suppose that the sun changed its orbit and approached the earth, so that it was closer to it by a single mile. The sun would certainly burn up the plants and animals and even all humanity, leaving no living being on the surface of our world. However, this is not possible, as all is in the Hands of the Omnipotent Creator.

This means that the One Who placed the sun in space proportioned its situation and its relationship to the earth, so that it would occupy a suitable location and its orbit would be appropriate.

This refers to the Perfection of God.

This also applies to the moon and the stars. They have all been put in the most perfect situation in splendid discipline in terms of their location and the distances between them, and their lights and rays. The Omnipotent rotates them according to a strict discipline. He is the One from Whom everything that issues includes perfection in all its aspects.

Another example about day and night:

Suppose that the earth's circulation was too fast, so that the night and day each only lasted for one hour. We would definitely not be satisfied with one hour's sleep, any more than we would with a single hour of work.

On the contrary, if its rotation was too slow, so that the day and the night each lasted for five days, we would be sure to feel bored with sleep and rest during this long night, and would be tired of working during such a long day.

Thus, the circulation of the earth has been regulated. The One that created the night and the day has proportioned this regulation so that it is perfect and expedient.

If a person considers everything carefully, they will find that all of the plants and animals have been created appropriately. It is just the same with the human body. If a person thinks of it, they will find that every organ has been put in a suitable place and is proportional in its dimensions.

If the thumb was longer than its current, normal length, you would be unable to perform the deeds you routinely perform. You would find difficulty in your actions if it was shorter than usual, or if it was mutilated.

Also, if you did not possess your fingers you would have never achieved the deeds you have up to now.

Thus, everything has been done perfectly, and the One that created everything and brought it into being is the One Who has made

them well. This is why they have appeared in such perfection, which indicates the Existence of Him, the Almighty.

People! Ponder and meditate time after time on whatever your eye catches, and you will be led to your Creator. You will recognize the supreme Perfection of your Provider.

Verse no. 3

3. “Who has estimated (a livelihood) and guided them (to it),”

To ‘estimate’ is to make a judgement about the size or amount of something. For example, you may say: “the merchant estimated the price of the goods,” or “the man estimated the amount of wheat he needed to put into storage.”

As we see, in these examples, estimation is made by people of experience and knowledge. God the Almighty, Who created all the different kinds of creatures, estimated the proper provisions for each to fulfill their individual requirements.

In fact, no rain falls, no plant grows and no boon is granted without being measured beforehand. God says: **“There is not a thing whose stores are not with Us, and We do not send it down except in its due, determined measure.”**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 15, Al-Hijr (Stone Buildings), Verse 21*

The Almighty did not only create the creatures and found the agreeable provision for each, but also acquainted every creature with its own food and guided them to its location.

The bee, for example, rushes to the flowers and sucks their nectar soon after emerging from its hive.

Equally, as soon as it hatches from its egg, the chick immediately begins to search in the soil for food. When the foal comes out of the mare’s belly, you will also see it hasten to its teats to suck their sustaining milk, even though it could not have seen or known about them before.

I wonder: who guides the bee, the chick and the foal to their own appropriate sources of nourishment?

Who has taught the little baby how to suckle the milk from its mother's breast?

It is He, the Almighty, Who has estimated the provision that every creature needs, and then created it and led them to its location.

Verse no. 4

4. "Who brings forth the pasture,"

The word "pasture" indicates the herbage and plants which the animals graze upon and live on.

The Almighty – Who has estimated your sustenance needs and employed the animals for your service and to provide you with the necessary nutrition– not only secures your living, but also takes responsibility for feeding these animals. He does so due to His Care for you, and to complete His Favor towards you.

This Verse draws our attention to the benevolence of God towards us and, at the same time, to the arrangement through which God creates this pasture.

Observe, human, the winds and how they blow and run, and the clouds and how they swim and stick together! Look at the rains and how they fall, and the sun with its rays and heat! All these agents – and others – are factors which help to revive the land and bring forth from it the pasture.

That is but one aspect of what is signified by the previous Verse.

Verse no. 5

5. "Then turns it to precious desiccated containers (dry yellow plants which still keep the vital benefits to be eaten in summer)."

What is "**desiccated**" is what is dry, and has lost greenness and freshness.

The word “**containers**” here refers to grass, which contains the substances necessary for the nourishment of animals.

This pasture, produced for animals by God, ripens and creates what is necessary for the animal’s nourishment, and then stores it inside. You can then see that it becomes desiccated and stiff. This helps the animal to graze during the summer.

Verse no. 6

6. “We shall let you read so that you will not forget:”

To read a book is to look in it and to know its content.

To let somebody read something is to make them see and witness what facts that thing or that book contains.

This Verse tells us: if you, human, look into this universe with an attitude of thought and meditation until you appreciate your Creator, then your spirit will draw near to Him, feeling deep reverence for Him. Through such reverence and closeness, your Provider will let you read. That is, by His Light He will show you those things which bespeak His Magnificence. You will then witness their realities, and will never forget them.

Verse no. 7

7. “Except what Al’lah wills. He knows what is open and what is hidden.”

You do not forget what you have seen, and it will remain apparent to your spirit as long as it keeps close to its Provider. However, when you turn away from Him your spirit will become blind and will witness nothing. You cannot dispense with your Lord, so do not turn away from Him for even a twinkle of an eye.

As for the Verse “**...He knows what is open and what is hidden**”, it means that the Almighty knows well everything that you hide as well as everything that you reveal, so let your secret thoughts be in agreement with your open actions. Be truthful in

your demands in order that your Provider shows you what you want to know.

Verse no. 8

8. “We shall ease for you the smoothest path.”

This means that your nearness to your Provider makes you aware of the good deeds which will entail you ease and benefit, so you seek them out and you are required to perform them. Al’lah will guide you to them and facilitate their practice for you.

Exactly as it was going with the great humane scholar M. Amin Shikho whose heart is full of sympathy and mercy upon the creations, the Almighty God always draws the facilities for him according to his benefit before even asking for it.

Moral Story

At the time when he retired from his job as a great general officer who protected the human rights, defended the weakness, established the basics of rights and struck the crimes and the criminals, he devoted his time to teach and recite the Holy book for the students and guided them to the right path.

The Money Lender Woman

The Almighty God says in His Holy Book: **“Whoever looks with the Light of God, God will give them salvation and provide for them whence they do not reckon.”** [19]

And in one of His Holy Sayings, He (Glory to Him) declared: **“Oh My obedient follower, be for Me as I want you to be, and then I will be for you as you want Me to be.”**

This is a law and something that, in reality, happens continuously when a human being becomes connected with God’s Robe, meaning Prophet Mohammad (cpth) and abiding by His Statute they will be close to God. Thus whatever good they ask from Him, He will definitely respond to them and fulfill their requests.

The more one is submissive to God and conforms to His sublime Legislation, the more beloved to God they will become and the more God will respond to their call.

Our humane guide, M. A. Sheikho, was extremely close to God, and because he took great care to apply His Orders and to serve His creatures many incidents occurred that showed the effectiveness of this Godly Law and gave proof of the scholar’s high standing with God.

One of these events took place at the beginning of winter when the noble guide was anxious that his new house would not be in a suitable state to receive his disciples during the coming rainy days.

He had bought the house during the summer. It was an Arab-style house in the al-Muhajireen area, including a vast courtyard where fresh air always circulated freely. A fountain was located in the

middle of the courtyard, surrounded by many beds of green plants and colourful flowers and roses which spread their fragrant perfume to captivate the heart and heal the spirit: it presented a delightful picture when one observed their bright beauty which the Godly Hand had produced and formed in all its excellence.

Like all other Damascene houses, the house of the noble guide consisted of two floors: the ground floor which was inhabited during the summer season while the upper floor was used in the winter. Both floors of this new house contained many spacious, sunlit rooms providing perfect ambiance and comfort to all.

But what distinguished this house from others was that whoever went into it would feel as though they were entering a garden of Paradise. This is because of the serenity and comfort they would sense within; they might experience a state of deep pleasure, or even of bliss: the kind of feeling that could not be found in any other house.

And it was no wonder, for the Envoy of God (cpth) said, **“Courts of teaching Godly Knowledge are gardens of Paradise.”**

Our noble guide had dedicated his house to weekly religious lectures, and this was in addition to the special gatherings where he used to meet with his close and loving disciples. This blessed house was indeed like a Ka’ba, a focal point, for all his murids (disciples) and all those who honestly sought truth, rectitude and religion.

When this great master, M. A. Sheikho, reached fifty years of age he turned fully to devoting himself in spirit and time to guiding people towards God: leading their spirits into His Presence under his distinguished direction and the superior knowledge God revealed to him. He helped them turn to God and His Envoy with love, through the great realities he unveiled to them concerning God’s Perfection and His Supreme Attributes, and the truthfulness and noble merits of His Envoy (cpth) By virtue of the scholar’s endeavours in creating this feeling of love for God in the hearts of

his followers, their spirits were refined and became imbued with the mark of Godly Perfection.

Large groups of young men, whether educated or not, joined his circle (his soul has been sanctified by Al'lah) where they could acquire great intellectual and spiritual fruits from the superior lessons they received from their teacher, and enjoy happiness simply by talking about the Supreme Attributes of God the Almighty. These lessons breathed life and beatitude into their hearts and therefore they were unable to miss with them for they felt them necessary to their daily lives.

Days rolled by and turned into weeks and then months, and summer faded, then autumn spread its colourful cloak; that too ran its glorious course and gave place to winter which brought with it chilly weather, heavy rain and snow.

With the onset of winter the noble scholar, M. Amin, began to ponder upon the state of his new house and how it would fare in the coming rainy days, for it was the only place available to receive his followers who would be coming to drink from the fount of his heavenly knowledge. When he bought the house, it was still not plastered and the courtyard was covered with dust for it had not yet been paved. At the time this was not a problem for him and his followers for they were still experiencing the warm, dry days of summer.

But on this particular day, thick banks of grey clouds covered the sky and veiled the sun; winds loaded with cool moisture began to blow, causing the rain to fall lightly at first. But it quickly increased and the heavens sent it in abundance. The rainfall lasted long enough to turn the open courtyard into a large, muddy pool. The noble master came out of his room and stood beside the pool observing this new problem and wondering what he could do about it. He thought to himself, 'Winter is here and the heavens have overwhelmed the earth with its blessings and rainwater; so, what can I do about this unpaved courtyard? I see that it will cause me some problems. Had it been only for me and my family it would

not matter. But this situation will affect my disciples and the visitors who come here to learn about God!'

In fact, the problem might well affect more than three hundred people who were used to attending the lessons in person; and this number is apart from the groups who would visit him all during the week, morning and evening, to quench their thirst from his heavenly knowledge. Unfortunately, the noble master was facing this problem at the same time that he was passing through financial difficulty, and so he did not have the money to solve it. He knew that the problem could easily be rectified by paving the courtyard, but this would cost a lot of money as the area in question was large, and he would have to buy the floor tiles and the materials needed for paving, also pay the delivery costs and the wages of the workers.

He had always been in the habit of keeping a sum of money to provide all the daily needs for himself and his family, and other necessities, including the alms he gave to the deserving needy. So whatever difficult circumstances he passed through, he would carry all the burdens to face them easily and without any trouble, but with this new situation he felt a heavy burden on his shoulders. He had to pave the courtyard as soon as possible because winter had arrived, but at the same time, he did not have the money to pay for it. So, what could he do?

He thought that he might borrow the necessary amount from his close disciples, but he realised that they were all poor and thus unable to cover the cost of the work. A feeling of anxiety began to flow into his pure heart when suddenly he heard a knock at the outer door of his house. The great guide walked steadily towards the door and opened it, and to his surprise he found an old woman standing before him although it was still early morning; the woman seemed to be strong and active even though she was advanced in years. He recognised her, for she was a famous usurer known not only to all the people in the region where she lived and, incidentally, where Officer Sheikho had once been the director of security, but many of the people of Damascus had also heard of

her. She was well known for her abundant fortune, and her wide area of influence. In short, she was like a moving bank, for what money she has was equal to, or perhaps more than, all the deposits in any bank. And now, this money lender was standing at his door holding a heavy bag. In a trembling voice she greeted the noble guide, saying, ‘Good morning, abu Fat’hi.’

‘Good morning!’

‘May I come in, please?’

‘Yes, of course! Welcome, come in!’

She passed across the doorstep, still carrying the heavy bag, and then the noble master closed the door behind her. Once inside the house she put the bag down on the floor and revealed her careworn face, dripping with sweat. In a breathless voice she addressed the noble guide and began to tell her story, ‘Oh abu Fat’hi! Last night I could not sleep at all. I was so afraid that burglars would burst into my home... at any moment I expected them to come over the wall... from all directions. Oh, sir I was sure that they would steal my money and deprive me of so much of the fruit of my life’s work. I couldn’t close my eyes for even a moment. I waited, on tenterhooks, for the coming of morning, but it was needless for last night passed peacefully, but who knows what may happen tonight or any other night? So I’ve decided to resort to your protection, sir. I can put my trust only in you, sir, for I believe in your honesty and truthfulness. I still remember your reliability and noble manners when you were the director of our region. I still remember your honourable conduct therefore I find no-one to be more trustworthy than you, sir.

‘That is why I have brought these golden pieces for you to take care of on my behalf; in this way I will protect myself and my beloved money from the eyes of thieves and burglars. And with this I give you a full and free hand to take whatever sum of money you need and to spend any of it in whichever way you see fit. But this will be on one condition only, and that is to hand the full amount of golden liras back to me on the day I return to collect

them. If you agree on this condition you can take the amount you need and I will not charge you any interest on it at all. I just want to find the full amount of money when I come back to get it. Here is the bag of gold coins, take it and protect it. Now I can go to my business with a peaceful mind. But again I remind you, when I visit you again I want to see it as I left it, without a single penny missing. Do you agree?’

The noble master took the bag from the woman, saying, ‘As you like, but don’t you want a receipt for this money?’

‘Not at all,’ the woman answered, ‘a man like you who is entrusted with men’s souls can surely be entrusted with even the greatest amount of gold. No... No I will not take a receipt from you.’

However, the noble guide refused to keep the money in his charge without giving her a receipt which he wrote and signed with his own pen. And so, the woman said goodbye to the honourable master and left the house with a calm mind and tranquil heart. Her heavy steps expressed the exhaustion she suffered because of the previous sleepless night she had spent, worrying that thieves might break into her house and steal her bag of gold.

Glory to Him! How Great He is! He directed this woman to his obedient servant at the proper time, and did so even before M. Amin prayed to Him to ask for His Help! It was only because the feeling of a heavy burden had begun to creep into his noble spirit as he thought of the new situation of his house in winter and joined it to his straitened circumstance, that the Almighty soon dispelled his worries by totally unexpected means. He sent to him a “moving bank” and placed at his disposal a sum of money, interest free, and many times greater than the sum he needed. Thus, the noble master was relieved of his worry and his features relaxed as he decided to borrow some of the woman’s money since she had willingly offered it to him. In this way he could pave the courtyard and make some necessary improvements in the house so that the entire problem would be quickly resolved.

When the work was finished, the noble master was extremely happy for everything had been easily accomplished. He turned to God in praise for His Arrangement and Help which enabled him to continue his lofty lessons of guiding people to Him without any trouble.

Many days passed before another favour came from God to this noble guide when one of the shops which he had inherited from his late father was sold; so he took a part of the price he received for the shop, equal to the sum he had borrowed from the money of the money lender, and put it back in her bag after he changed it to golden coins.

That same evening our noble man went to bed with his heart full of immeasurable gratitude for the Almighty Al'lah (Glory to Him) Who supported him and eased the difficulties in his way, helped him to finish the work and return the money he had borrowed to the bag before the woman came back and asked for what was hers.

That night he closed his eyes, delighted and at ease, and surrendered to sleep. Then, as dawn broke the muezzin called for the dawn prayer, and so our great guide performed the communication with God and then he began to glorify the Almighty Al'lah. Suddenly he heard the echo of a voice as though coming from a distance. It reverberated around the entire quarter repeating one phrase, 'I have missed it... I have missed it.'

'How odd! Who could it be?' the noble master thought to himself, 'It's still early morning, so who is shouting like this and in this area? Oh God! I hope it's good news.'

The quarter where he lived was known as the area where the upper class of society and the ruling element in Damascus lived in and where silence and tranquility constantly prevailed.

'So,' he thought, 'who is causing this clamour and speaking in such a strange voice?' But the answer was soon revealed when he heard loud banging on his street door followed by the same voice echoing the same words:(I have missed it... I have missed it)

With this, he could guess who the source of all this noise was, so he got to his feet and quickly rushed to open the door. It was she, the money lender! She had come back to reclaim her bag of money.

Without any word of greeting she said to the noble man, in her Bedouin accent, ‘I’ve missed it... my money... my gold... I want my bag of golden liras.’

‘Okay... okay... you will have it,’ the noble master replied, ‘the gold is complete, not one lira less.’ She went into the house and the noble master entered one of the rooms and then came back holding the weighty bag and handed it to the woman.

She drank the delicious cup of coffee that had been offered to her and then said goodbye to the noble guide and left the house holding her beloved bag, not just with her hands, but seemingly with her eyes and heart too.

Behold, dear reader, the Wise Actions of the Almighty and Merciful God!

Unaware of God’s Will and against her own will, the Almighty directed this money lender to relieve His beloved obedient servant of his distress and to alleviate his difficult circumstances. He sowed in her heart a feeling of alarm about the security of her gold and so pushed her to seek refuge in the noble guide and bring him, unconsciously, a release from his own anticipated troubles. He did not allow his obedient follower, the man of high intentions, to suffer straitened circumstances or to be put in any kind of tight situation.

Rather, He sent that woman at the appropriate time to solve his problem and, again at exactly the right time, He sent her back to reclaim her money after the borrowed sum had been replaced, and not a moment sooner.

If this demonstrates anything at all, it shows the great rank of this truthful guide with his Provider.

The Almighty says in His Holy Book, the Qur'an, **'Every difficulty is followed with ease'** [20]

In this noble Verse, Al'lah, Glory to Him, states a firm rule and effective law: "Whoever is straight in observing His Commands and Statute, He will assuredly raise his prestige and remove any difficulty that may stand in his way."

This is true for every righteous human being. As for those whose difficulty arises in their spirits out of their care for the advantage of their brothers and sisters in humanity and for fear of their future in the after-world, and not out of any personal purpose, how high their spirits are and how close to God they are!

Let all humanity strive in that same way.

Self-Activity:

I consider and understand the Holy Verses and their sublime meaning in Surah Al-A'la, consequently I appreciate and love the Almighty God for His favor and charity, His mercy and sympathy, His Omnipotence and Grandeur. After I read the story of the great scholar Mohammad Amin Shikho (God has sanctified his soul) and know how God relieved him by ease and smoothed his path and accomplished all his wishes, I will try to perform his guidance including his interpretation of the Verses in the Holy Qur'an by attaining humane, good deeds then I am (God Willing) going to achieve happiness and to draw nearer to the Almighty God.

Questions and exercises:

1- The Almighty God says **“Make (people’s spirits) glorify the Name of your Provider, the Most High”**

What is the meaning of the word “glorify” which means in Arabic “Sabeh”? Who is the one who helps people to swim in the Name of their Provider?

2- What does this Verse **“...The Name of your Provider, the Most High”** indicate?

3- What is the meaning of this Verse **“Then turns it to precious desiccated containers”**?

4- What is the reason behind the old lady coming to meet the great scholar M. Amin in the morning on that day when he decided to pave the out yard floor of his house?

5- Why did the old lady entrust her money to the great scholar, why did she rely on him very much?

6- What do you deduce from the story of that old lady and what is the wisdom of her coming and resorting to the great scholar Mohammad Amin Shikho (God has sanctified his soul)?

Lesson Eighteen

*Interpretation of Fortress 87 (The Most High, Glory to Your Lord
in the Highest)*

Surah Al-A'la (Part Two)

Having revealed how the contemplation of this universe results in entry into God's Presence, by attaining knowledge about Him and the spirit's requirement of virtuous actions, the Almighty next addressed His noble Envoy (cph) saying:

Verse no. 9

9. "Therefore give admonition if (or if not) admonition avails."

That is, "remind My servants of My Favor and Graces and speak to them about My Might, and do not cease from reminding them of these things whether or not you are successful."

Then God uncovered the way which – if we adopt it – will make us derive the benefits of this admonition. He says:

Verse no. 10

10. "He who stands in awe (of Al'lah) will remember,"

Feeling awe of Al'lah is the only way which will lead us to benefit from the Envoy's admonition.

However, this awe will not be attained except through examination and speculation.

If people look at this universe and excogitate on its marvels which express the Majesty of God, then their spirits will revere this Creator and believe that He is Great. Through this reverence it will fear Him, and will in turn make it abide by His Commands in submission (this fear is established on the basis of high estimation and love; it is not a terrible fear at all).

Accordingly, a person's guidance is related only to their own will. If they observe this universe attentively and study it carefully, they

will feel glorification and awe, and thus derive advantages from the admonition in question.

Verse no. 11

11. “But it will be ignored by the most miserable one,”

The most miserable people are those who draw misery to their spirits when they befoul them and tire them out with wicked desires.

In fact, anyone who does not use the power of thought or their sight to see God’s Greatness through signs of the universe, and who instead allows themselves to be led by their desires, will be always distressed and heavy-laden. Trouble will never leave them. Therefore their heart will not feel ease and they will not taste the flavor of happiness.

Thus, recollection depends on thinking. As long as people are immersed in their lusts and fail to use their ability to think, they will never remember God or be guided.

If you sincerely desire guidance and wish to repent to Al’lah, refrain from your forbidden yearnings and your sins, remember death, and then consider the signs of this universe. You will fear your Provider and realize the atrocity that is contained in immorality and breaches of His Commands. This will lead you to change your course and derive benefits from admonition.

To reveal the outcome for the most tortured people, God says:

Verse no. 12

12. “Who will suffer the Greatest Fire,”

The “**Greatest Fire**” is a fire which contains great intensity and burning pain, as it is great in its continuity and duration.

The miserable have defiled their spirits with the dirt of offence, and have disobeyed their Provider Who overwhelmed them with His Graces. Therefore, when they die, they will sense their diffidence before their Provider due to their deviation. They will

feel great contrition for their failure to carry out good actions during their lifetime, consequently losing out on the precious accession. In addition, they will feel grief for having hurt people who are their brothers and sisters in humanity.

This contrition, grief and shame will grow inside them until they find no way to distract themselves from their pains except to throw themselves into the Fire, wishing to forget their unbearable spiritual suffering through having their body burned therein. Indeed, those that do good do it for their own advantage, and those that commit evil do so against themselves. Al'lah never wrongs them, but they wrong themselves.

Verse no. 13

13. “In which they will then neither die nor live.”

Death is the cessation of sensation.

Life is the feeling of delight, and tasting the relish of happiness.

The miserable and tortured person in question will not die; that is, their feeling of pain will have no end.

Moreover, they will not taste or enjoy anything while in the fire. All food, drink, shade, or beds within the fire are painful and bitter for the spirit.

Verse no. 14

14. “Indeed, successful shall be those who purify themselves,”

‘Success’ in Arabic is ‘Falah’ which means ‘cultivation’. To be “successful” is to prepare yourself and make yourself ready to perform good actions willingly.

To purify yourself is to help yourself to be cured and virtuous.

This noble Verse tells us that the person who endeavors to reclaim their spirit until it becomes cured – that is, pure and clear from all evil – has succeeded. Their spirit will become accepting and

capable of being charitable, seeking out good actions and willing to do favors.

A person does not succeed unless their spirit becomes pure and clear of wicked desires. Without this, their spirit will not be competent or inclined to perform good actions.

God then explained to us the way that leads to purification. He says:

Verse no. 15

15. “Who remember the Name of their Lord and so communicate with Him,”

That is, this person is continually reminding themselves of the Favor and Kindness of their Provider, of His Sympathy and Tenderness, and of His Omnipotence and Grandeur. They persist in doing so until their spirit enters God’s Presence, glorifying Him. With such an entry they attain a link with their Creator, which then will purify their spirit.

If you want to be successful – that is to say, if you want your spirit to be ready to do good actions and to be fond of virtue – you must purify this spirit. This purification is accomplished by communication with Al’lah, which is achieved after feeling awe.

However, this awe arises in the spirit only through continuous remembrance of Al’lah, and specifically through remembrance of His Greatness and Power, His Boons and Kindness, and all His Supreme Attributes.

Verse no. 16

16. “Yet you (oblivious people) prefer the worldly life,”

If you do not adopt this path or diligently try to purify your spirit and clear it, this means that you prefer the mean yearnings and the lower life to the behaviour and good actions which lead to success.

Verse no. 17

17. “Even though the life to come is better and more lasting.”

The other abode is better than all of the bliss in this lower existence. The pleasures of the life to come are incomparable with those of this life. The life to come is also better than the present life in its continuity and eternity, for the bliss of this life is temporal and soon vanishes, but the bliss to come is unbroken and lasts forever.

Verse no. 18-19

18. “All of this is in the earlier scriptures:

19. “The scriptures of Abraham and Moses.”

Finally, God clarifies that the revelation He has sent to all humankind is the same and never changes. A person has no way to purify their spirit except by entering into the Presence of their Provider. When they enter that Presence and attain a link with Him, the Almighty, they will become spotless and rise high. On the contrary, when they oppose and shun God, they will be evil and become low in grade.

The Almighty previously revealed all of the guidance that is implied in this Fortress in the scriptures which came before, which He sent down upon our masters Abraham (cpth) and Moses (cpth). Therefore He says: **“All of this is in the earlier scriptures: the scriptures of Abraham and Moses.”**

Praise is to God, the Provider of all worlds.

Guidance and abidance:

- 1- You have to sit alone everyday in the morning and in the evening thinking about God's Favors and bounties and contemplating the cosmic signs, so that you may establish a link with the Almighty God.
- 2- Avoid the places of amusement and corruptions and self-indulgence also avoid the false evil companionship.
- 3- Every human should have an inner moral court to judge his actions before sleeping. If they are good, he urges himself and gives a pledge to the Almighty God to perform more virtuous actions continuously, otherwise if they are evil or bad, he must repent to God giving Him a pledge not to do such bad actions again..... That is what we have been taught by the noble Envoy of God (cpth).
- 4- Carry out the above mentioned and all the instructions which have been mentioned in the interpretation of Am'ma part, thereby your spirit will have step by step a high rank within your prayers, you will be truthfully nearer to the Almighty God, so through your communication with Al'lah your spirit will be overwhelmed with His blessings and the real happiness and be of those who love sincerely and wholeheartedly Him and His Envoy (cpth) and finally enters into God presence.

Questions and exercises:

- 1- Why does the believer always seek good actions and will to do benevolences despite the difficulties and tiredness he may face?
- 2- What is the feature of the one who benefits from the Envoy's (cpth) admonition?
- 3- What is the veil which covers the human sight that he can't see and adopt the path of guidance and remembrance of the Almighty God?
- 4- Who is the most miserable one? And why does the Almighty God describe the fire which he will suffer as the greatest fire?

5- Why does the disobedient human, who immerses himself in lust and wicked desire in this worldly life, throw himself in the fire in the life to come?

6- When does human prefer this worldly life to the life to come?

7- Explain the meaning of this holy Verse “**He who stands in awe (of Al’lah) will remember**”?

Lesson Nineteen

Interpretation of Fortress 86 (The Goodness Star)

Surah At-Tariq

I seek refuge in God from the cursed Satan

In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful

1. **“And (behold) the heaven and the night-comer (the star of goodness)!**
2. **“What enables you to perceive what the night-comer is?**
3. **“It is the piercing star.**
4. **“Is there not for every spirit a guardian (watching) over it?**
5. **“Let humanity reflect on what it is created from!**
6. **“It is created from an ejected fluid,**
7. **“And is issued from the backbone among dust (tiny particles).**
8. **“Surely He (Al’lah) has the power to bring it back to life!**
9. **“On the Day when secrets will be tested and laid bare,**
10. **“It will have no power and no helper.**
11. **“The heaven of recurrence,**
12. **“And the earth of response;**
13. **(Tell you that) It is a decisive Word (Al’lah’s),**
14. **“It is not (a word) in jest.**
15. **“They are making schemes,**
16. **“But I (too) am making schemes,**
17. **“So tell the disbelievers to act deliberately; deal with them gently.”**

§§§§§

At the onset of this noble Fortress, the Almighty wants to draw our attention to heaven and the benefits that it brings. Therefore He says:

Verse no. 1

1. “And (behold) the heaven and *the night-comer (the star of goodness)!*”

The “**heaven**” is the blue dome which we see above us, surrounding the earth on all sides. “**And**” is used to urge us to think of heaven, so that we will perceive its greatness. Let us ponder its illimitable extensiveness and its role in the regular and well-ordered motion of the sun and the moon, and on the stars’ uniformity and their correlation with one another. Let us consider its effect on the swimming of the clouds and the condensation which causes rainfall.

You can liken heaven to the shell of an egg, which preserves its contents and helps them to keep existing.

If it was not for the heaven, the stars would be scattered here and there and would lose their correlation with each other.

Because of the heaven, the sun remains in its present location in space so that the earth profits from its heat and light.

Without the heaven, the moon would not perform its rotation around the earth, and the earth would shake as it travels through space, so that its movement will be disturbed and irregular. Consequently there would be no night or day or the four seasons.

Without the heaven, no snow and no rain would ever have formed or fallen.

Thus, the perfect performance of their functions by these creations, which leads to the steadiness of our life, mainly depends on the existence of the heaven. Because of this heaven, your needs are fulfilled and your existence and life on this earth becomes possible.

This is only one aspect of what we understand by the word “**heaven**”, for nobody is able to count the signs that are included in the heaven.

Oh human! Contemplate this heaven and think of it once and once again, so that you will appreciate its Maker and glorify the Provider Who supplies it.

As for the phrase “**that which percusses**”, it draws our attention to the blessings that come from the heaven and which are continuously coming to humanity. The Arabic word for “**night-come r**” is ‘tariq’, which is derived from the verb ‘taraqa’, meaning ‘to strike’ or ‘to come’.

In this Verse it refers to the goodness that successively comes and reaches people, and means: “Behold the heaven, My obedient followers, and the continuous blessings which it brings to you.”

To make us observe this abundant goodness which comes from heaven, God says:

Verse no. 2

2. “What enables you to perceive what the night-come r is?”

This tense is used to show the greatness of something and its high role.

This Verse means: “Oh human! You are unable to find any limit to the blessings that descend from the heaven, or to count the Godly Boons that overwhelm you by means of it.”

What are these blessings? God explains this with His Words:

Verse no. 3

3. “It is the piercing star.”

The Arabic word for “**star**” is ‘najm’. It is taken from the verb ‘najama’ which means ‘to appear’ or ‘to rise’.

According to this conception, we can say that the air can be considered a star in terms of how it comes into being. So is it with

coldness and heat and the formation of the clouds, rain, and the like.

The word “**star**” therefore includes everything that comes into being.

Something “**piercing**” – from the verb to penetrate – is something effective and piercing. For example, you could talk about a penetrating mind, a piercing view, a piercing arrow, and so forth.

The phrase “**piercing star**” refers to the effective goodness which comes to us continuously in perfect order, free of any fault or shortcoming. For example, the air is piercing because it comes according to a certain order, abiding by firm rules so that it will stir up the clouds and joins them to one another. The rain also is piercing, because when it falls on land, it causes the soil to bring out the blessings that are hidden within it, because the rain is loaded with countless benefits. So is it with coldness. The cold is piercing (or effective), because when it affects plant life, it stirs up the qualities and powers that are folded within them, so they yield up their crops and lavish their fruits.

Thus we can see that everything God the Almighty brings into being is like a star in its appearance and how it rises, just as it is piercing in its plenitude and great benefit.

After these Verses, which attract us to the limitless heaven and manifest its great significance and some of the countless graces which it brings, God sent down the following Verse in order to caution humanity against debauchery and disobedience. This Verse tells us that for He Who has such Might, and Who precisely directs everything in this universe, it is not difficult to watch and record every action of every person. He says:

Verse no. 4

4. “Is there not for every spirit a guardian (watching) over it?”

Does this miraculous universe not prove that He Who created it is able to record all the deeds of every spirit?

Such a task is certainly extremely simple and easy for God to perform, for He, the Almighty, is protecting and watching over all spirits.

Next, God draws humanity's attention to its own creation in order to recognize our origin, from which we were created. If a person thinks of this and makes some comparisons, they will know themselves and realize his powerlessness, and will recognize their Creator and His Grandeur. God says:

Verse no. 5

5. "Let humanity reflect on what it is created from!"

That is you, human! Look at your origin and your physique, and think of what you were created from.

Verse no. 6

6. "It is created from an ejected fluid,"

You were created from this insignificant fluid! The Almighty made all of these systems and organs from that fluid! Blood, veins, muscles and bones of various forms, the eyes and the ears, and all the other sensory organs: all these were created from an ejected fluid!

Should not you, human, think of all of this, so that you can be guided to your Maker?

To detract from the pride of humanity, God says:

Verse no. 7

7. "And is issued from the backbone among dust (tiny particles)."

The word "**dust**" in this Verse means numerous and countless spirits, for they are like the dust in their number.

In fact, in the loins of our father, we existed together with millions of millions of the spirits which will come into this world.

Oh human! How weak and tiny you were on that day, and how Grand is this Creator, who formed you in such a faultless image and with such excellent construction!

You are absolutely unable to find any limit to His Favor and Tenderness for you.

Would it be difficult for He Who has such Potency and Might to resurrect you after death and rebuild your body once again, as He did the first time?

If you speculate and think deeply you will ascertain that resurrection is real, and will see that it is easy and simple for Al'lah. God says:

Verse no. 8

8. “Surely He (Al'lah) has the power to bring it back to life!”

We are talking about the One Who created heaven and all that it contains, and Who built you, human, from an ejected fluid and brought you out from between loins and dust: it is not hard for Him to rebuild your body even after you pass away and turn to dust. Indeed, it will be even easier than it was the first time.

To show the status of people on the Day when they return to their Provider, God says:

Verse no. 9

9. “On the Day when secrets will be tested and laid bare,”

‘To test’ is to examine and to uncover the truth. You can say: “the commander tested the soldiers, which means that he examined them to uncover the knowledge and ability of each of them. You can also say, “The teacher tested the students,” which means that the teacher examined them to discover what every student understood from the lesson.

In Arabic, a secret which we hide and keep in our inner self, and which we dislike anyone to know is called ‘sarirah’, with the plural form ‘sara’ir’. If we are to say about someone that they have a

good ‘sarirah’, it would mean that their intentions are clear. This is the intended meaning of the word “secrets” as mentioned in these Verses.

On the day when God will rebuild our bodies once again, the reality of every spirit will be uncovered and the secret of every person will be visible to all creation.

At that time people shall witness the Godly Justice and know that He, the Almighty, does not wrong anyone by so much as the weight of an atom.

The intents and the secrets of every person will surely be disclosed, and then the doer of good will be rewarded for their actions, and the evil-doer will receive their recompense. Everyone is the hostage of their own deeds.

Verse no. 10

10. “It will have no power and no helper.”

When the sinner sees their defects and diseases on that Day, and these defects and diseases begin to cause pain for them, they will be unable to repulse their treatment. This treatment will act as medicine for their faults and diseases, and there will be nobody who can help them and relieve them of this treatment. They will realize their urgent need to this cure, and its necessity.

The state of the doer of evil on that day will be like the state of a butcher who needed to be very careful while cutting a piece of meat with a sharp knife, but who instead turned his face towards the road and cut his finger, losing much blood in the process.

I wonder! When the doctor sets to curing this butcher, will he try to run away? Will any of his family come forward to intervene with the doctor on his behalf, asking for an end to the treatment to save him?

That is the state of the sinner when they are in the Hands of their Provider on Doomsday. They shall have no power, and no helper shall stand by them.

The Godly Wisdom requires that they be treated with Fire so that they will be cured of their diseases. This takes place out of God's Mercy and Clemency for them.

Glory to You, God of all! How Merciful and Generous You are!
Woe to those who shun God and wrong themselves!

In the following Verses, God proves to us that the resurrection will surely occur and that there will certainly be an account for all of our deeds. He says:

Verse no. 11

11. "The heaven of recurrence,"

The recurrence of heaven is meant as the blessings which it always brings, yearly and periodically. For example, rainfall occurs as a reaction of heaven. We are told of the existence of a Steering Provider by the recurrence of rainfall at certain times, as well as the cycle of the seasons and atmospheric events and their reoccurrence at regular times. In fact, when you throw a stone up into the air, it would not return to earth again unless there was a force which brings it back.

What do you have to say about the seasons and the rains which have been coming back every year for many thousands of years, periodically and regularly, without change or modification?!

This also applies to the motion of the sun and the moon, and even to the motion of the earth.

All of the aforementioned facts about the heaven are contained in this Verse. Would it be possible for the earth to revolve by itself, for the seasons to recur regularly by themselves, and for the rain to fall every year at certain times by itself? Must there not be a great Hand that directs and moves them?

Verse no. 12

12. "And the earth of response;"

This Verse refers to how the earth responds to the heaven with germination.

When the rain – which is loaded with vitamins – falls on the land, the land responds by bringing forth crops and bearing fruit. Is this not an indication that there is a Wise Arranger and Estimating Creator?

If you were to contemplate and appreciate this discipline until you came to believe in this Mighty Creator, then you would know that everything that is said about the resurrection is true. God says:

Verse no. 13

13. (Tell you that) It is a decisive Word (Al'lah's),”

The decisive word is the final judgment, which is indisputable and irrefutable.

Now we have learned that humanity will undoubtedly return to its Provider one day, when our secrets will be uncovered and we will be called to account. However, the Almighty wanted to inculcate this in our minds. Therefore He says:

”The heaven of recurrence, And the earth of responsiveness; (Tell you that) it is a decisive Word (Al'lah's),”

That is, if you think of the heaven and its recurring cycles, and observe the earth and its response to it, this fact will settle in your mind and you will believe in the Day of Resurrection. You will know that the Glorious Creator can resurrect and recreate you. This will mean that your spirit will no longer have doubts about this, and thus you will realize that the Words of God are decisive.

Verse no. 14

14. “It is not (a word) in jest.”

A word in jest is a word which has no firm foundation.

Such being the case, these words are valueless and do not affirm any facts. Consequently, we have no need to pay attention to or

take into consideration the warning in such words. On the other hand, if a serious warning is given, then we should listen carefully to it and take precautions to face the troubles of which we are cautioned.

Since God the Almighty has proved that the Day of Resurrection will truly come to pass, and has proved that He is able to bring the dead back to life, there is no doubt that any believer who knows this for certain will adopt steps to ensure their safety and to prepare themselves for that inevitable Day.

God then wanted to portend His Envoy's victory and the imminent coming of the manifestation of truth. He says:

Verse no. 15-16

15. "They are making schemes,

16. "But I (too) am making schemes,"

A scheme is a plan that a contestant puts in place to overcome their opponent.

This Verse means: "they put plans in place to disprove this revelation, and to stand in the way of declaring the truth. However, I too make plans to forestall their purpose and frustrate their schemes, for you will be supported without fail, whereas your enemies will be defeated."

In the following Verse, the Almighty bids His Envoy to exhort the disbelievers and to warn them of the acceleration of torture. He says:

Verse no. 17

17. "So tell the disbelievers to act deliberately; deal with them gently."

"So tell the disbelievers to act deliberately: When the unbelievers heard God's Warning of torture, they asked that it should be allowed to descend upon them without delay. They did

that out of their ignorance of God's Might and as a challenge to His Prophet (cpth).

However, the Merciful God ordered His Envoy to tell them to act in a leisurely way. That means that He bid him to caution them against their opposition and to plant fear in their hearts, so that they might repent from their error and refrain from hastening woe unto themselves.

Moreover, the Almighty told His Prophet to be gentle in his warnings. He says: “**deal with them gently.**”

That is, “let your explanations and admonitions be delivered with kindness and deliberateness.”

Indeed, if people think of this Guidance from Al'lah to His Prophet – and how it specifies the way he should adopt in leading His obedient followers, and how He bids him to be gentle and lenient with them – they will realize how Merciful and kindly Al'lah is towards all of His creatures. They will know that Al'lah, the Almighty, is indeed the Provider of all the worlds, and that He is the Most Merciful One.

Praise is to God, the Provider of all worlds.

Self-Activity:

Memorize Fortress Al-Tariq very well with your teacher in your school, cooperate with your classmates to memorize it very well, discuss its sublime interpretation with them and keep reciting it in your prayers.

Questions and Exercises:

1- What is the meaning of the word **“the night-comer”** which is mentioned in the holy God saying **“And (behold) the heaven and the night-comer** (the star of goodness)?

2- What does this Verse **“It is the piercing star”** indicate?

3- The Almighty God says: **“(Tell you that) it is a decisive Word (Al’lah’s)”**. What does this Verse want to draw human's attention to?

4- Explain the meaning of the Almighty God saying: **“The heaven of recurrence, And the earth of response;”**?

5- You were created from a humble fluid from the backbone among dust **“tiny particles”**, The Almighty Al'lah made all of your systems and organs from that fluid! He made Blood, veins, muscles and bones of various forms, the eyes and the ears, and all the other sensory organs: all of these were created from an ejected fluid, how Grand the Creator is! Who formed you in such a perfect being and with such an excellent construction! Should not you, human, think and speculate of all this, and remember the Godly wisdom behind your perfect creation and complete construction?

Part of Stories

In The Name Of God The All-Compassionate, The All-Merciful

The Almighty Allah Says: {We relate unto you (Mohammad) the best of stories through Our Revelations unto you, of this Qur'an...}

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 12, Yusuf (Joseph), Verse 3*

{Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding}

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 12, Yusuf (Joseph), Verse 111*

Lesson Twenty

The Story of Our Master Noah (pth) (Part one)

The Almighty God has mentioned three nations in the Holy Quran from the beginning of the human existence on earth, which came in succession of each other. At first He the Almighty mentions the people of our Master Noah (pth) then Thamoud and A'd people, these three examples of a destructible damned people are enough to be considered as a lesson and exhortation to whom of those who are seeking to purify themselves and be saved from Hell-Fire, thereby the Almighty God mentions them in The Holy books exhorting us from conducting their path.

The bestowed Mercy:

My dear students:

A long space of time passed over Adam's sons after his death, then they went astray from the path of right and drew far from God.

So, the Almighty Al'lah sent them our Master Noah (pth) in order to warn them of the results of their deeds and remind them of Allah and their life to come.

They were taking idols as gods, worshipping them instead of Allah.

The most famous and the greatest of these idols to them were Wadd, Suwa, Yaghuth, Ya'uq and Nasr, God says: **{And they have said: 'You shall not leave your gods, nor shall you leave Wadd, nor Suwa', nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 71, Noah, Verse 23*

What are the indications of these names according to their belief?

They pretended that:

Wadd [21] establishes the relationships of intimacy among people.

Suwa [22] seeks after their good and happiness.

Yaghuth [23] succors them when hardships.

Ya'uq [24] prevents evil and disasters from them.

As for Nasr [25], it is the most grand and the head of these gods.

They claimed the above mentioned without knowing that the Creator Who has created the entire universe and the Provider Who supplies each of their beings with life unceasingly is the Steering God, alone.

He is alone Who manages the requirements of the universe, succors man when surrounded by adversities and inflicted with hardships, and hinders evils from them if their acts become good.

So, He drives to every human what is proportional to his deed.

These people broke off their link with their Provider and linked their hearts to their idols.

They thought that things and affairs in this universe happen randomly and through no account and accordingly, the hardships and mishaps which they were afflicted by are not related to their deeds.

Therefore, they asked these idols to bring them goodness and to draw off distress from them.

Had they only minded, they would have known that only the Creator is the Doer – Executor – and the Organizer of affairs of the entire universe.

So, none can harm or profit another, nor can one bring goodness for or drive evil away from another.

Thus, When God, The Almighty, afflicts someone with distress, none can draw it off except Him, and if He pleases gift to someone of His obedient people, none will be able to drive His favor away.

But since these people – our Master Noah’s folk – were far away from God without believing certainly; Therefore, they fell under what they fell of error.

They drew astray from God and misguided a lot, yet their disbelief added them nothing but loss.

The Origin of Idolatry

Idolatry arose among the previous nations but out of the extremism in religion and exceeding the bounds laid down by God for mankind.

As God, the Almighty, had ordered the angels to prostrate themselves to and bind up with our Master Adam (cpth); He also ordered Adam’s sons to bind themselves up with their Messengers and to enter into His Presence through their company so that they would be a shining sun for their spirits and a light for their hearts.

So, by the envoys of Al’lah they can reach knowing Him, and by the light coming into their spirits from Him, those who are entering into God’s presence through Al’lah’s envoys can see the Godly Perfection.

This clarifies God’s Saying: **{Verily, the prophet is always communicating with Allah, and His angels are communicating with him. You who believe, communicate, then, with him and submit whole heartedly}**.

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 33, Al-Ahzab (The Combined Clans), Verse 56*

So, the communication with prophet, in its reality, is but a link and coupling with this Noble and pure spirit and draw nearer to Al’lah through this noble spirit, so as to be a shining sun for the spirit bound up to it and alight for the believer’s heart who communicates with Al’lah through its company.

After his death, Adam’s sons relied on this important point in their approaching towards their Provider .

Some of them were righteous who were entering into God's presence and whose spirits became worthy to be a shining lamp for their contemporaries.

But, after these good men had died, Satan came and whispered to the oblivious people to make effigies representing them, reminding people of those good men and increasing love in the heart of who looks at them.

Then, time passed over these effigies when the oblivious people forgot those good men and the entering into the Presence of the Provider of all the worlds with them. Long time passed, step by step people forgot those good men and to those effigies, they limited their spirits' facing and stuck, thinking that they had might and power. Thus, their spirits broke off their link to God and they fell into what they fell of polytheism and farness off God.

Accordingly, it becomes obvious to us that binding up with the Noble Messengers (envoys) then with the righteous men coming after them is right and a requisite precept as long as it be a means serves drawing nearer to Allah.

But if man confined his spirit to the messenger, the sacred man or the worthy guider and tended only to him without directing himself through his company towards God; this would be the polytheism itself which is more similar to idolatry'.

Now, we can have a reasonable attitude between those who exceeded the bounds of their religion restricting their direction to the creature instead of the Creator; so they fell into polytheism due to their turning away from God, and those who denied coupling with worthy men and denied entering into God's presence through the Noble Messenger.

Then, neither the former ones were right concerning their polytheism and going away from God nor were the latter denying the means and disconnecting form God's Messenger.

The middling and right position is that the believer should approach towards only God through the companionship of the

closer to Allah who are alive. There, he will see Allah's Perfection and Justice and witness that only His Command directs the whole universe.

Thus, he will certainly have the knowledge of certainty that: There is no God but Allah.

Heart-Coupling should be but with the Alive

The function of the perfect guider comprises two duties:

1- First, he guides you, by his saying, to Allah and acquaints you with the indication to Allah that His Messenger brought.

2- Besides that, he would lead you, if you were sincere and spiritually bound up with him, to the love of God's Messenger (cpth) who is greatly interested in the entrance of the whole creation to Allah.

So, by means of your true love to this perfect guider; your spirit will be impressed with the elevated love to God's Messenger that impressed in this guider's spirit and sooner you will find yourself bound up with this Noble Messenger, clung to him and never separated from him.

If your guider found you coupled spiritually with God's Messenger, then he would say to you: 'Adhere to this entrance, for my task towards you is over as I have conveyed you to him whom God, the Almighty, made an entrance for the worlds and ordered all the believers to bind their spirits up with him, that is, to communicate with him.

The example of the guider here is as that of a boat which carries those who want to travel and transports them from the shore to the large ship.

So, the boat's task is confined to transporting from the shore to the ship without exceeding that, while the Ship sails to the deep seas, seas of Divine knowledge and witnessing the Godly Perfection.

Thus, the ship is only one, whereas the boats which transship travelers to it are many.

When this guider dies, his function will end and move to another alive one after him. To such spiritual coupling with God's Envoy the Noble Verses refers as God says: **{Verily, the prophet is always communicating with Allah, and His angels are communicating with him. You who believe, communicate, then, with him and submit whole heartedly}**.

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 33, Al-Ahzab (The Combined Clans), Verse 56*

The Almighty Allah has ordered all the believers to adhere to and bind up with this Noble Messenger and never separate their spirits from him, this meaning is confirmed to you within God's saying: **{And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, and never separate yourselves from him}**.

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 3, Al 'Imran (The Family of 'Imran), Verse 103*

This Rope is but God's Envoy (cpth).

As for following the guidance of the guiders coming after the Envoy (cpth), it is referred to by the Noble Verses, God says: **{Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining favor and forbidding disgraceful acts. And it is they who are the successful}** (the doers of what results in good for them).

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 3, Al 'Imran (The Family of 'Imran), Verse 104*

After the Messenger, these guiders invite you to proceed the path of right.

So, if you follow their guidance got from God's Messenger; the confidence in God's satisfaction with you will arise in your spirit there upon, you will approach towards the almighty Allah, and by such approaching, the perfection will be imprinted on your spirit,

so you will love the owners of perfection, love your leader and guider. then, through him you will shift to the love of God's Envoy as mentioned before.

What did Our Master Noah invite his people to?

Our Master Noah began with inviting his people to worship Al'lah alone. Such inviting to worship only Al'lah is the soul of all the heavenly religions and the essence of the whole Envoys' mission, to that the Noble Verses indicate, God says: **{ Indeed, We sent Noah to his people and he said: "O my people! Worship Al'lah! You have no other God but Him. Certainly, I fear for you the torment of a Great Day!}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 7, Al-A'raf (The Heights), Verse 59*

Al'lah also says: **}And to 'Ad (people, We sent) their brother Hud. He said: "O my people! Worship Al'lah! You have no other God but Him".}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 7, Al-A'raf (The Heights), Verse 65*

Al'lah the Almighty says too: **}And to Thamud (people, We sent) their brother Saleh. He said: "O my people! Worship Al'lah! You have no other God but Him"}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 7, Al-A'raf (The Heights), Verse 73*

}And to (the people of) Midian, (We sent) their brother Shu'aib. He said: "O my people! Worship Al'lah! You have no other God but Him".}

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 7, Al-A'raf (The Heights), Verse 85*

Thus, every Envoy was inspired by God to invite his people to worship only Al'lah.

The Noble Verse indicates that fact, God says: }**And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Mohammad) but We inspired him that there is no God but Me, so worship Me (Alone and none else).}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 25*

It is intended by worshipping Al'lah the Almighty, to obey Him by applying His orders without obeying anyone beside Him.

That is our Master Noah's mission and the whole messengers' (*Peace is through him and them*).

Since the call for worshipping Al'lah requires acquainting people with Him; therefore God's saying: " **Worship Al'lah** " was always followed by His saying: "**You have no other God but Him**", Revealing to them that God is Who deserves obedience and there is no other god beside Him, for God is the Controller whose Hand organizes the affairs of the universe and directs all the creatures it contains whatever they are: Small or big, grander or minute:

The sun, the moon, the Earth, the planet, the wind, the clouds, the rains, the thunderbolts, the lightning, the thunders, Man and animal and even each of the Creatures moves by the Command of this Provider, He is alone the Driver of all that and the Responsible of steering them.

After acquainting his people with the necessity of obeying Allah Whom there is no God but Him, our Master Noah (cpth) wanted to draw their attention to the cosmic signs under their sights which indicate to God's Omnipotence, Might and Wisdom in managing His creatures' needs, so that if they think about the creation of Heavens and Earth, and the signs they include, they might magnify and remember their Provider; consequently their spirits would submit and surrender to Him.

To those signs (cosmic wonders) which our Master Noah had called his people's attention to, the Noble Verses indicate as God says:

{why do not you aspire to revere Al'lah * although he has created you in gradual stages * See you not how Al'lah has created the seven heavens one above another. * And has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp. * Allah has brought you forth from the Earth like a plant; *

Afterwards He will return you into it, and bring you forth again *

And Al'lah has made for you the earth wide spread * so that you may advance in great strides in faith – through it.}

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 71, Noah, Verses 13-20*

Through these Verses you can see that the belief which is not based upon thinking and contemplation, and does not produce in its owner's spirit revering and glorifying the Creator, is unprofitable and unavailing for its possessor.

In order to be straight within his Creator's Command and worship Him sincerely; man should precisely think, consider and contemplate this universe a speculation and contemplation that are originated from the sincerity of seeking the knowledge that makes its owner acquainted with the Creator and reaching the truth.

If the spirit was so truthful, then it resorted to think of this universe, its consideration would certainly lead it to glorify this universe, consequently to magnify and revere the Creator. Thereupon, it will yield and comply submissively with Him, driven Willingly to obey Him, it will worship God truly, abide by and apply brought by the Noble Envoy where it dares not breaking His orders or disobeying Him in anything.

Yes, it (the spirit) will submit and surrender to its Creator and no doubt, this will make it confident of His Satisfaction with it, so it will turn its face towards Him.

To this important point the reported invocation of the Prophet's Saying – Mohammad (cph) – refers when he says, **“O, God of all!**

You alone we worship, with You alone we communicate and to You alone we prostrate”.

So, if man worships and obeys His Provider Properly, he will be able to communicate with Him, that is to enter into Allah Presence and attain the spiritual communication with Him.

Absolutely, this link and true facing purify spirit from the dirties of wicked desires as the Godly light cleanses the spirit from what had been attached to it, so it will be pure, immaculate and having the finery of perfection and virtue .

By my life! That is the only way leading to refine the human spirits and uplift them to the highest positions of perfection and humanity; for the noble moralities are obtained from Allah and to Him, alone, the seekers of reaching virtue return as He is the Owner of Supreme Attributes and the Source of endless perfection.

Praise be to Al'lah, with all His Supreme Names the Provider of all worlds.

Questions:

- 1- What thoughts about the idols did the people of our Master Noah (pth) have in their mind? What requirements did they want to get through these idols?
- 2- Why does the Almighty God order humankind to link their spirits (hearts) to their Noble Envoys (cptt)?
- 3- How did idols- worshipping come into existence?
- 4- The Almighty God says: **And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Al'lah, and never separate yourselves from him...}** Who is the Rope of Al'lah? What is the way to hold it fast?
- 5- Explain the Noble call of the Envoy (cpth) (“**O, God of all! You alone we worship, with You alone we communicate and to You alone we prostrate**”)?

Lesson Twenty One
The Story of Our Master Noah (pth) (Part Two)

The damnation of the people of our Master Noah (pth)

Our dear students:

Our Master Noah (pth) invited his people to worship only God according to His command so he said what was mentioned in the Noble Verses, **{O my people! Worship Al'lah! You have no other God but Him.}**.

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 7, Al-A'raf (The Heights), Verse 65*

In order to acquaint them with their Provider he drew their attention to His creatures as we had seen.

But, unless the human spirit was determined to seeking the truth and desired, Voluntarily, to reach it and to be of its owners, neither reminiscence nor advice would profit it.

Such was the case of these people with their Envoy.

They did not care about all what they had heard, moreover, they wondered at the coming of a Divine reminder from their Provider through a mortal (man) like themselves.

They said what was mentioned in the Noble Verses: **{...We see you but a man like ourselves, nor do we see any follow you but the junior of us who are new at conceiving – giving opinion. And we do not see in you any merit above us, in fact we think you are liars.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 11, Hud, Verse 27*

To this meaning the Noble Verse indicates, God says: **{But the chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said: "He is no more than a human being like you, he seeks to make himself superior to you. Had Allah willed, He surely could have sent**

down angels; never did we hear such a thing among our fathers of old}

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 23, Al-Muminun (The Believers), Verse 24*

The argumentation between our Master Noah and his people lasted long but they showed him nothing except stubbornness and opposition.

To that the Noble Verse refers, God Says: **{The leaders of his people said: “Verily, we see you in plain error.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 7, Al-A'raf (The Heights), Verse 60*

And they also said: **{‘He is only a man in whom is madness, so wait for him a while.} That is, he will surely die.**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 23, Al-Muminun (The Believers), Verse 25*

When they despaired of making him stop announcing his mission; they threatened him saying: **{They said: “If you cease not, O Noah! You will surely be among those stoned (to death).}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 26, Ash-Shu'ara' (The Poets), Verse 25*

In spite of all the indicative signs to Allah which our Master Noah had revealed to his folk, they said to him as the others said to our Master Hud (cpth), God says: **{They said: “O Hud! No evidence have you brought us, and we shall not leave our gods for your (mere) saying! And we are not believers in you. * “All that we say is that some of our gods have seized you with evil (madness)...}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 26, Hud, Verses 53-54*

That is, you are a man harmed by our gods so they veiled your spirit from the truth and let you say what you say.

As for “And we are not believers in you”: it indicates the unavoidable state of all spirits with their Envoys and guider in case they have not thought about the universe and recognize its Creator through it.

The recommendation of their messenger or guider would add them nothing but more intention and more arrogance; furthermore, they would neither pay attention to this adviser nor appreciate his rank.

For one thousand years excluding fifty good ones, our Master Noah kept inviting his people to Allah caring of nothing against their opposition, to that, the Noble Verse refers, God says: **{and he stayed among them a thousand years save fifty good ones.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 29, Al-Ankaboot, Verse 14*

After all that their response was no more than to say: **{They said: “O Noah! You have disputed with us and much have you prolonged the dispute with us, now bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful. * He said: “Only Allah will bring it (the punishment) on you, if He will, and then you will escape not. *[26] “And my advice will not profit you, even if I wish to give you good counsel, if Allah wants to tempt you. He is your Provider and to Him you shall return.”}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 26, Hud, Verses 32-34*

You might ask:

‘What is intended by the statement **‘If Allah wants to tempt you’?**

I say, the spirit’s cure of the germ of its wicked desires cannot be attained except by its approaching towards Allah and its absolute facing to Him.

Such facing and approaching are achieved by one of two ways:

1- Man may proceed to think and consider in this universe voluntarily, coupling this thinking and consideration with

truthfulness in seeking the truth as we have already seen and there, his thinking will lead him to magnify these creatures.

Consequently, he shifts to confess the presence of the Almighty Creator and submit to His Majesty and His Great omnipotence fearing Him.

This fear incites him to be straight within God's orders and to obey Him.

Then, when man reaches this stage – the stage of straightness-; self- confidence will arise in the spirit for being sure of God's satisfaction with it.

Thereupon, it will whole heartedly approach towards Him. Thereby Godly light shines upon it and spreads through its sides where it clears every wickedness and dirt from the spirit and uproots the germ of its evilness just as how the sunshine which enters into a room clears the influences of the mold, or as how the directed rays towards the infected part of the body kill the germs settled in it, and that is only an approximate example.

2- But, what can be done if the spirit became pleased with the lower life and leant on it?.

How can this spirit draw nearer to the Almighty Al'lah while its yearning has become very influential with and fully controlled over it till it (its yearning) stood as an obstructing block and a veiling screen between this spirit and its Creator?.

Beyond doubt, such being the case, the spirit can never approach towards Al'lah unless this yearning is taken out of it.

When this happened and the spirit's field became unoccupied, the phase of treatment and cure would start.

So, God afflicts this man with sorts of troubles, calamities, anguishes, and distresses that make him invoke and resort to his Creator.

After that, God the Almighty draws off the hardship and reassures this distressed man so that he may remember his Creator's

Kindness after lifting his distress and appreciate His benevolence upon him. Then, he would soundly think and hence he would know his Provider the proper knowledge which leads him to draw nearer to Him.

That is the second way that leads to entering into Allah's Presence.

Here in, God's Favor upon man appears to you, as does the meaning of the statement '**..If Allah wants to tempt you**': It reveals that God, the Almighty, adorns to the sick spirit its deed in order to take its wicked desire out of it.

This situation is similar to that of the doctor who flavors the medicine for the patient when he adds sugar and flavors to it.

Then God follows the yearning's fulfillment and the spirit's emptiness from this yearning with kinds of affliction that is to say, with the treatment which leads to approaching towards God and to the true face-directing to Him for uprooting the germs of wickedness from the spirit and purifying it from the seed which causes generating lusts.

God, the Almighty, says: **{And indeed, We will make them taste the lightest torment before the greatest torment in order that they may repent and return. }**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 32, As-Sajda, Verse 214*

People's reaction towards affliction

Having known what is meant by the word 'temptation' and the Godly Purpose beyond the hardship and distress, we can say, people's reaction towards disaster, are divided into two categories:

1- Some plead to God when they are afflicted by it. Those, their spirits have the ability to be cured.

So, if God drives away the hardship and the distress from them, then they appreciate His charity and Kindness, and follow the way

leading to approach Him, that will be a cause of curing and purifying their spirits from the wickedness.

2- The other ones do not plead to or invoke their Provider. Those, their spirits haven't the ability to be cured; therefore, they are before one of two states:

1- Either depriving them of their desires causes an excess of their disbelief and drawing far from God, and that is why the Almighty drives them all the lower lusts they like and grants them all their desires.

Then, when their spirits become free from every lust and they enjoy what they have been given, death will come to them.

To that case the Noble Verses indicate, God says: **{When Our Torment reached them, why then did they not plead? But their hearts became hardened, and Satan made fair-seeming to them that which they used to do. * So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened to them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them from this life, and lo! They were forfeiters (they were of no profit from all what God had given them).}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 6, Al-Anaam, Verses 43-44*

2- Or giving them their desires will cause their aggression and harm to increase; therefore, God the Almighty, deprives them of their desires in order to stop their harm and to limit their trespass and seeking to rid their spirits of the desires that they are clung to, calamities continue afflicting them and growing more and more till their spirit renounces and loathes their lusts.

To the case of such man the Noble Verse refers, God says: **{And though We had mercy on them and removed the distress which is on them, still they would obstinately persist in their transgression, wandering blindly.}**

The Holy Qur'an,

Fortress 23, Al-Muminun (The Believers), Verse 75

Our Master Noah invoked God to pass his people away as a mercy to them:

Through this explanation we have revealed, you see that the Godly Wisdom treats each one according to his status; thus man's term of death does not come unless God clears out his spirit from all its lusts.

As for those who did not believe, although their spirits became devoid of their desires, but the germ – of lusts – is still settled inside them.

So, if God prolonged their lives more than their certain date of death, they would not have any profit; moreover, that germ would reproduce and arouse the lust inside them afresh.

Therefore, out of Allah's Mercifulness upon them, they die at their appointed term exactly, with no delay nor advancing. To this meaning the Noble Verse refers, God says: **{And if they were returned (to the world), they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 6, Al-Anaam, Verse 28*

For this reason, when God told our Master Noah that no one more of his people would believe save those who had believed – and that is what the Noble Verse indicates when God says: **{And it was inspired to Noah: "None of your people will believe except those who have believed already.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 11, Hud, Verse 28*

So, our Master Noah asked Allah to have mercy upon his folk by death in order to put an end to their harm and to lessen the spiritual torture and the pain of their eternal loss hereafter. To that the Noble Verse indicates, God says: **{And Noah said: My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth! * If You leave**

them, they will mislead Your obedient, and they will beget none but dissolute an excessive unbeliever.}

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 71, Noah, Verse 27*

Thus, the invocation of our Master Noah for his folk was not mercilessness nor misdeed, on the contrary it was merely mercy and tenderness upon them.

God, the Almighty, responded to the Invocation of our Master Noah and to that the Noble Verse refers, God says: **{. And indeed Noah invoked Us, and We are the Best of those who answer (the request).}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 71, Noah, Verse 75*

The statement 'We are the Best of those who answer (the request)' clarifies that our Master Noah's invocation for his folk was very exactly suitable for them and within the graciousness and justice.

The destruction of Noah's people:

So, when it was the appointed time of their utter destruction; God the Almighty, ordered His Messenger to make the ark, and to that the Noble Verse refers, God says: **{And construct the ship under Our Eyes and with Our Inspiration, and address Me not on behalf of those who oppressed themselves; they are surely to be drowned.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 11, Hud, Verse 37*

The statement 'and address Me not on behalf of those who oppressed themselves' reveals the superfluity of this Noble Messenger's sympathy and compassion upon his folk.

God ordered His Apostle to load the ark with only two couples of each species he would need.

To that the Noble Verses indicates, God says: **{(So it was) till then there came Our Command and the headwater gushed forth (water like fountains from the earth). We said: “Embark therein, two couples (male and female) of each kind you would need and your family, except him against whom the Word has already gone forth, and those who believe. And none believed with him, except a few.}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 11, Hud, Verse 40*

The ‘headwaters’ is the source of water, and the statement ‘the headwater gushed forth’ means that the springs of water broke out intensely and jetted strongly.

“Embark therein, two couples (male and female) of each kind you would need”: God ordered His Envoy to embark therein the ship only two couples of each kind he would need, because it is useless to carry two couples of every creature God has created on the Earth’s surface.

What occurs to mind and according to the Godly Justice, that God inspired to the spirits of all the other animals of that area which the flood overwhelmed, to run away stampeding to faraway lands; as the flood did not spread all over the earth.

It befell just that limited tract which man had populated, for – at that time – people were one nation living on one spot of the land; while the other areas were uninhabited.

As soon as our Master Noah and those who had believed embarked the ship, the Heaven’s gates were opened with water – rains – falling heavily and the water flowed out through springs from the earth. the Noble Verses indicate that, God says: **{So We opened the gates of heaven with water pouring forth. * And We caused the earth to gush forth with springs. So the waters (of the heaven and the earth) met for a matter predestined. * And We carried him on a (ship) made of planks and dowels, sails under Our Eyes, a reward for him who had been rejected.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 54, Al-Qamar, Verses 11-14*

Then the surface of this area became overwhelmed with water, the waves towered up increasingly, and the ship set to sail through mountainous waves.

To that the Noble Verses refer, God says: **{So it (the ship) sailed with them amidst the waves like mountains, and Noah called out to his son, who had separated himself (apart), “O my son! Embark with us and be not with the disbelievers. * The son replied: “I will betake myself to a mountain, it will save me from the water.” Noah said: “This day there is no saviour from the Decree of Allah except him on whom He has mercy.” And a wave came in between them, so he (the son) was among the drowned. * And it was said: “O earth! Swallow up your water, and O sky! Withhold (your rain).” And the water was diminished (made to subside) and the Decree (of Allah) was fulfilled (i.e. the destruction of the people of Noah. and the whole states were regulated – settled – at best,, and it was said: “Away with the people who are unjust. * And Noah called upon his Lord and said, “O my Lord! Verily, my son is of my family! And certainly, Your Promise is true, and You are the Most Just of the judges. * He said: “O Noah! Surely, he is not of your family; verily, his work is unrighteous }**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 11, Hud, Verses 42-46*

Through these Noble Verses, it is cleared that if man's deed becomes bad, none will drive the torment away from him or shelter him from God's punishment.

Whoever that draws far from God, his deed would certainly return on him in accordance with Godly Justice and Compassion.

God, the Almighty, has kept an everlasting lesson for us out of this story in order to make us know that he who does not pay attention to God's signs (cosmic wonders) or give thought to what He has

created, can never see the truth nor will he be guided to it, and then, his destruction is inevitable.

But when the affliction occurs, God Saves His believing worshippers.

He the Almighty says: **{... so We saved him and those along with him in the ship, and We drowned those who belied Our revelations. They were indeed blind people.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 7, Al-A'raf (The Heights), Verse 64*

God also says: **{Then see what was the end of those who were warned (but heeded not) except Allah's true-selected-obedient.}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 37, As-Saaffat, Verses 73-74*

Praise be to God, the Provider of the worlds.

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- Why was our Master Noah (pth) arguing his people to contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth?
- 2- The Almighty God says: **{...If Allah wants to tempt you.}** what is the meaning of the word “temptation” in this Verse?
- 3- What is the reason behind the distress and agony which afflict some people?
- 4- What did our Master Noah (pth) embark therein the ship and why did he do so?
- 5- Our Master Noah (pth), what is the meaning of his noble name ”Noah”?
- 6- Our Master Noah couldn’t save his son from God's punishment, according to this explain the following Noble saying of our Master the Prophet Mohammad (cpth): **(Oh Fatima, daughter of Mohammad save yourself from the fire because I can avail you nothing in God’s will)?**

Lesson Twenty Two: Smashing the Idols

Our dear students:

The lesson today is about a great deed of our Master Ibrahim's (pth), and it is mentioned in the Holy Quran revealed from the Almighty God to be an immortal reminiscence for all humankind, these stories are not just ordinary tales or literary novels, but they are factual stories and true lessons by them evilness and falseness are destroyed and ended and the right is built and supported. Actually, all the stories in the Holy Quran have a moral lesson and everlasting benefit for the humans who seek and look for the truth.

Our Master Ibrahim (pth) grew up in a small town whose people worshipped idols, even his parents worshipped idols, but he was unlike them in their astray, he contemplated and thought about his creation (his body) and every sign around him, his contemplation led him to realize that idols couldn't be creators or providers then why would he have worshipped and appealed to them for his desires?

I “our master Ibrahim” have to request of and appeal to the Almighty God, not to an idol made by human's hand, this idol couldn't move from its place to another one, but it needs someone to move it...

His contemplation led him instantly to know that worshipping idols is a really foolish action...but alas it was a common thing among people, they inherited this worshipping and followed it from their grandfathers without any serious considering why would we not follow this wrong creed, even without any hint of right thinking about the bad results returned from this action!

On the other hand, our Master Ibrahim (pth) could through his thinking in the universe wonders (signs) be himself led to know the Almighty God and to witness that there is no god except Allah, which means that there is no controller and actuator in the universe except the Almighty God, after that he urged his people to attain

this true belief through their thinking of the universal signs, as previously had done, out of his love and compassion towards them, therefore our Master Ibrahim (pth) asked them, criticizing their false creed of worshipping idols, hoping to activate their thinking through his question, the Almighty God says: **{When he said to his father and his people: “what are these images, to which you are devoted?”}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya’ (The Prophets), Verse 52*

The word (images) means the idols, these stones which had been sculptured as ancient people and represented their images.

The word (devoted) means: to worship and to plunge into loving it the most.

After questioning them they answered: **{They said: “We found our fathers worshipping them”}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya’ (The Prophets), Verse 53*

Accordingly, they acknowledged within their answer that they followed their father’s way without any concerning the falsity of it, they worshipped those idols as their fathers had done.

Actually, human shouldn’t follow anyone without thinking if the way he follows is true or false. The Almighty God has bestowed a great jewel on human which is thought, that human could distinguish and investigate to find the truth.

Thus, our Master Ibrahim (pth), when he thought about everything of God’s signs and Creation, his thinking led him to the truth and to reject those idols.

He said (pth) to them: **{He said: “Indeed you and your fathers have been in manifest error.”}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya’ (The Prophets), Verse 54*

The word (**error**: straying from the right path) is the opposite of guiding, and the word (**manifest**) describe their error as an obvious and exposed one, therefore he (pth) told them that they were far away from the path of happiness and guidance, it was an obvious error as clear as the sun of the clear noon when you saw a man worshiped an idol! A stone which you sculptured by your own hands, how could it be a god!?! Did this stone create the human ears, eyes, hands and legs!?! Did it create him therein his mother womb then bring him out to this worldly life!?

It is necessary for human that they should contemplate the universe and think about the circulation of earth around itself where the day and the night are produced. How Grandeur is He the Almighty Who moves it in such circular movement, also human must contemplate how the rain comes down from the sky, the sun, the clouds, the winds, and how then this rain pours down through an organised way, isn't there a steering controlling Hand behind all that?! Man must think about the existence of the water and the springs in the earth, Who has created and controlled them?! about these Vitamins and nutrients found in foods and fruits, each fruit contains a different kind of them! Surly there is a creating steering Hand which puts these different nutrients in each fruit. Who does stop the sap from reaching the ripe fruits? If it is not so, they (the fruits) will continue to grow more and more, for example the apple will be in a huge and in a great unacceptable size, How Great is He Who esteems everything in a very proper balance?

Is it the idol who created the human, putting his organs each one in a special site of his body and all of that in his mother's womb? Absolutely no, so Who is the Creator then?

When they heard that declaration: they said: **{Have you brought us the truth, or are you one of those who play about}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 55*

They found that his revelation was true, but they were people of malicious spirits and limited thinking, so they didn't believe in

him, the truthful Envoy, because they thought that he made joking or he cheated them through his high speech.

Therefore, he replied: {**Nay, your lord is the lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them and of that I am one of the witnesses.**”}

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya’ (The Prophets), Verse 56*

The Verse {**Who created them**} means who brings them into being in a complete discipline, take a look at the universe and contemplate it profoundly, doesn’t it have a steering One who creates it and supplies it with life? Who did create the universe in such an arrangement and in a great order?

Who does arrange the four seasons and the day and the night?

Haven't you contemplated why the Almighty God created and arranged everything in this universe, and why He sent you to this worldly life?

As for his words {**I am one of the witnesses**} he means that if you want to witness this Divine truth, I can show you it, if you question me about anything of these heavens and earth I will answer you, I reveal to you the truth if you want. But they repelled his supreme logical revelation and thought that he could be joking and cheating them with his new words which they never heard before. By the way, the one who doesn’t think profoundly is the one who scares everything.

Because they repelled his logic and high revelation he argued them, therefore he (pth) decided to urge their thoughts in a practical way and determined to smash their idols to make them realize that they (the idols) had absolutely no power nor strength, so he drew up an elaborated plan to smash their idols and did it in a proper time,

The Almighty God says {**And by Allah, I shall plot a plan (to destroy) your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs**}

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 57*

The words **{And by Allah}** means that the whole Al'lah's steering and controlling of this universe is done within all His Supreme Names and whatever happens in the universe does not happen but by His Will for the human benefits and goodness.

And the Verse **{I shall plot a plan (to destroy) your idols}** means that he (pth) decided to wield a plan, through it he could destroy their idols completely. He said that in his noble spirit,

But didn't our Master Ibrahim (pth) recognize the consequences of that dangerous act?

Absolutely he did, he was the best one to recognize the consequences of this great procedure, and knew that his life would be the price for that great plan, for he would face a whole strong nation by himself, but he determined to make himself-sacrifice for the way of the Almighty God to guide his ignorant, astray and lost people who lost the hereafter of immortal paradises and bliss, all that was because they were worshipping idols, this silly worshipping would bring them the distress and misery in the worldly life and the Fire in the hereafter.

He determined to do a great thing and appeal to God to bless his deed, however, if the plan worked, it would be the reason to change all his people's life.

He was waiting for the right time to come, as his people were celebrating in an important, public celebration where everybody disported and spend the night there, thus our Master Ibrahim (pth) took the opportunity to enter the temple, carried an axe in his noble hand... through his premeditative decision he began to smash all the idols except the biggest one, he left it and hung the axe over it, making a big surprise for them where no human could imagine or conceive it in that time.

The Almighty God says **{So he broke them to pieces, (all) except the biggest of them, that they might turn to it}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 58*

The word (**pieces**) means they were turned into small parts which were thrown on the ground.

And the rest Verse **{that they might turn to it}** means that they (the people of our Master Ibrahim) might return to the Almighty God and awake from their unbelief, return to their thinking in order to be guided to the Divine Truth, thus if they had thought of these idols which were thrown in pieces on the ground, they would have realized that these idols had no strength nor power to defend themselves and the biggest one which was still unbroken among those idols, couldn't protect the rest of them and it had no power nor will, then they would know their astray and regret that they worshipped idols, therefore guiding them would be easier by giving them help getting them out of the darkness of disbelief to the Light of God and His Envoy.

The public celebration was almost finished, and that night was to end after it had witnessed what they had committed during it of evil deeds. They carried their burden on their necks, but they didn't know what that great youth had done with their idols, when the priests of the temple entered their temple they were astonished of what they had seen they opened their mouth and their eyes were constrained on that calamity in great sadness and pain.

The Almighty says: **{They said: "Who has done this to our gods? He must indeed be one of the wrong-doers".}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 59*

Among themselves **{They said: "We heard a young man talking (against) them who is called Ibrahim"}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 60*

The name "Ibrahim" means that our Master Ibrahim denied their worshipping idols and loved his Lord.

They decided to bring our Master Ibrahim (pth) to make sure and establish the truth of what they heard, they wanted to bring him before people in order that he might be known by people and to testify that he was the doer, they interrogated him and didn't give the sentence without hearing him, so their action denotes that all things and affairs of this universe are not controlled but by Al'lah's Will, otherwise, if this statement was not true, they would kill him promptly.

The Almighty Al'lah says: **{They said:”then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may testify”.**} ; they may testify that he was the doer.

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 61*

Our Master Ibrahim (pth) came in stable steps, walking in honour and superior strides, feeling proud of his great deed, the happiness clearly appeared in his noble face as he came to receive a great reward or a surprise gift! But actually he came into an impendent danger.

Whereas, he entered inside the temple, he found many faces full of extreme anger and rage, with eagerness to know what happened that night, then immediately they asked him:

{They said:”Are you the one who has done this to our gods, O Ibrahim”}: are you the one who destroyed our gods?

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 62*

Our master Ibrahim (pth) looked at the broken idols, then he looked at the biggest one with the axe pendent on it, and answered them:

{Ibrahim said: Nay, this one, the biggest of them did it, Ask them, if they can speak!}: “the biggest of them did it” it may answer you “Ask the m...” ask them who did that. He said that to them, they might think about their false worshipping, “**If they can speak**” if they could answer you about the one who did it.

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 63*

He stimulated their inactive thoughts in spite of their will, their worshipping idols turned their hearts and minds into stones, even though he (pth) stimulated their brains to think true.

Truly, it was a great plan which came out from a true believer and thinker with insight-eyed, so what will they answer him now?

They admitted and pronounced against their will that the idols didn't speak, therefore how could we ask them!

{So they turned to themselves...} they were astonished with his answer and realized their slander and hypocrisy and that all their deeds were wrong.

{And said: "Verily, you are the wrong-doers".} they acknowledged the truth and admitted that they were astray, they realized the Truth and returned to it. After that soon their voices became louder feeling ashamed of themselves that a young boy in an early age revealed that they, their fathers and grand fathers were astray, however, after having the clear proof with no false and no haze in it and their belief was confuted, they retreated and remained unbelievers. Satan had already returned to them whispering in their chests, so some said to others you left the gods without protection.

The Almighty Al'lah says: **{then they turned to themselves(their first thought and said): "Indeed you know well that these (idols) speak not}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 65*

The word **(turned to)** means that they retreated.

They returned from what they thought in their minds which were motivated by our Master Ibrahim (pth), to their false way and remained in their going astray, they said to each other: You are responsible for leaving the idols without protection, you should

protect them, whereas our master Ibrahim (pth) answered them strongly and firmly to put an end to their transgression and arrogance.

God says: **{Ibrahim said:”Do you then worship besides Allah, things that can neither profit you, nor harm you}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya’ (The Prophets), Verse 66*

What a silliness! You worshiped stones ... which are thrown pieces on the ground?

If those stones couldn’t defend themselves, then how could they harm or benefit you!? Answer me!

**{Fie upon you, and upon that which you worship besides Allah!
Don't you mind the Truth}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya’ (The Prophets), Verse 67*

The word (**Fie upon you**) means: what a silly way you adopt (**and upon that which you worship besides Allah**): your adopted way and continuing in such false thinking absolutely make me fed up with that. After I revealed the truth with logical knowledge and Divine proof, but you insist on remaining on your false belief even after I put you on the true track!

Truly it is a foolish act.

Why don’t you think that those idols have nothing, no power, no strength and unable to perform any act, the Almighty God gave you this valuable jewel, it is the thought which enables you to think and attain the Divine Truth, so why don’t you think in truth and leave your stray way behind!?

How is it to you to leave your God the Great Creator Who has favoured you with uncountable bounties and bestowed upon you all bliss! and go with a stray people who died long time ago!

Dear student,

You see that all the actions and sayings which our Master Ibrahim (pth) acted and said were full of honor, he was among them the high sublime ranked man while his people were in low rank. When those deviated people were clearly confuted, those of uncompassionate and inhuman full-hearted decided to burn our Master Ibrahim (pth) as a punishment for his great deed, his Divine call truly fell on deaf ears, actually they made their ears deaf and refused to listen to any logical proof of the great Envoy revelation.

The Almighty says: **{they said: “build for him a building, and throw him into the blazing fire”}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 37, As-Saffat, Verse 97*

They judged him to be thrown in fire, but he (pth) was very brave and didn’t care about their threatening because he was striving to guide them through any way:

God the Almighty says: **{And I fear not those whom you associate with Allah in worship...}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 6, Al-An’am (Livestock), Verse 80*

The people of his village emblazed a fire for several days until the blaze of the fire became high and reached the sky, they wanted him to be as a lesson that no one would dare to touch their idols again, but the Almighty God wanted to show them a great miracle through their own hands and the fire they prepared and emblazed.

The Almighty says: **{They said: “Burn him and help your gods, if you will be doing”}**

*The Holy Qur’an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya’ (The Prophets), Verse 68*

They couldn’t get near the fire which they had emblazed because of the sever blazing of it, therefore they invented the ballista (striking machine) to put him on it and throw him upon the fire.

Indeed, the Almighty God allowed them to carry out their harmful plan with the consent of our master Ibrahim (pth), he determined to sacrifice himself to make them see a miracle in order to be guided... When they put him on the ballista in order to throw him upon the fire, Gabriel (PBUH) came to our Master Ibrahim and asked him: Did you need anything? He (pth) said: From you nothing, then Gabriel said: Then from God? Ibrahim said: I don't need to ask as long as He is aware of my state, O my brother, leave me.

Dear student, according to this marvellous conversation you can recognize easily that our Master Ibrahim (pth) knew well that the Almighty God is full of sympathy and mercy.

When they threw our Master Ibrahim (pth) upon the fire, **{We said: "O fire! Be you coolness and safety for Ibrahim"}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 69*

Accordingly, before their eyes he got out from their great fire without any burn or any harm resulted from the ballista cast, he (pth) got out with his head uplifted and face shinning more than the full-moon in the dark night, all what he desired from his people was to throw evil out of their wicked spirit and to be guided to the Almighty, their Provider and Creator.

But unfortunately, despite that great miracle they didn't appreciate or esteem him, they were neither guided by a logical Divine fact which he had revealed before nor by the present miracle which happened before their eyes, moreover they determined and insisted on their destroying shunning.

{And they wanted to harm him, but we made them the worst losers}

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 70*

The statement (wanted to harm) means that they had managed or planned to harm him through burning him with the fire in return for his deed of smashing their idols to be as a lesson for everyone.

The words (**worst losers**) means great loss; there is a lost person, more lost person and the most lost person, this later is the one who has the greatest forfeiture.

Those people resisted our master Ibrahim (pth) and therefore they lost the paradise prepared to them by Al'lah which he could lead them to if they would believe in God and his Envoy (our Master Ibrahim), therefore their loss was great and intensive.

Alternatively, he left them, leaving their issue to the Almighty God.

It is very important to recognize that after he got out unscathed from the fire no one of the whole nation dared to touch or hurt him, however all what happened to him happened according to God's Will to be a miracle for his people to see that the Envoy of God couldn't be burnt by fire, therefore they would believe him and follow his Divine instructions, but they shunned him and repelled against his guidance, accordingly he (pth) abandoned them emigrating to another area searching for another people who might glorify the Guidance of the Almighty God and follow Its instructions.

The Almighty says: **{He said: I will emigrate for the sake of my lord, Verily He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 29, Al-Ankabout, Verse 26*

Questions:

- 1- How did our Master Ibrahim (pth) attain the true belief in the Almighty God?
- 2- Why did our Master Ibrahim (pth) want to smash the idols?
- 3- Did our Master Ibrahim (pth) estimate the consequences of his deed when he smashed the idols?
- 4- Explain this Holy Verse, the Almighty God says **{So he broke them to pieces, all except the biggest of them, that they might turn to it}**?
- 5- Was our master Ibrahim (pth) afraid when the people of his town called to question him about smashing the idols? How did he come?
- 6- Why did the Almighty God allow those people to apply their harmful judge on our Master Ibrahim (pth) by throwing him upon fire? Why did not the fire burn our master Ibrahim (pth)?
- 7- Is the speech and the answer of our master Ibrahim (pth) when he said, (that the responsibility of smashing the idols was that of the biggest one) considered as a lie or as a sin?! Or was it the most suitable speech on that state?!

Exercises:

Contemplate the hearing system of yours which the Almighty God bestowed upon you, these ears which collect the voices and make you able to know what happens around you, think deeply of this system. Then, mention the wisdom and the benefit, which you get through your thinking, behind the creating of this system.

***Lesson Twenty Three:
The Plot to Murder an Eminent Officer***

Dear students:

The true sincere scholars are the inheritors of the Envoys of God, as we saw in the previous lesson when the people of our Master Ibrahim (pth) decided to burn him with fire, the criminals in this story also decided to kill the great scholar M. A. Sheikho (God has sanctified his soul)...but why?

The alarm bell should be ringing... the criminals have agreed unanimously to kill our officer, M. A. Sheikho! Will it be the end of our officer? Or will God defend and keep him?

Be with us, dear student, as this exciting story unfolds!

Indeed, our courageous officer dedicated his life to getting rid of criminals and cleansing the state of al-Sham [27] of them and their evil actions and inhumane deeds. He took an oath to his Provider once he had graduated from the military faculty of Amber as an officer. He swore that he would devote no time to himself as long as deception reared its evil head and prevailed. He would dedicate everything in his power to wipe it out and to support the truth and establish justice... and he set to work to achieve that exactly.

That period was the golden time for crime and criminals, when no man felt safe after sunset unless he were in his own home.

Once he took up his position as a security officer M. Amin dedicated his life to obliterating vice and criminality. He slept rarely, going to his work early in the morning and not returning until dawn the following day just to snatch a few hours of much needed sleep. Both night and day his pursuit of criminals was relentless. He broke into their hiding places, thwarted their schemes and confounded their criminal deeds, until they were beaten into submission.

Eventually there remained no more than thirty criminals who were, by then, in prison and he punished them even further when he

discovered that after he had arrested them and sent them to prison they resorted to bribes and intermediaries to arrange for the court to discharge them. It was clear that they had not repented of their crimes and consequently they were still afflicted by the evil that they imposed on other people.

For example, he prepared an ambush for one of the criminals as he returned one night, drunk and disorderly. The drunkard was surprised when the soldiers pounced upon him, threw him on the ground and tied up his feet, then Officer Sheikho lashed the soles of his feet until the blood flowed, then he had him untied and said, 'Listen to me you evil-minded drunkard! Carry on drinking wine every day and you'll find me waiting to give you a warm welcome every time!' The criminal groaned and pleaded but then thought better of it: it would be a high price to pay for the pleasure of drinking too much wine. And that put an end to this man's bouts of drunkenness!

This is just one simple example of our officer's approach when dealing with such criminals.

He was remorseless... he harassed them everywhere... closed every path open to them and plunged into their dens (taverns and such like places) until they were forced to disband and crushed them so that some of them fled to Iraq, others were imprisoned, and some others repented. However, the remaining few grouped together to discuss their situation as they realised how dangerous their lives of crime had now become, and to consider what the best solution might be.

During this get-together, the criminals spoke about their past days of glory and heroism which they could no longer even dream of! 'Do you remember,' they said, 'the days when the market would close if just one of us went there, and how people got off the roads if they saw us... Ah! What days of power and glory they were! Whereas now, we just want to be safe... should we put up with this situation? We should be ashamed of ourselves... ashamed!'

They wondered how it was that one man could break up their unity, destroy their power and overcome them. ‘No,’ they said, ‘we don’t believe what’s happening... we have to find a solution and decide how to tackle it by tomorrow... we’ll kill him whatever the cost may be... we’re so desperate that we don’t care if some of us go down while getting rid of him. The most important thing is to kill him even if a few of us are killed... there’s just one of him but there are a lot of us... we’ve got to get rid of him now so we can get back to our previous position of power whereby we’re not controlled by anyone but we control whoever we want.’ They eventually reached their decision at midnight after much talking and scheming.

Remember! This evil crime was being planned to murder Officer Sheikho who had established peace, justice and safety in al-Sham, the place of the Prophet’s descent and the cradle of Divine messages.

That particular evening, suspecting nothing untoward, M. Amin went home and went to sleep. He reasoned that safety and security had been stabilised and there was no need to be alert all night as usual, as the criminal gang had been broken down and peace prevailed.

But... there was something strange... he felt an odd feeling as if a noose was being slowly tightened around his neck.

Our officer thought to himself, ‘I hope it’s nothing bad... maybe there’s something wrong at the headquarters... I’d better go at once to check if all is well.’

He got up from bed, put on his military uniform again and, armed with his pistol, he left for the headquarters without telling his wife who was sleeping soundly, completely unaware of his absence.

On the way, he met a sluggish drunkard staggering across the road, colliding with one wall and scraping along another, reeling right and left and about to fall, then trying to stand up, but swaying like a leaf in the wind. It was the same drunken sot that he had

disciplined a few days ago, so he slapped and cuffed him a couple of times to get him to sober up enough to understand what he, Officer Sheikho, had to say to him, and in the hope that he would remember his words of advice this time.

Immediately, the officer spoke to him in a stern voice, ‘I thought you had repented your past behaviour and promised me that you wouldn’t go back to your old ways! Have you become a drunkard again?’ Then he left him and continued on his way to the headquarters, walking fast, as he felt a sense of unease and needed to monitor the situation there.

As for the criminals, they had finished their meeting and gone out to put their plan into action at whatever cost to themselves.

Officer Sheikho, their arch enemy, was only one man against their twenty-two, so even if one or two of them were killed in the process they didn’t care. One of the criminals went off to look for him and to find out whether he was at the headquarters or not. If he was there, they would all attack and surely they would manage to kill him even if some of them were killed, and the rest could go back to enjoying their old life of crime happy in the knowledge that there was no longer anyone with the tenacity and courage to pursue them.

The criminal reached the headquarters before Officer Sheikho arrived, and when he did not find him there, he returned to his gang and told them that the officer must be at home. This was good news for them, for it would be much easier to kill him in his house where he would be alone and have no police back-up.

By God’s Will they rushed off in a different direction to that which Officer Sheikho had followed... and when they reached his house, they drew their weapons and all attacked it, with their evil intentions seemingly written clearly across their faces.

In the meanwhile, as mentioned before, our officer had arrived at the headquarters. The criminals launched their united attack on the house of M. Amin (as they thought!) but by God’s Will they got

the wrong door and smashed the door of his neighbour's house instead. And while all this was going on, that drunken sot whom Amin had just disciplined, arrived on the scene... where he flared up and shouted at the gang in the loudest voice possible (keep in mind, reader, that he was quite drunk!): You dogs...! What are you doing? You fools...! And he heaped abuse upon them – because of his drunken state – so the band of criminals thought that the drunkard was, in fact, their opponent, the noble officer, so they left the door and jumped upon him. They thought, in the darkness of the night, that he was the chief officer who rarely slept at night... and that it was he who was defending his own house... and that their prey had walked straight into their hands. How wrong they were! They fired at their target... and he fell down covered in blood. They fired, and fired again, until every part of his body was riddled with bullets: his feet, legs, head and chest, and then, their pistols empty, they had quenched their thirst for revenge. They quickly turned tail and left him where he was, on the ground, dead. In their eagerness to get rid of Officer Sheikho and to make a quick getaway, they had failed to notice that the man was just a drunken passer-by.

After some time, our officer went home having visited the headquarters and checked the situation there: he saw that all was secure, calm and peaceful, and the unease that he had felt earlier was now dispelled. But then he was surprised at the terrible clamour that cut through the night... people were shouting... and he was astonished to see the drunkard whom he had disciplined, lying on the ground dead and blood-stained.

Fortunately none of this hubbub or sound of shooting reached the ears of Mohammad Amin's wife because God's Wisdom had ensured that she remained asleep and in blissful ignorance of the whole affair.

In fact, Al'lah the Merciful willed that because if she had woken up and not found her husband at home, she would have guessed that he was involved in a bad situation and been extremely concerned about his safety.

But it was God's Will that saved Officer M. Amin, defender of the truth and destroyer of the pillars of evil and its supporters: **“You who believe! If you help Al’lah, He will help you and make you stand firm.”** [28]

In fact it was Al’lah who turned the criminals towards the wrong direction so that they failed in their quest... they caused Officer Sheikho no harm and He spared him their attack, for **“Whenever they kindle the fire of war, Al’lah will put it out. They try to spread corruption in the land, but Al’lah does not love those who corrupt.”** [29]

In his spirit M. Amin always addressed all criminals by saying, ‘You will perish because of your rage unless you turn away from your crimes... if not... woe betide all that is evil and the people who perpetrate it.’

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- What was the pledge which the great scholar M. Amin Sheikho gave to the Almighty God after his graduation as a security officer from the military college?
- 2- How was the security situation in Damascus city in the latest of Ottoman era?
- 3- How were the criminals getting out from the prisons after the brave officer M. Amin arrested them?
- 4- What speech did the brave officer M. Amin talk with the criminal who had been fallen in the ambush, after he had disciplined and punished him?
- 5- Why did the rest of the criminals, who were outside the prisons, decide to kill the brave officer M. A. Sheikho?
- 6- What is the Godly wisdom behind the deep sleeping which the wife of the eminent scholar sank into, that she didn't hear the sounds of the shootings near her house?

Lesson Twenty Four:

The Loyal Guardians

A great Epic Against Deprivation and Inhumanity (Part One)

As we saw previously in the story of “The Plot to Murder an Eminent Officer” how the criminals tried to kill the brave officer M. A. Sheikho and how it was failed by the Almighty God's Will.

{And he is the irresistible, above His slaves, and He is the All-Wise, Well-Acquainted with all things }

The Holy Qur'an,

Fortress 21, Al-Anbiya' (The Prophets), Verse 18

Through many true stories we haven't mentioned yet, one comes to learn how the great man, M. A. Sheikho, was able to wipe out crime and the criminals who had perpetrated it. He removed the darkness that hovered over al-Sham[30] and changed it into a place of peace and tranquillity seeking no help but that of God Almighty. Some criminals even arranged a plot to get rid of this illustrious officer and planned to murder him. Those criminals were hardened murderers who had drifted into a life of crime from a young age, and had many lives and spirits on their conscience.

On the other hand, there were men who became criminals because there was little work for them, or perhaps they were victims of circumstance, whereby their standard of living was very low and hard times befell them. And so, deprivation and poverty, lack of food, the hunger pangs of their children, and their turning to alcohol as a means to numb their emotional pain, were the reasons they gradually slipped into a life of crime. So how should he deal with them? What would be the best approach that he could adopt so as to distinguish them from the hardened criminals and to turn them away from their iniquitous life-style and also rescue their families and children from an obscure future? How did this great reformer convert al-Sham's night into bright days that lasted for many years? [31]

With worthiness and competence:

Our dear students:

The scientists as the famous British scientist sir John Benet [32] , the great author Mustafa Mahmud[33] and many other great scientists were amazed how the humane scholar Mohammad Amin Sheikho (his soul has been sanctified by Al'lah) could alone have all that sublime revelation whereas no human could come up with any Divine knowledge like it.

In fact, the most important reason for sending down that sublime Divine revelation which the Almighty Al'lah has sent down into the great scholar's heart was his great humane sacrifices and deeds, that is God rewards human according to the goodness degree of his deeds and humane sacrifices, so through his absolute devotion to God and unlimited sacrificing his money and soul to the way of God to establish the Divine Truth, and helping people who were in need of his help, so the Almighty God helped him and sent down that sublime Divine knowledge to him that has bewildered the scientists and attracted thoughts and hearts of those of thoughtful person.

It is a life journey but not like any other journey, it is a life which is full of strife, sacrifice, help, support and selflessness. If he did a good deed that had been offered to him and estimated it as a slight one, in fact it was always very great deed that many others couldn't do.

He thought that he gave nothing but actually he gave everything, as Al'lah's Envoy (cph) said: **(O my God, let me see myself small by my eyes and great by the eyes of the people).**

He appealed to God after any deed he did, truly he was in a continuous appealing to the Almighty God. He was always striving to save people from the darkness of being away from God to the Light of nearness of Al'lah the Almighty.

The great miracle was that Officer M. Amin enrolled seventy of the lesser criminals as security guards to protect the whole country,

people's homes and man's honour, and so he brought joy not only to their lives but also to their families and their fellow countrymen.

After the Ottoman Empire had turned away from the teaching of God's Book and replaced it with temporal systems and laws written by man, the fortunes of the empire took a turn for the worse. Weakness started to erode the heart of the state till it was completely overcome and the West began to call it 'the sick man'. That was the situation in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. So, it is no wonder that disorder spread and corruption prevailed in different parts of Greater Syria that were subject to the rule of the empire.

Security quickly deteriorated, reassurance was confused and people suffered unenviable difficult circumstances. Furthermore, poverty and deprivation, plundering, and theft increased. The citizens felt the encroaching danger to the extent that as the sun set and darkness fell, the doors of the houses were locked and the streets soon emptied especially in the two quarters, of al-Salihiya and al-Akrad, because the vicious chaos was worse than it had ever been. Anyone foolish enough to leave his house after sunset could blame no-one but themselves if they became a prey for brigands and thieves or a target for others with criminal tendencies. It was not unusual for them to be set about and robbed, and often killed.

In the meantime, with regard to the status quo of this dreadful situation and as a security measure, the army commandant issued an urgent order that assigned our officer M. Amin as director of the al-Akrad quarter in Damascus and granted him full authority to do whatever he felt necessary to restore law and order and reassure the people. The commandant appointed him to this formidable task because he recognised his exceptional conduct and heroic feats carried out in the cause of law and order.

Our officer received the official document and soon made his way to that area. He then went to the administrative offices of the department: namely, the police-station. There, he set about formulating his ingenious plans to clean up all the criminal

elements till he eventually held the reins of power firmly in his hand. He steadily and surely got rid of all signs of neglect, disorder and aggression until he achieved a real sense of security as an outcome of his consistent efforts. He felt neither tired nor drowsy and his determination never deserted him. He spent many long sleepless nights in his efforts to stamp out criminality and transgression and remove evil-doing and vice whereby he pursued the wrongdoers, arrested them, and inflicted the severest punishment. He pursued them to their mountain hideouts and attacked them in their dens as he patrolled the two mountains Qasiyun and al-Arb'een on horseback accompanied by his squads of policemen. There was barely a night that passed without undertaking planned raids on the hiding-places of the criminals high on the two mountains. The criminals' dens no longer served as their safe havens for Officer M. Amin pursued them relentlessly. These villains could never have imagined that one day an officer with such superior qualities of boldness, courage and strength, would be appointed to that position. The resultant misery he brought to their lives when he pursued them to their hiding places and captured them to face their punishment changed the lives of all of them, one way or another.

The lives of the people changed too, for they could now bask in safety, for he had restored the joys of life to them and brought a smile to the faces of their children.

He often went without sleep and was constantly alert, he spent his leisure time, and would have sacrificed his soul for people to sleep, safe and sound, in their homes. However, through his relentless efforts, Officer M. Amin captured many of the criminals and put them into prison: for they were hardened villains who insisted on adhering to their love of crime, iniquity, plundering and robbery. Some members of the same gang ran away abroad, never to return, for fear of being arrested and humiliated. Additionally, there was a further substantial number who repented at his hands and turned towards God, and so they did not dare to let their spirits be seduced

into committing any further evil action due to the punishment that they would face.

In his office, M. Amin drew up lists of all previously convicted criminals and classified them under various categories; one list specified defectors who had vanished from sight; a second list held names of unrepentant culprits convicted of a long list of crimes. After finishing their terms and being released from jail these men would soon revert to their criminal ways and their evil deeds. They would be caught again and taken to prison for further degrading punishment. A third list contained the names of those who willingly would have returned to a life of crime but were afraid to do so because of the impact and authority of our officer. These men were watched too, but to a lesser degree.

The last list contained those who had truly repented and whose conduct was now deemed to be safe: they numbered seventy men. With such efficiency and by having full knowledge of all of the criminal elements in the quarter he was able to purge the area of all the crimes that were prevalent at the time: robbery, plundering, violence and other violations which might escalate into serious offences or even murder. Ultimately safety prevailed and the whole of his area again basked in security and tranquillity restored to people's hearts. Again they were able to go about their daily life freely and peacefully by both day and night: go to the mosques to pray, the markets to shop and out to fields and orchards to tend the product and enjoy the fresh air. Eventually, this great champion was able to sleep at his home for a few nights of the week. Finally, he had some respite from being continuously on duty at the police-station, when it was no longer necessary for him to go out to make raids on villains who had taken refuge in the mountains.

One night, after Officer M. Amin had left the police-station and arrived at his house, someone knocked at the door at two o'clock in the morning. 'Strange!' he thought, 'Who's knocking at the door so late at night?' He took up a lamp and looked out from a small window above the street door and shouted, 'Who's there?' They replied, 'Oh Sir, we're robbers.' He was astonished at what he

heard. And shouted again, but louder this time ‘Who is it. What do you want?’

‘Oh sir, we are thieves,’ they answered.

‘This is strange, altogether too strange!’ M. Amin said to himself. He quickly went back to his room, brought out his revolver from under his pillow and loaded a bullet into the chamber of the gun. Then, going back to the door, he pulled open the street door and leaped forward prepared to attack, levelling his revolver at them. What a bizarre scene: he saw three men standing before him all calm and peaceful, but their faces looked afraid. A mule could be seen behind them with a sack on its back.

‘What happened, what’s the matter with you?’ He asked them.

‘Sir, we’ll tell you about our problem, and we hope you will help us; please, we have come to you trusting in your generosity and assistance,’ one of them replied, trembling.

‘So... let me know what’s wrong... tell me about it.’ M. Amin said to them.

At this, the man began to relate their story, explaining why they had come to the police director’s house at such a late hour. There were three men and each of them was a father with a family to support. They had wives and little children, but they had nothing to eat. Even the bread had run out of their impoverished houses. There was no money in their pockets and no food in their kitchens. During the winter when it was bitterly cold, they had no fire-wood to warm their homes. The children cried because of their hunger, their mothers wept, and their husbands’ hearts were overcome with anguish at the sorry plight of their families.

Their teeth chattered from the cold and they rubbed their hands together to try to restore some warmth till finally they could stand it no longer and each of them went out into the neighbourhood. The first man went out intending to steal at all costs even if he were caught and severely punished. He walked along the street in a state of great anger and agitation and met with the second man who

had gone out for the same reason and with the same purpose in mind. Once they realised that they had the same aim they joined up. Within a few minutes, they came across the third man who had also gone out for the very same purpose because he was also suffering such similar circumstances.

On the way, the three men agreed to break into the flour mill to steal a sack of flour and divide it between them so that it might keep their families' bodies and souls together. They continued on their way towards the mill while they planned how they would carry out the break-in. Of course, this was an easy task for them because they had spent many years doing such things.

They arrived at the mill, and immediately climbed the fence. Inside, over in a corner, there was a big mule used exclusively by the mill to carry sacks of flour. One of them hurried towards it and loosened its tether, while the other two men went into a room where sacks of flour were stored. They took just a single sack and loaded it onto the back of the mule. The three men walked quietly pulling the mule towards the outside gate of the mill. In the meantime and in the darkness of the night – remember there was no electricity at that time – the guard of the mill got to his feet when he heard the faint sound of footsteps breaking the stillness of the night. Quickly he rushed out of his room shouting, 'Who's there, what are you doing?'

At that moment, one of them pointed his gun and shot a single bullet in the direction that the voice had come from: all was quiet... not a sound could be heard. I wonder! Had he hit him? Was he dead? Then they ran away, stopping only to take the mule with them.

On the way, they soon hid in a house to divide the flour; but one of them was delayed for he had something to do... it seems he had second thoughts. While he was walking along, he remembered how he was once caught by the head of the police station. He remembered the intense pain of the whip that hit every part of his body till it bled. He recalled the bitterness of that day when the

officer punished him severely for a misdemeanour he had committed. That event had taken place some time ago and nothing would make him forget the pain and humiliation that he had suffered; but the suffering of his children, because of hunger and hardship, had prompted him to steal again. But by then, it was too late to go back after what had happened at the mill. He could only imagine what he would suffer for this crime. He was quite certain that the police officer would find him and he would be arrested. Finally, he realised that he was in a very precarious position.

He caught up with the men at the house while still thinking about what might become of him if he were caught. His horror increased a thousand-fold when he thought about the severe punishment inflicted on him in the past at the hands of the chief of the police station, who was a violent man, in his view, and he did not want to face such torture again. While the other two began to divide the flour, he felt a strong shiver pass through his body and he shouted. ‘Don’t get me into trouble... may God keep you safe... don’t bring me any problems. I don’t want my share of the flour. Keep it for yourselves. Forget about me... as if I didn’t see you and you didn’t see me... let’s all go our separate ways... keep the sack of flour for yourselves... I’m not your partner in this robbery.’

The other two men were amazed at what they heard and their hearts were overcome with fear, and so they said, ‘We’re in this together. Whatever happens to us, will happen to you too.’ As for him, he became even more horrified, still trying to get out of the situation, until his cowardice affected all of them.

‘However, what’s the solution once the deed is done and it’s already too late? What can we do? What should we do after we have been involved in a murder and robbery? How can we get over this problem?’ they wondered.

One of them said, ‘What do you think? Should we go to the director of the police station? It’s true that he’s hard and tough, but he’s compassionate and honourable and never denies those who ask a favour of him. By God, I’ve heard so much about his

integrity, generosity, and the great support he gives to the needy people of the neighbourhood who go to him for help. What do you say about going to him now and telling him our story, and about the desperate circumstances of our families that have forced us to go back to stealing again? I'm sure he'll help us.' They all agreed to this plan and immediately went off to the police station as they knew that he often stayed there on duty at night.

As they got closer to the police station, they began to be afraid, which became worse when they thought of his awe-inspiring appearance and grave demeanour, though they still expected that he would help them. A short distance before the police station, they stopped and one of them went off to see whether M. Amin was in his office or not. After a few moments, he came back in a happy frame of mind as he had not found the officer there; he would most likely be in his house. If they had found him in the police station, he might have arrested them on the spot and sent them to prison to be punished and humiliated for the crime they had just committed. As he was at home, it was more likely that he would help them, especially if they went there seeking help and mercy. So they set off towards the officer's house dragging the mule with the flour sack behind them.

Our officer quickly understood their story and why they had arrived at his house so late at night. Officer M. Amin inwardly gave thanks to Al'lah for he realised that the fruit of his efforts and hard work had not been lost on the wind and he knew that criminals were always very apprehensive of him whether he was present or absent.

'Did the warden die?' Officer M. Amin asked them.

'Sir, we shot him and we think that he fell to the ground and we heard no further sound from him... we don't know anything more,' they answered with voices shaking with fear.

'I hope that he is alive, and I shall help you as much as I can. God forbid that he is dead... anyhow, I promise to do my best to help you.' He said after a few moments of silence.

Officer M. Amin continued, ‘Now take the mule and the sack of flour into the stable at my house and tomorrow morning at about ten, one of you should take the mule and the sack of flour back to the mill and tether it to a tree and leave it there.’

They said, after they regained their senses and caught their breath, ‘That will be easy, Sir.’

As they were about to leave, the officer asked them to wait for a while, then he said, ‘Follow me.’

As for our officer, he entered the stockroom inside the house where sacks of flour were stored, with the three men following behind; then he pointed at a sack of flour and told them to take it, ‘Eat that flour which I’m giving you legally, and don’t break the law by eating the flour you stole from the mill.’ Their high opinion of him was justified: he was truly compassionate and generous and did not deny those who asked a favour of him. They left after he had lessened all their hardship and suffering on that difficult night.

As for Officer M. Amin, he went to his room after they left, performed a short prayer, and prostrated himself before God; he gave thanks and praised Him for He had dressed him as though in a cloak of reverence that made the likes of those brutes and villains come to him for help.

In the morning when Officer M. Amin reached the police station, everything had happened as expected: there was the recorded complaint from the flour mill, detailed as follows:

One or more men broke into the mill.

One sack of flour and one mule were stolen.

The watchman was shot, incurring a slight flesh wound to the ankle.

Then he gave heartfelt thanks to God because the guard at the flour mill had not been killed during the incident the previous evening. At once he started to write an unofficial report because he already knew all the details as they had been related to him.

When the prosecutors returned to the mill, they found the mule tethered to the tree and the sack of flour upon its back! Soon they came back to the police station to tell the officer that they had found the mule along with the sack of flour and also told him that they had dropped the claim. Then he tore the paper into pieces and the case was closed.

The results were good and he kept his promise exactly as he had told the three men. But that event and the confession which he had heard from the three men along with the details of the hunger, poverty and deprivation that their families were suffering made him realise the reality of a painful and unchanging situation. That situation had existed when they were criminals and remained the same after they gave up their life of crime. The hunger and deprivation had not been changed for them, and the flour he had given them from his own store was like a sedative for their misery and soon it would run out, and so they inevitably would return to a life of crime due to the hunger of themselves and their families.

That incident brought the situation of seventy families to the attention of that humane officer, M. Amin; they, too, had suffered the same problems of unemployment, hunger and deprivation. He spent an entire night thinking of them and wondering what he could do to help them. His monthly salary was not enough to help more than a few of them, but what about the rest? He had seventy names written down on the list before him. They were criminals, but there were three men who had repented and it was only hunger and need that had turned them back to their criminal ways. At that time after they had abandoned the criminal life at his hands, how could they ensure the food of their families and keep their children barely alive after they ate the one sack of flour? People were talked about them for the reason that they were known for their bad reputations and no-one wanted to employ them as workers or let them hold a lease on any property. In addition to their notoriety, time had not been kind to them either. Because of their hard lives and difficulties in providing food and lodging for their families they were ill-kempt and their faces were worn and lined so that

they had the appearance of rascals or villains. As if it were not enough that time had worn their bodies out, but they were stamped with a look of abject misery that marked them out as, murderers and thieves.

Before Officer M. Amin was appointed to that district people would run away from them in fear, but then how could people be familiar with them from day to day and still be safe from them? However, that was their situation and by studying and thinking of the matter these was the conclusion that Officer M. Amin had arrived at after the event happened at the mill, which Al'lah (Glory to Him) had put into his hands. Hence the question still remained: How could they make a simple, honest living to meet the needs of their families?

He thought, 'If their circumstances stayed the same, and they received no help, they must sooner or later go back to the life of crime, driven by hunger. But driven by desperation I certainly believe that their crimes would be uglier and their hatred towards society would be greater... then, what is the solution?' Officer M. Amin spent a long, sleepless night imploring Al'lah to lead him to an adequate and curative solution for them. So, he must keep them on the straight path, and protect them and others from their own evil. Finally, he found the solution and said to himself, 'I get it... I get it... it is the solution by God's Leave.'

Questions and Exercises:

- 1- Why did the Almighty God send down the Divine revelation to the great scholar M. A. Sheikho (his soul has been sanctified by Al'lah)?
- 2- What was the reason behind the retrogression of the Ottoman Empire and why did it become in that weakness and collapse?
- 3- Why did the three criminals become afraid while they were dividing the sac of wheat?
- 4- How did the scholar M. Amin treat those three criminals who asked his help to repentance?
- 5- What was the first thing that the scholar did after the three criminals had left his house?
- 6- What was the reason which troubled the scholar for the whole night, and what was he thinking about?

Lesson Twenty Five:
A Great Epic Against Deprivation and Inhumanity
(Part Two)

Dear students:

After the great officer M. Amin had spent a whole night appealing to the Almighty God and thinking to find a complete solution for the issue of those seventy repentant criminals, he got the solution; a complete plan ready to be accomplished, then he felt relief and his noble face became more delighted and full of happiness.... and he said to himself, 'I have got it... I have got it... it is the solution by God's Leave.'

He remembered that a few days earlier he had noticed a report issued by the sultan's palace on behalf of the commander of the gendarmerie of al-Sham[34] to the effect of recruiting a large number of security guards because of the general disorder, and the great number of crimes committed in most areas of al-Sham.

Many men were eagerly dreaming of being appointed to that position because gendarmes, guards and officers received a high salary at that time; and later when he retired he would also receive a big pension which would ensure a life of plenty and opulence for family however large it was. Furthermore, he would have a prestigious social position. At that time, the police-man (gendarme) was held in high esteem and respected by all people because he received certain entitlements from the government and other authorities that most people did not have.

Officer M. Amin proceeded straightaway to the commander-in-chief (the commander of the army) of Greater Syria and knocked at the door of his office. When he heard the words 'Come in', he entered the office and gave the customary military salute, 'Greetings, Sir.'

On seeing him the commander-in-chief gladly stood up due to the affection and appreciation he held for him. He returned the greeting saying, 'Welcome, Aslan, [35] come in and have a seat.'

‘Might I ask you something, Your Excellency? But before that, please let me give you some details.’ Our officer said after he sat down.

The commander said, ‘Please, let me know what is in your mind.’

‘God forbids... God forbids... God forbids!’ Our officer said.

The commander fixed his eyes on our officer in amazement; ‘This must be a matter of some importance, he thought.’

Our officer continued, earnestly and steadily, to paint a graphic picture for the commander. ‘God forbids... God forbids that one day the Sultan might prefect be angry with you and dismiss you from the service for some particular reason... Of course, you would have to leave your position of authority and become a civilian again. Then you would live like any man here in Damascus and use up all your savings and any spare money collected from your previous salaries... until eventually all that you possessed had been used up. You were formerly a policeman and chief of the army, and you have no other job or profession to practise in order to earn a living and provide your family. Of course, you are a person of considerable social rank known to all the people in al-Sham so you could never work in any mundane job such as a blacksmith or a carpenter...’

‘And then it happens! Your money has run out, there’s no suitable work for you and your children are crying from the griping pains of hunger and deprivation, their beautiful eyes sunken from lack of sleep. There’s no more food in the house not even a morsel of bread, and you stand completely powerless watching this desperate scene and you are smitten by its harshness. What would you do then? How would you behave? Would you leave them to die?’

The commander’s eyes opened wide, his nerves were stretched and he trembled in every limb, then he shouted at the top of his voice, ‘Aslan, do you want me to steal?’

Our officer replied, ‘Far be it from you, God forbid... but I have a strong reason for giving you this scenario.’

The high commander, still flabbergasted, cried out, 'I?... steal?... and kill?'

Then our officer continued in a forceful voice, 'Your Excellency, High Commander, seventy families are suffering this bitter and painful situation. Seventy men who are trying to provide their families have repented and turned away from their lives of crime and now due to the dire state of the country they can't provide even a single morsel of bread: their children weep from hunger and deprivation... cold and pain, and so their fathers are obliged to steal in order to feed them. Inevitably these men become felons and we arrest them, beat them and put them in prison.'

The commander-in-chief calmed down at these words and a look of amazement appeared on his face... as he said, 'But would my salary be enough for seventy families? Of course not, Aslan! I have no way to provide sustenance for seventy families. Surely they need far more than I can provide for them.'

Our officer added saying, 'Your Excellency, High Commander, I do not ask you to give them charity from your own pocket, but you know that there is an official order published by the sultan's palace on behalf of the gendarmerie of al-Sham by which they are looking for a number of security guards and gendarmes, and I think that those seventy would be enough to fulfil that order.'

The face of the high commander was again overcome with all kinds of emotions... amazement, anger, astonishment... and he shouted, 'Are you going to deliver the souls of good human beings to the hands of mere felons?'

Our officer replied in a voice that was equally heated, 'Your Excellency, Commander-in-Chief, those are criminals for precisely the same reason that would make you steal and kill. They stole only because of necessity. Now they have repented that crooked course. You know that no sooner had I taken over the leadership of the two sectors of al-Salihiya and al-Akrad than I brought peace and stability to those areas. Along with my men, I left no stone unturned in my mission to purge the district of all crime and its

associated dangers. My men and I did not rest until I had achieved my aim.

‘Of course, the same cannot be said of the rest of al-Sham. However, you know that these two sectors were the most violent and dangerous and the situation there was chaotic. At any rate, there would be a further guarantee because if these seventy men remained in this present state of lack and deprivation, they would have to violate the law however severe the punishment might be because their condition of poverty and starvation which would drive them to this demeanour is more severe than the punishment itself. It is lack of food; yes, they will return to their life of crime if we do not provide them with the means to earn their living...’

Our officer went on saying, ‘What’s more, I think that they would be the best possible security guards because, having been criminals they would know all the ins and outs of the criminal’s mind and how they go about planning robberies and killings. Nothing would escape them on their watch especially once they are appointed as guards, a position that they could never have dreamed of, nor of the salary they would receive, and the retirement pension which would surely provide security for their families. Thus, on taking up that post they would do their utmost to keep it; and for fear of losing it, they would be the most courageous and the best security guards: they would never be afraid of death and would face all situations however great or small.’

During the conversation, the high commander appeared to pay full attention to the words of our officer the like of which he had never heard before in his life. It must be added that while listening to the ingenious ideas of this noble and honest man all the signs of stress and excitement had finally left him.

However, our officer continued explaining his humane ideas adding, ‘Oh your Excellency, Commander-in-Chief, I expect that the following things will be achieved: First, we ensure their repentance; second, we raise their families up to a better level and good reputation and so we save them from misery and deprivation;

third, we ensure safety throughout Damascus and its people. There will be no more disorder, robbery or crime after we entrust them with this job, or rather, to tell the truth, this task. What do you think?’

The high commander became confused and said, ‘But you know Aslan, I have no control over this matter. It’s under the authority of the prefect, do you have the way to get an appointment to meet him and convince him?’

Our officer replied, ‘Well, I’ll speak to him; why not?’

The commander-in-chief added, with signs of astonishment and wonder on his features, ‘Aslan, what do you say? Are you definitely going to talk to the prefect about their case?’

Our officer said, ‘Yes, I’ll do it. I shall explain the situation to him in full, exactly as I did to you.’

At that moment, the high commander stood up abruptly, put on his military hat, adjusted his clothes and walked out of his office; saying, ‘If you are prepared to speak to the prefect, then follow me; let us go to him now.’ Aslan stood up immediately and set out behind the high commander. He was determined to meet the prefect and complete this humanistic and ingenious action which he had started.

Meeting the prefect was not easy for he was equal in status to the president who ruled over Greater Syria that comprised: Iskenderon Province, Cilicia, al-Mussel, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. This was the personage he was about to meet. A personage that held such an exalted position of power which commanded great reverence, and meeting him would be deadly serious. The headquarters of the prefect was in the same place as those of the commander-in-chief; that is, in the government palace.

The high commander entered the office of the prefect to tell him that our officer, by the name of Aslan, would like to meet him on a matter of extreme urgency. A few moments passed, when he came out to tell our officer that he could go in. The commander-in-chief

went back into the prefect's office and Aslan followed him with firm, steady steps until he came face to face with the prefect. Aslan had the appearance of a brave lion, courage radiating across his features... as he gave a firm military salute.

The prefect said, 'Welcome... welcome to you... welcome to the lion, your excellent reputation and brilliant deeds precede you and are held in high esteem by us. Please have a seat... what do you wish to discuss?'

Our officer sat down and began saying, 'Your Excellency, the Prefect, I have an important request for you but first of all I would like to give you an example to clarify what I will be asking of you.'

The prefect said, 'Please, continue.'

Our officer said, 'God forbids... God forbids... God forbids!'

Officer M. Amin continued his speech with similar words to those he had used to address the high commander. He repeated the conversation without any sign of hesitation. But he started with the words: 'God forbids... God forbids if the Grand Vizier [36] were to be angry with you...'

At these dramatic words all the senses and emotions of the prefect were entirely focused on what our officer was saying. Then, his eyes glowed as keenly and directly as the dark eyes of a rapacious falcon as he stared straight into the eyes of Aslan as he continued to deliver his speech steadily and firmly. He asked the prefect what he thought would become of him if he became an ordinary civilian in Damascus with no salary or financial resources. Our officer asked how he would fare once he had spent all the money he had saved during his working life... and there was nothing left to provide sustenance for his family. He also reminded him how he would no longer be a statesman and politician of the highest rank. What could he do to earn his living? 'Oh your Excellency, it would be impossible for a person such as you to work in any lowly job.'

Our officer then explained the raw truth of desperate hunger: he described how the day would come when his children would weep from the pain of hunger and the harshness of their life; unable to sleep for the spasms in their bellies and not even a morsel of food in the house.

‘Oh Excellency, you would see the suffering of your children with your own eyes... their pain would be your pain too... in this case, what would you do?... leave them to starve to death?’

The prefect reacted as the commander had done earlier... he became nervous, began to tremble from head to foot, and then he shouted in a thunderous voice, ‘Aslan, do you want me to steal?’

Our officer replied firmly and strongly, ‘Certainly not! God forbid! You misunderstand my words.’

The prefect added in his firmest voice, ‘Yes I would steal... I would steal and kill.’

Then Aslan continued with logic and stupefying ingenuity that crystallised his deep humanistic feeling, ‘Your Excellency, seventy families are suffering this bitter unchanging situation. The heads of seventy families are sorry for their crimes and prepared to work to provide their children, but right now they don’t have even a crust of bread and those children are crying from hunger and cold.’

A kind of confused wonder spread over the prefect’s face, ‘But... Aslan! Would my salary be enough for seventy families? Would it support the daily life of seventy families? Of course not, Aslan. I couldn’t possibly provide seventy families.’

How strange that his reply is exactly the same as the high commander’s!

Aslan added, ‘Excellency, I am not asking you to do that, but an official order has been submitted by the sultan’s palace on behalf of the gendarmerie of al-Sham. They have positions for a large number of security guards. I think that the seventy men I have mentioned would be enough to fulfil that order.’

Again, the prefect's reaction was similar to that of the commander: his eyes opened wide and he shouted 'Aslan! Are you going to trust felons and criminals of the safekeeping of human beings and their souls?'

Our officer replied, 'Excellency, those men are not criminals by nature, but because of hunger and poverty. They turned to stealing simply because they were unable to provide basic sustenance for their families. If these seventy men were to remain in this state, they would surely break the law however serious the punishment might be, because they would be motivated by hunger and not because of a wish to commit crimes. If we fail to support them, or find work for them, they will turn to crime out of necessity. What is more, I think that they would be the best possible security guards, for once they have secure jobs there will be no further disorder, robbery or crime, Your Excellency.'

After the prefect had heard these irrefutable proofs and sound logic, he shook his head, filled with admiration and appreciation for the ingenuity of Aslan. He had heard more and more about, this officer's work, his ideas and plans... mere criminals were to become guards! What an innovative idea! This was something which he had never seen or heard about! Those felons were the most suitable and no-one else would match their competence for this job! Needless to say, this was an amazing idea and showed great ingenuity!

But in spite of all that the prefect had heard, and despite his confession and submission of those proofs and that sound logic, he was still not fully assured that the plan could succeed; he had to be completely sure because the responsibility was his, and his alone. However, he was afraid that the reality of the matter was not in accordance with the theoretical evidence however convincing it might be. For this reason, it was his duty not to commit himself to this plan before looking into it in more deeply.

The prefect asked, 'Who would ensure that those seventy men would follow the proper path and be able to save people's souls?'

The prefect looked at the commander-in-chief and asked him if he would assume the responsibility for them. With no hesitation at all, the high commander replied that he accepted the responsibility because the works, achievements and the wonderful successes he had seen from our officer during his lifelong convinced him that Aslan could be trusted completely to accomplish every mission or deed. When the prefect heard the confirmation of the commander-in-chief, he said, ‘I agree Aslan, you may have what you want. We shall issue our order to appoint the seventy men.’

No sooner said than done! Our officer took an application from his pocket, opened it and handed it to the Pasha. He had been so hopeful of success that he had already prepared it! The application included an order for appointing the seventy men listed individually by name to the position of security guards. The prefect took the application, read it, signed and stamped it with the official seal. It had now become an official order to be executed. The prefect added, ‘Take it Aslan and use it as your authority to complete the rest of the procedures.’

Aslan thanked the prefect, and asked for permission to take his leave; he saluted the prefect and set off in a hurry, followed by the high commander who was speechless and dazed by the officer’s boldness, strength and ingenious planning. As soon as they reached the stairway of the palace, Officer M. Amin stopped suddenly. The high commander asked him, ‘What is the matter with you, Aslan?’

Our officer replied, ‘I forgot a very important thing and I must go back at once to speak to the Pasha.’ The commander-in-chief soon turned around and rushed back to the office of the prefect and asked for permission to be brought again into his presence. The prefect smiled, and seemed quite bemused – a few moments ago he had seemed to say, ‘You (Aslan) turned us into thieves and criminals and now what will you make of us?’ – and said, ‘What is the matter, Aslan?’

Our officer replied, ‘Your Excellency, those men are not criminals by nature but because of deprivation. Because they committed

crimes they are now wanted men as they have been convicted of various crimes. Even though they are appointed to an official position, they will be arrested, brought to trial and convicted. For this reason, would you kindly add an article of general amnesty for these men. This should include all their previous convictions Excellency... so that they do not encounter any problems after their appointment.'

The prefect agreed and added an extra article of general amnesty including all their previous convictions and stamped it with the official seal. Again our officer thanked the prefect for his cooperation and asked him for permission to leave, saluted him and left with an air of great victory surrounding him..

Officer M. Amin sent for the seventy men telling them to gather at a specific time that afternoon in the square of al-Juma market near the Sheikh Muhyiddin Mosque. They were all there waiting for him at the appointed time. Our officer arrived and began to give them the details of the plan and then read out to them the official order for their appointment. He made sure to point out that the amnesty order included all their previous crimes and had been signed and sealed by the prefect himself and now it was to be executed.

They were stupefied on hearing this news which would save them from the humility of want and disgrace and turn their lives into ones of affluence, happiness and plenty which they could never have dreamt of in their entire life. Their hearts were instantly overwhelmed with joy and their happiness was tangible: they all began to speak at once, almost unable to believe their good fortune, but celebrating anyway. They threw their hats and headbands into the air... and leapt up to begin frenzied dancing... Could they believe what they had heard? Was it true? Was it reasonable? In one strike they would be saved from all the complications of life. Even their previous convictions were included in the amnesty. They were about to get official positions which no one could have ever dreamt of. They would certainly be loyal guards, they would become respected and adorned with

reverence and known for their steadiness by all people. Hunger and deprivation would be things of the past and their children would now be able to live safely and peacefully, and become respected by their neighbours. Finally, they would have every reason to receive all their rights in society.

While the seventy men were celebrating with unbridled merriment and the sound of their laughter filled the place, the voice of our officer rumbled above the hubbub saying, 'Listen men... Listen!' The clamour died away immediately and the men stood motionless on the spot, looking at him with awe and appreciation. His voice rumbled again, saying, 'Listen to me well: you will be responsible for protecting the souls of people that will be entrusted to your hands; and I must tell you that this will never come to pass unless you all perform your prayers. If you do not persevere in your communication with God, you will neither be appointed to these positions nor get your amnesty; do you understand? In the past you have committed atrocities and crimes which prevented you from praying and standing in God's Presence, but now you have repented these transgressions. So if you do not perform the daily prayers, how could I deliver the souls of people to your safe keeping? How could humanity be entrusted to your hands to keep them safe and protect them from all evil?'

Then, their voices resounded in unison saying, 'We promise you that we will pray... Yes, Sir we will definitely perform our prayers.' Our officer said, 'Then we will all gather today at the evening prayer in the mosque. Soon you should go to your homes, have a bath and wear clean clothes as far as possible, and then you must be at the mosque on time... understood?' They all replied, 'Oh Sir, we're all ready; we understand.'

Sheikh Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Mosque is well-known in all the cities of the state of al-Sham At that time, al-sheikh Amin Kharbutli was the preacher and imam of this well known mosque. He used to recite a daily religious lesson to his murids[37] between sunset prayer and evening prayer. On that particular day, while they were listening to the lesson after sunset prayer sitting around

al-sheikh Amin Kharbutli, he noticed that the four doors of the mosque were crowded with men whose features and appearance indicated that they had a deep connection to the shady world of crime... between five and seven men trailed through each door, and were soon followed by seven more... and so on. Of course the sheikh was sitting at the pulpit with his face to the north, facing the four doors of the mosque, whereas his pupils were crowded round him with faces pointing to the south and looking at him attentively.

When the sheikh saw those men, he was shocked and filled with horror at their criminal appearance especially as he recognised and knew some of them. He was overcome at the scene before him, to the extent that he was struck dumb, he was unable to move and remained in that position, his eyes fixed on the doors and the men passing through them.

A terrible feeling of dread overwhelmed the sheikh and he became afraid for the safety of his pupils around him for he was certain that they would be killed by the hands of those villains... surely those felons would attack his group and steal all the fine carpets of the mosque and the expensive pieces of furniture. These were the initial thoughts that passed through his mind from the very first moment he saw them. He was in an unenviable strange situation... his tongue was silenced, his eyes were fixed on the doors and he appeared to be overcome by such terrible fear that his mouth stayed open and fixed, unable to speak except to make an occasional sound.

His pupils witnessed his strange behaviour, but they could not see what was happening behind them. However, the predicament of their sheikh amazed them, for they were not aware of the reason: what was the matter with him? Had he had a seizure or could he see something behind them? They wondered what was happening. And so everyone turned around to see what was going on, and they, too, seemed to become fixed in that position, but with their necks twisted backward and overcome with shock as their sheikh had been. They were afraid to take their eyes off the men coming in for they were certain that they would soon be killed.

One question crossed the minds of all who saw what had happened at the inside doors of the mosque: What could bring those men into the mosque? They instilled fear wherever they went and if just one of those felons came into any street of a market, people would soon leave and run off in all directions. So what was about to happen with so many of them in one place? Were they about to attack the place? There could be no other reason for them to enter the mosque except theft and violence..

The sheikh was still in a shocked, miserable state when our beloved officer Mohammad Amin came in from behind that numerous crowd of horrible men whose ugly shapes matched their ugly past. At that moment, al-sheikh al-Kharbutli caught his breath and his soul was revived: he had caught sight of our officer and felt safe and reassured. He stood up at once and asked Officer M. Amin, 'My son, what is the matter with those aggressive criminals? Why have these dreadful men entered our mosque?'

Officer M. Amin replied, 'They have repented their life of crime.'

The sheikh was overcome with surprise and wonder and he said, 'My son, what are you saying? These are repentants? If Satan ever has the chance to repent, these men may then repent too... by God, even if the Prophet Mohammad (cph) were to come here, they would not repent.'

Our officer said, 'I'll say it again. These men are true repentants and have attended the mosque in order to perform the evening prayer behind you.'

When the sheikh called for the prayer, they ranged themselves behind him and some of them had to copy him because they did not know even the formal movements of prayer: they looked right and left, and once they stared in wonder at the others who were praying, and sometimes some of them looked in surprise at the line of feet and noticed how they were upright throughout one line. They continued to observe all that was happening around them until the imam started the prayer with the statement 'Al'lah is Greater'. They began to imitate him in the prayers and that was

possibly the first time that some of them had entered a mosque for tens of years. The only occasion they might have entered a mosque would be when little children were present.

And so, that prayer was one of the great, eternal achievements of Officer Mohammad Amin because it was the key to great good and a path to the Afterlife for seventy human beings and their families. He took them in hand and helped them to give up the life of sin and disobedience and begin again with a pure and honest life. This was the first great step.

For many years they had been disobedient criminals and aggressive, insolent thieves... now they had repented and were ready to perform their prayers at all the appointed times. In the past no-one had been able to control any one of them. No-one could affect their hearts nor turn them away from their frequent acts of violence however much they tried. And now, they had repented their previous life of crime and were thanking their Provider because of the supreme efforts of our great humane man, and there they were together performing prayer in a group at the mosque.

The prayer had finished and our officer went out to the courtyard of the mosque followed by the seventy men who stood around him in the yard which was covered with a beautiful layer of sparkling white snow. Then, he told them about the time and place of their next meeting the following morning where they would be given details of the training course they were to go on. This was for them to learn the principles and laws applicable to their new positions as security guards. They also would receive the essential instructions and basic guidelines of the job, and after that they would follow the security training and finally would receive their military uniforms and weapons.

Our officer then reminded them that it was of vital importance to attend every prayer in the mosque. He strongly urged them to perform their prayers even though some of them had already understood this when they tasted the bliss of prayer after their hearts opened to real life and happiness from Al'lah. They needed

no further encouragement as they, themselves, persisted in their prayer and never wasted it. Furthermore, from that time on they maintained their obedience to all that had been asked of them and abandoned all forbidden actions.

As soon as they finished their training course, they received their arms and were posted to every quarter and street throughout Damascus. Eventually, small guard posts were built for their guard duties and they became brave and loyal guards. As a result disorder, robberies and crime had been wiped out and safety and peace spread throughout the city. If a woman went out at midnight carrying a large basket of gold, nobody would dare to touch her and she was able to walk safely and peacefully at any time, day or night.

This wise and merciful man, M. A. Sheikho, brought security and justice to Damascus after it had been full of injustice and tyranny. As for the actual situation of the seventy families, there was a radical change that was beyond their imagination. How wretched and miserable they had been! The torment they had suffered was beyond one's imagination! They suffered from cold, hunger, and used to eat stolen food and wear stolen clothes. As for their children, they lived with fathers who were felons and thieves... without the wonderful opportunity given to their fathers by the illustrious officer, Mohammad Amin, and the fathers' true repentance their destinies would also have been to follow their footsteps towards a life of crime.

And now, the present had changed and so had the future as their fathers had become loyal guards receiving a high salary which had changed their lives completely. They had gone from poverty to relative riches which was sufficient for all of them to lead a life of plenty and tranquillity. Apart from all other benefits they had reached a respectable social rank which they would participate in from that time on, as government officials merited great esteem at that time.

Thereafter, Damascus lived through a golden era, safely and securely, when there was little or no crime or danger for many decades.

This is the account of the great epic against, misery and anti-humanism that our humane officer M. A. Sheikho undertook with his great traits of benevolence and compassion.

It is the eternal career and those are the unique humanistic deeds. God said, “And let those who have aspirations emulate him and strive for this.” [32]

Praise is to God, the Provider of the Worlds

Questions:

- 1- Why did the Turkish commanders give the great Officer M. Amin the nickname “Aslan” which means “the lion”?
- 2- What was the wisdom that the great Officer M. Amin aimed at behind the introduction of his speech to the Turkish commander and the governor?
- 3- Try to mention some of the advantages which made those seventy men qualified for the mission of being employed as night guardians?
- 4- Why did the general Commander guarantee the plan of the great Officer M. A. Sheikho before the governor?
- 5- Why did the great Officer M. Amin want to see the governor once again, after he had taken the permission to assign the seventy repentant men as night guards?
- 6- What was the important thing that the great Officer Mohammad Amin ordered the seventy men to do after he had read to them their appointment order and the amnesty one?
- 7- Why did al-sheikh Amin Kharbutli feel safe and comforted after having his heart filled with fear and panic from the presence of those seventy men in the mosque?
- 8- Write down your conclusion from the previous three lessons?

Lesson Twenty Six:
The Sentence of Cutting off the Thief's Hand

Our dear student:

Our lesson today is a very important one, it is quite related to the previous lessons.

Is the sentence of Cutting off the thief's hand judged in all cases and conditions of thieving?

Or, are there some cases and conditions which must be considered by the Judge and prevent him from giving the sentence of Cutting off the thief's hand to a condemned thief?

The Almighty God says: **{Cut off the hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise}**

The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 5, Al-Ma'ida (The Table), Verse 38

This sentence appears full of severe torment and cruelty but actually it conceals in its interior the goodness and mercy not only to the thief (male or female) but also to the whole society.

The Commander of faithful, our Master Omar ibn Al-Khatib, (May God be pleased with him), didn't cut off the hands of thieves during a specific period of rainlessness (drought) and starvation which overwhelmed the Islamic countries during his Era, after he had made sure that the thieves were needy and they stole only to feed themselves and their families' members (their children). So, he offered them from the money house (treasury) of Muslims a sustenance which sufficed them to support their life and made them live at ease, but according to the normal general case, when the Almighty God drove away the epidemic of plague, starvation and drought from the country, he became sure that the money-house (treasury) of the Islam states was enough to meet the life requirements of all the Muslims and non Muslims and sufficed

them for a good level of life, therefore, according to this case, if a thief was arrested, the Muslim Judge would give him a sentence of cutting off his hand, applying and submitting to God's order.

So, in those previous conditions why must the thief's hand be cut off?

To answer this question, we say:

When people in Islamic states live a tolerable level of life which meets the basic life requirements and there is a social warranty for all the individuals without any discrimination in treatment or privileging, thus if a person from this society stole, then his stealing would be due to neither starvation nor neediness but to a wicked desire in his spirit. In this case the thief must be sentenced according to God's law of cutting his hand.

Accordingly, the sentence of cutting off the thief's hand isn't unconditional, but the judge must investigate, before judging him for his stealing, to be certain of the reason behind the stealing act. If it was for a severe neediness and starvation, then his hand wouldn't be cut off, but he would have been granted the subsistence and all the requirements which guarantee a good life to his family, exactly as the eminent scholar M. A. Sheikho (his soul has been sanctified by Allah) treated those who stole the sac of wheat, when they came to him afraid of his strength and appealed to him for his mercy.

However, if he stole again, his hand would be cut off, because this act becomes a crime originated from a wicked desire in his spirit so it (this wicked desire) must be uprooted of his spirit.

Cutting off the thief's hand contains a great goodness for the thief himself (male or female) and for the whole society, thus when the thief's hand is cut off, he will heartedly hate and leave that inhumane act, because he knows that if he steals again he will lose the other hand.

This sentence must be executed in a public place such as a market square before a group of the believers and the cut off hand is

remained hung down in that public main square before the eyes of people who pass by and see it, having a great lesson through that effective sight. As for children who have the germ of this wicked desire of stealing, they ask their fathers about this cut off hand, and they are answered: O my child, that is the thief's hand, it has been cut off, my son be careful not to steal.

This sight of the cut off hand and its dropped blood has unforgettable impressions, which are full of a great fear of the result of theft acting. In the child's spirit (heart), that impression makes him hate and leave even the thinking of doing such acts at his early age, and when he becomes young, he still has in his mind that fear of what he previously saw and perceived when he was a child. Therefore, this punishment becomes a cure for the theft desire which is folded in the spirit of thief or the child who may steal in future.

Alternatively, they will get rid of this wicked desire, if someone had the desire to steal, he would remember that sight of the cut off hand, then he would look in fear at his dear hand and finally determine not to steal forever, therefore the society would become safe, free from thefts and all the disturbing sequences of this act. All those advantages are resulted just from the cut off hand i.e. applying God's judgment on the thief, so these sublime results which are resulted in the society as a whole and individuals through considering this Divine lesson (cutting of the thief's hand) will be put by the Almighty God as a good deed in the deeds' sheet of that cut off-handed thief.

In addition to that, as we have mentioned above, he himself will not dare to steal again, then he will have a free of wrongdoing spirit and a white heart which enable him to stand before the Almighty God within his prayer attaining the true communication with the Almighty Al'lah, his Provider, that he has repented of committing the wrong deed (theft). There is no wicked deed to stand as a veil between him and his Almighty Creator, he will approach sincerely the Almighty God, thus he will have the Godly Light in his spirit which purifies it from the wicked desires.

Finally, his destiny after he passes away will be the Paradise instead of the fires that he would have had if his hand hadn't been cut and he had lived as a thief and criminal all his life.

The Almighty God says: **{And there is life for you in the punishment, O men of understanding, that you may become pious}**

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 2, Al-Baqara (The Cow), Verse 179*

In the punishment there is a life for the people as they will live happily if they apply God's order of executing the punishment, thus if the killer was killed and the thief's hand was cut off, then all people would stop committing killing and stealing, and the thief and the killer would see their punishment was the treatment for their spirits to become purified,...

This is the fact; by executing the sentence of theft, and the people see the cut off hand, then the theft wicked desire will be quite moved away from all the individuals of the society, finally they, generation after generation, will live safely.

As for the thief, his heart becomes alive again after he repents of stealing, and the paradise doors are opened for him.

However, if humankind had not abandoned God's laws and followed their own laws, there would not have been those troubles, neediness, thefts and murders... which are seen nowadays, and which happened only because people followed their laws not God's.

They think that their own laws are merciful and prison sentence is better for the thief than cutting off his hand, but alas their laws bring them more distress, more thefts and those thefts generate murders and violations, that the thief doesn't fear because he knows that, in case he is arrested, he will be sentenced for his crime to imprisonment not more, moreover he will meet the masters of criminals in the prison, and after he finishes his sentence, he will get out of the prison having his heart filled with

the wicked desires of stealing and devastating the society, that society which has a mercy upon him and does not cut off his hand!

Consequently, everyone in this society will complain, whimper and suffer the pains and distress of such crimes which are not judged by God's Law.

The sentence of Cutting off the thief's hand is a Divine law, which contains the complete goodness for the individual and the whole society, it is not unconditional law but it is connected with and conditioned by an accurate social guarantee system, as it was in the era of the noble companions of the Prophet (cpth) and also of the first Ottomans, but later when the Ottomans substituted the Almighty God's law with their own put laws, they thought that their laws were more merciful than the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate, the All-Wise and the All-knowing Al'lah's one. Therefore, they failed and fell down from their highness losing their dignity and high prestige that their society were pervaded with crimes and corruptions, and the human became an enemy to his human brother.

A time is like its people, and its people are as you see!

Questions:

- 1- Why didn't our master Omar cut off the thief's hand during the period of starving in his Era? And how did he treat them?
- 2- Why must the thief's hand be cut off when the social guarantee is achieved to the whole society?
- 3- What are the impressions felt by the hearts of people and craved in their spirits especially by the children when they see the thief's cut off hand with its dropped blood?
- 4- What is the situation of the thief after having his hand cut off ?
- 5- Explain the following noble Verse: **{And there is life for you in the punishment, O men of understanding, that you may become the pious}**?
- 6- What is the thing which has led the human societies to this recently situation of corruptions, immoralities, absolute wrong doings such as thefts, murders..., and etc reaching the maximum level and most kinds of that degeneration?

Endnotes

[1] (cpth): Communication with Al'lah and Peace are Through Him.

[2] Fortress: Surah.

[3] Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi

[4] (cptt): Communication with Al'lah and Peace are Through Them.

[5] Please see Al-Buruj (Constellations) Fortress, Verse 1.

[6] (pth): Peace is Through Him.

[7] (ptt): Peace is Through Them.

[8] Kindly, refer to the book The Sources of Spring Water in the World, by the humane scholar M. A. Sheikho.

[9] Sahih Al-Bukhari.

[10] Narrated by Al-Imam Ahmad and Al-Dramy.

[11] Narrated by Muslim, saying no. [2553].

[12] The Holy Qur'an Fortress 59, Creation-Gathering (Al-Hashr), Verse 9

[13] The Holy Qur'an Fortress 2, The Cow (Al-Baqara), Verse 273

[14] The Holy Qur'an, Fortress 76, Humane Man (al-Insan), Verses 5-9.

[15] Narrated by Al-Dailami up to Abu Hurayra, Kanz Al-Ummal, saying no. 29441.

[16] In Arabic the verb "to forgive" can also mean to cover or protect.

[17] Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad, part 3, page 116.[16]

[18] Al-Jami' Al-Saghir, saying no. [5875].

[19] The Holy Qur'an, Fortress 65, Divorce (al-Talaq), Verse 3

[20] The Holy Qur'an: Fortress 94, Relief (al-Sharh), Verse 5.

[21] In Arabic Wadd = Intimacy.

[22] Suwa = the one who seeks after a thing.

[23] Yaghuth = to succor.

[24] Ya'uq = to hinder.

[25] Nasr = The eagle.

[26] To feel reverence for Allah.

[27] Al Sham state (Greater Syria), which was comprised of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine

[28] The Holy Qur'an, Fortress 47, Mohammad (Muhammad), Verse 7.

[29] The Holy Qur'an, Fortress 5, The Feast (al-Ma'ida), Verse 64.

[30] At this time al-Sham was comprised of Damascus and its suburbs and the surrounding countryside

[31] Kindly refer to the book Stories of the Scholar which contains some of the great feats of the humane scholar M. A. Sheikho (his soul has been sanctified by Al'lah).

[32] The great philosopher Sir John Benet converted into Islam by the guiding of the great scholar M. Amin Sheikho in 1953, after having a positive marvelous discussion between them, which caused him to say before a large crowd of western scientists " All the sciences that we had didn't equal the sciences of that great scientist in the East".

[33] The Islamic Egyptian thinker, Doctor Mustafa Mahmud who presented the T.V program (The science and the faith) who had many articles and other written works, spent all his life in studying, researching and in philosophy, and he said " The facts I had been aware of through the books of the great scholar Mohammad Amin Sheikho (his soul has been sanctified by Al'lah) hadn't been found through the books and thoughts of all the previous and the latest

scientist and scholars”, he wrote a special book about some knowledge of the great scholar, and he published it, it was the last published book of his during his life, it was titled (ponderings on the pages of the great humane scholar Mohammad Amin Sheikho, God has sanctified his soul).

[34] Greater Syria included Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine.

[35] Aslan is a Turkish word that means ‘the lion’. The Turkish commanders gave Officer M. Amin this nickname because of his boldness, bravery and intrepidity.

[36] The Grand Vizier is the title of the Sultan in the Ottoman Empire.

[37] Murid is a Sufi term meaning ‘committed one’.

[38] The Holy Qur’an, Fortress 83, Dealers in Fraud (al-Mutaffifin), Verse 26.