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Surah An-Nasr

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1. When there comes the Help of Allah and the Opening.

Many of us know the event concerning which this Surah was revealed. Many of us know that this was indeed the last complete Surah ever revealed to the Prophet (saw) before he (saw) passed away. This Surah was revealed at the conquest of Makkah, which was the completion of the mission of the Prophet (saw). With this conquest the Islamic State achieved victory over the powerful tribe of Quraysh. With this conquest the dominion of Islam over the entire Arabian Peninsula was complete. Now the base was ready. Now the dawah to all mankind could begin. This was the end of the Prophet (saw)'s part and the beginning of the Ummah's part. That is why Ibn 'Abbass (ra) used to say that this Surah was Allah (swt) telling the Prophet (saw) that his life was about to end. Now his (saw)'s mission was finally complete. So for more than anyone else this was victory for the Prophet (saw). He (saw) had fulfilled the purpose for which Allah (swt) had sent him (saw). That is why we say that the main theme of this Surah is that it teaches us how to deal with victory. It teaches us what to do when Allah (swt) answers our dua, it teaches us what to do when He (swt) gives us what we had asked Him (swt) for.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**When there comes the Help of Allah and the Opening**". Here Allah (swt) is bringing the attention of the Prophet (saw) to a specific moment in time. When is this moment? It is when the Help of Allah (swt) and the Opening came. So both the Help of Allah and the Opening are traveling. They are on a journey. They are coming towards the Prophet (saw) in response to the duas that he (saw) used to make. He (saw) had been waiting for a long time for them to arrive. He (saw) had been anticipating their arrival for years. Then on that day when he (saw) rode into Makkah on his (saw)'s mule, when the Islamic State had conquered this holy city, that was when the Help of Allah and the Opening finally arrived. This is the moment that Allah (swt) brings the attention of the Prophet (saw) to. He (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) in the ayahs to come what needs to be done at such a time.

Before we leave this ayah let us look a little at its language and search for its profound meanings. First and foremost we should notice that the help belongs wholly to Allah (swt). This is His (swt)'s help. It belongs completely to Him (swt). This is to remind the Prophet (saw) that the conquest of Makkah and this victory was possible only because of Allah (swt). He (swt) is the One Who brought about this victory. No one else had any part in it. It was only and completely because of Him (swt). He (swt) is the One Who sent this Message to the Prophet (saw). He (swt) is the One Who established the Islamic State in Madinah. He (swt) is the One Who gave the Muslims victory over their enemies in all of their battles. He (swt) is the One Who gave the Muslims perseverance and steadfastness in their dawah and jihad. He (swt) is the One Who foiled the plans of the enemies of this Message. So the victory belongs completely to Him (swt).

There are several lessons that we can take from this for our lives. First and foremost it is to realize that any victory or any success in our lives comes about only because of Allah (swt). Anytime that we receive something that we are seeking. Anytime we gain some favor or bounty. Anytime some distress or calamity is removed. It is only because of Allah (swt). The linguistic definition of the word *Nasr* is the fulfillment of a need. This is what *Nasr* is. It is the fulfillment of any need that we may have. As we can see from this ayah the *Nasr* belongs wholly and completely to Allah (swt). This should remind us that anytime any of our needs is ever fulfilled it is only because of Him (swt). He (swt) is the One Who gives us all that we need. He (swt) is the One Who helps us in every way. So when you become sick He (swt) is the One Who cures you, Who takes away your pain and suffering, when you are hungry He (swt) is the One Who feeds you and He (swt) is the One Who gives you to drink. When you are in distress He (swt) is the One Who takes away your anxiety and your fear. Think back now to all of the times that you have called out to Him (swt) and think about all of the times that He (swt) has answered. So it was only because of Him (swt) that you passed that exam or got through that interview or got that house which you wanted. Any desire that has been fulfilled. Any thirst that has been quenched. Any moment of pain that has been removed has only been because of Him (swt). How much then are you in debt to Him (swt)? How much then should you love Him (swt)?

Because Allah (swt) is the One Who fulfills all of our needs what then should be our primary relationship with Him (swt)? Should it not be that of a slave who is always asking of his Master? Should it not be that of a beggar always asking of the Rich One? This is what we are. We are but beggars and slaves. No matter how much money have, no matter what our accomplishments are, when compared to His (swt)'s Majesty and Glory we are the lowest of the low. The fact that He (swt) is the One Who helps us whenever we need help should remind us of this. How can you be arrogant and proud when you are always and forever in need of Him (swt)? Think about this for a moment now. You not only need Allah (swt) to answer your dua, but you also need Him (swt) for every second of your life. You need His (swt)'s help to breathe, to chew a morsel of food, to drink a glass of water, to walk a step. You even need His (swt)'s help to read these very words. How then can you turn away from Him (swt)? How then can you refuse to worship Him (swt)? Can you even begin to realize your utter dependence on Him (swt)?

Notice also the close connection that has been made between the Help of Allah (swt) and the Opening. What is meant by "Opening" here is really the victory or the conquest. Because is that not what an opening is? Is not a victory and a conquest an opening? For example Makkah was once closed for the Muslims. They were not able to enter the city. They were not able to make Hajj. They were prevented from applying the Law of Allah (swt) in the city. But then through the Help of Allah (swt) they were able to open the city. Now these restrictions were gone. Now they could enter the city. Now they were no longer oppressed and persecuted because of their Din in the city. Now they could rule themselves according to the Law of their Lord in the city. Now everything that they were once prevented from doing was no longer prevented for them. The city had now been opened for them. This opening came only with the Help of Allah (swt). What a relief this was for them? What a mercy this was for them?

The lesson that we can take from this for our lives is to realize that the victory for this Din will only come with the Help of Allah (swt). It will not come because of your efforts or mine. It will not come because of this movement or that movement. It will not come because of this great scholar or that scholar. It will only come when the Help of Allah (swt) comes.

We all know this, but do we realize the consequences of it? Do we realize what it means for the victory to be attached to the Help of Allah (swt)? One of the consequences is that we must never give up hope. We must never look at the situation in the world today and give up hope. Sometimes when we look only at this world we wonder to ourselves how this Din could ever be victorious today? We see no scenario or no reality with which this Din could ever come back. The enemies of this Din are too powerful. The Ummah is too weak. The Ummah is too divided. There are too many variables that need to be factored. There are too many questions that need to be answered. What about nuclear weapons? What about population control? What about the Sunni/Shia issue? Shaitan will tell us that the Islamic State can never return while these questions are unanswered. He then tells us that we should not even try. He makes us look at the world and shows us how victory can never be found in it. But he makes us to forget that it is not the world where victory is to be found. It is not this world that will give Islam victory. Rather it is only Allah (swt). The victory comes from beyond this world. The victory comes from the Real and the True. How then can we ever turn away from Him (swt) and look only at the world? How can you give up hope and compromise? How can you turn away from the path of dawah and jihad only for this word?

We know the method that we have to follow. We only have to be steadfast on it. Think about the situation of the Prophet (saw) when he (saw) made Hijra from Makkah. He (saw) was alone. He (saw) was on the run. It was only the web of a spider that was between him (saw) and the sword of his enemy. Yet within only ten years he (saw) gained complete victory over all of Arabia. But on that day if the Prophet (saw) had looked only at the world then he (saw) would not have found victory. But he (saw) knew that victory does not come from this world. So too must we come to this realization. We have to be steadfast in our efforts and remember that the victory is indeed close. Allah (swt) is the One Who brings the victory and He (swt) can bring it at any moment. So even if the night looks very dark, even if it seems that there is no light in sight, we have to continue in our path. We have to remember that there is a Force and a Power that is beyond this world. When He (swt) wants to He (swt) will make His Din dominant once again.

Now because Allah (swt) brings the victory that does not mean that we can become lazy in our efforts. That does not mean that we can just sleep and wait for the victory to come. That does not mean that we can just make dua and not make any effort on our part. What did the Prophet (saw) do? He (saw) knew that the victory comes only from Allah (swt). He (saw) knew that the victory would only come when Allah (swt) pleased it to come. But did he (saw) simply sit at home and wait for it? Did he (saw) simply make dua in the masjid and not do anything more? No, rather he (saw) made dua but he (saw) also made his best effort. He (saw) built a movement. He (saw) cultured them with Quran. He (saw) interacted with the society. He (saw) met with tribal leaders. He (saw) established a State. He (saw) waged jihad. He (saw) made treaties. He (saw) did everything possible in his power following the method that his Lord had given him (saw). Then when he (saw) had done all that he (saw) could Allah (swt) gave victory. So too must we make the effort. So too must we be steadfast on the path no matter how long it takes. Once we are striving then we can have the hope that the Help of Allah (swt) is near.

Unfortunately we see that many Muslims in the West today have not come to this realization. They have all but given up hope on Islam ever returning. They have come to the conclusion that all we can do is make the best lives for ourselves here. That is why it is very few among the scholars who speak about working to bring back the Islamic State. Very few who speak about contributing to this effort. Very few who speak about working for a change. Most speak only about how we as Muslims can make the best lives for ourselves in these lands. Some even go to the extent to speak about how we can help these kufr nations and how we can contribute to their betterment. They forget that the very foundation upon which these societies have been established is the very antithesis of Islam. Secularism contradicts what we believe from the very foundation and core. These people believe that Allah (swt) has no place in the life of the society. That He (swt) has no say in the lives of the people. That He (swt) has no say in how the wealth and resources of the earth are used and distributed. They believe that the very purpose in life should be the satisfaction of desires and not the servitude of Allah (swt). How can you love a society that is based on such a foundation? How can you live contently in such a land?

But this is exactly what many Muslims today are doing. They say that we should not work for a change. They say that the change will never come. They say that there is no hope. They admit that the ideal is for us to live under the Law of Allah (swt). No sane Muslim will deny this. But they say that this is an ideal that can never be reached. They look only at the world and they do not see victory for this Din in the world. They fail to realize that victory for this Din does not come from this world but it comes from the Real and the True. They may even recite this very Surah in their Salah a hundred times a month. They hear the very words of their Lord and Master. But they do not see the connection that Allah (swt) makes here between His (swt)'s help and the victory. Their hearts are so attached to this world, so distant from the Divine. They have sold this Din for the trifling price of this world. They have given up on the Real and the True. They have forgotten about Him (swt) and about pleasing Him (swt). They only care about pleasing their own selves. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) allow us to be steadfast in supporting this dawah no matter what!

Another lesson that we can take from the fact that the victory and the Help of Allah (swt) are so connected is to realize once again in our own lives how many times He (swt) has given us victory. We should never see this ayah as speaking only about the conquest of Makkah. We should never see this ayah as speaking only about the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. We should never see this ayah as speaking only about victory for Islam. Rather there is a guidance in every ayah of the Quran for every believer. In this ayah Allah (swt) is teaching all believers how to respond when He (swt) gives them victory through His (swt)'s Help. When He (swt) gives them an opening through His (swt)'s Help. So think back now to all the times when you were in need. Think back to all the times when you called out to Him (swt). Think back now to all the times when you desired something but it was closed off from you. You were sick and your health was locked away from you. You were hungry and your food was locked away from you. You were in distress and serenity was locked away from you. Who but Allah (swt) opened these for you? Who but He (swt) gave you the relief that you sought? How then can you ever turn away from Him (swt)? How then can you ever refuse to work in His (swt)'s cause?

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿٢﴾

2. And you see the people enter into the Din of Allah in great numbers.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) how He (swt) gave him (saw) victory. How He (swt) answered his (saw)'s prayer. How He (swt) gave him (saw) what he (saw) most yearned for. From this ayah we can see where the heart of the Prophet (saw) was. We can see what was his (saw)'s goal in life. We can see what he (saw) was always striving for. If we want to follow in his (saw)'s footsteps. If we want to walk the path that he (saw) walked. The path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The path that leads to salvation. Then we also must yearn for what he (saw) yearned for. We also must make this as the goal in our life.

Allah (swt) speaks to the Prophet (saw) in this ayah and says “**And you see the people enter into the Din of Allah in great numbers**”. This was what happened when the Help of Allah came. This was the victory. The people entering into the Din of Allah (swt) in large numbers. The Arabic word *afwaj* that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah gives the meaning of extremely large numbers. This is what happened that Day in Makkah. Not only did all of the Quraysh enter into the Din, but all of the other tribes entered as well. During the years of conflict between the Islamic State and the Quraysh, most of the other Arab tribes decided to remain neutral. They decided to wait and see who would prevail in this conflict. Then on that Day they saw. So they all entered into the Din along with the Quraysh. All of Arabia entered into Islam on that day. All of the people came to the Prophet (saw) to give him (saw) allegiance. This was the victory for Islam. This was the relief that the Prophet (saw) was seeking. This was the answer to his (saw)'s prayers. In vast numbers the people became Muslim. In throngs and crowds they came to give allegiance to the Islamic State. To live under the Law of Allah (swt). To accept the Prophet (saw) as the leader whom they must listen to and obey. Just think how much of a mercy this sight must have been for the Prophet (saw). How cool must it have made his eyes? To see what he (saw) had strove and sacrificed for 23 years come to fruition before his eyes.

The first lesson that we can take from this is to realize that dawah was the life of the Prophet (saw). This is what he (saw) lived for. This sight of the people entering into the Din in large numbers is what he (saw) had spent his days and nights trying to achieve. This was what he (saw) yearned for. So if we want to follow in his (saw)'s footsteps. If we also want to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Then this must be what we yearn for as well. This must be our mission in life as well. This is what we must spend our time and our money and our efforts on. For this cause. To bring the people into the Din of Allah (swt). To make them enter it in large numbers.

If we truly love Allah (swt). If we truly live for Him (swt). Then how could this not be our goal in life. How can we seek with our life something other than this? If you truly love Allah (swt) then do you not want to give every moment in your life to Him (swt)? Do you not want to try your best to please Him (swt) at every moment? And what could be more pleasing to Him (swt) that you could do other than inviting the people to Him (swt)? To make the people to dedicate their lives to Him (swt) just like you have done? If you truly love Allah (swt) then what could be a better use of your time other than working towards this goal? To make as many souls as possible to submit to Allah (swt). To make them enter completely into His (swt)'s Din of Al-Islam.

Notice also that Allah (swt) does not describe the people as simply accepting His Din, rather He (swt) describes them as "entering" it. The Arabic word *dakhala* gives the meaning of entering something completely. So much so that what you enter becomes a part of you. It mixes and intermingles with you until it transforms you. It becomes a part of who you are. This is what Allah (swt) expects of us. This is what He (swt) expects of all mankind. Not just to accept this Din or to believe in this Din but to enter it. To enter it to the extent that it transforms our lives. To the extent that it becomes the criteria with which we judge all actions and thoughts. To the extent that it becomes the light which guides the way at every moment of our life. To reach this level we have to be among those who always remember Allah (swt). To reach this level we have to be among those who have been cultured with the thoughts and ideas of the Quran. To reach this level we have to be in an environment that always reminds us of the Real and the True. Do we have such an environment in the world today?

So if our goal in life is to make as many people as possible to enter completely into the Din of Allah (swt), to make as many people as possible to submit completely Him (swt), then how do we go about reaching this goal? What is the best path that we can take to arrive at this objective? We believe and of course Allah (swt) Knows best that it is by working to restore the Islamic State. The Khilafah. This is how we believe that we as a Muslim Ummah today can fulfill the purpose of our existence. This is how we can correctly convey to mankind the Message from our Lord. This is how we can make as many people as possible to enter into the Din of Allah (swt). Why do we say this?

First and foremost because this was the method of the Prophet (saw). Anyone who studies the Seerah sincerely will see that this indeed was his (saw)'s method. From day one of this dawah the Prophet (saw) was working to establish the sovereignty of Allah (swt) on the earth. Yes it is true that the Prophet (saw) called to Tawhid, called to the Oneness of Allah (swt). But what does Tawhid really mean? It not only means that you do not worship any other gods besides Allah (swt),but it also means that you do not take any other sovereigns or lords besides Him (swt). Just as He (swt) should be the only God Who is worshipped, He (swt) should also be the only Sovereign Who is obeyed and submitted. This was what the Prophet (saw) was calling to from the very first day. Why do you think that he (saw) faced so much oppression from the Quraysh? Why were they willing to do anything to make him (saw) give up his (saw)'s call? It was because they understood the reality of his (saw)'s call. They knew that it came to take power away from them. Furthermore if all that the Prophet (saw) was seeking was to make the people worship only one God, then why did he (saw) not stay in Makkah? Why did he (saw) make Hijra to Madinah? Why did he (saw) meet with the tribes that came for Hajj? These actions show us that he (saw) was seeking a base. No one can deny that what he (saw) established in Madinah was a State. It had an army, it had a commander, it has a functioning government with a court system and a treasury. If this is not what a state is then what is? This same state was implemented by the Khalifahs who followed the Prophet (saw). Anyone who studies history sincerely will be able to see this.

There is also no one who knows the history of this Din who can deny that the purpose of this State was to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to the people. To make certain that the people correctly receive this Message. To remove all the obstacles that might prevent them from properly receiving it. We have authentic narrations from the Sahabah themselves telling the kings and emperors that this was the reason why they had come to their lands. The reason why the Muslim armies were at their gates. So this was the method of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. They did not do missionary work where they simply preached to the people while allowing the people to live in a secular world. No rather they used the Islamic State to establish the sovereignty of Allah (swt) over the people. Only when this was done did the people start to enter into the Din of Allah (swt) in large numbers. Just look at the history for a moment. Look at all the lands to which Islam spread under the leadership of the righteous Khalifahs. How many years did it take for the entire population of those lands to become Muslim? Very few. In a few years the entire population of these lands, millions and millions of people, accepted the Din of Allah (swt). They entered into the Din of Allah (swt) completely. They even abandoned their language and adopted the language of this Din. That is why to this day they are called "Arabs" even though the language of those lands before Islam came was not Arabic. Compare this to Makkah where for 13 years the Prophet (saw) was preaching by himself, without a state to support him (saw). This was the Messenger of Allah (swt) himself (saw). In all these years of individual preaching he (saw) without the state was only able to convert at most 5% of the population of Makkah. The rest of the people all remained on kufr. They remained on kufr even when they were certain that he (saw) was the true Messenger. Why is this? It is because people are by nature stubborn. It is because people by nature do not want to change. It is because people by nature do not want to give up their lusts and desires. It is because people by nature are lazy and heedless. Even if they may be good people at heart. There is always something that holds them back from taking the big leap into this Din. This is assuming the Message even reaches them in the first place. Think now about the secular world in which we live today. A world in which there is nothing that reminds the people of their Creator and there is everything

that reminds them of other than Him (swt). This Message does not even reach the majority of the people today. All that reaches them are the lies and fabrications spread about this Message. Even today if you were to do an internet search you would find more sites speaking against Islam than sites for it. How can you expect the people to enter into the Din in such an environment? Furthermore even if the Message does somehow reach them, through all the propaganda and the lies, many of them will still choose not to accept it. As we said because such is the nature of people. Allah (swt) Himself even tells us this in the Quran. Most people do not have the strength to live the life of a true Muslim in a secular world. Such is the imperfection of man. So the bottom line is that we cannot accept the vast majority of mankind to enter into this Din in a world like we have today. A secular world. A world of heedlessness. A world of materialism and consumerism. No matter how strong are the arguments that we have. No matter how powerful and convincing of a Miracle the Quran is. There may be a few souls who will be able to fight the tide and come into this Din, but many will not. For how many years now have Muslims been trying to carry dawah in the West? Have they been successful in converting even one percent of the total population? Despite all their efforts, despite all the forms of media and communication that are available these days, the results have been terrible. This is because your method is wrong. Trying to have dawah to mankind before the Khilafah is like putting the carriage in front of the horse. It is never going to work. That is why we believe that if our goal is what Allah (swt) describes in this ayah, to see the people enter into the Din in large numbers, then we have to reach this objective following the path of the Prophet (saw). We have to first establish the Law of Allah (swt) over the people. Then when the world around them becomes one that submits to Allah (swt) then they will submit to Him (swt) as well. We should note here that we are not calling for the establishment of the Islamic State in the West. We believe that the Khilafah should begin in Muslim lands and then be allowed to spread to the rest of the world. This was the method of the Prophet (saw). This was the goal that he (saw) yearned to reach. If we want to follow his excellent example. If we want Allah (swt) to be pleased with us. If we want salvation and the Garden. Then this must be the goal towards which we are working towards as well.

So in this ayah Allah (swt) shows us the sight that is most pleasing to the Prophet (saw). The sight with which he (saw) knew that he (saw) fulfilled the purpose of his (saw)'s existence. This is done so that such a sight could be beloved to us as well. So that we also would yearn to see such a sight. Just imagine how wonderful it would be if we could see such a sight today? In the time that we live in. Not only to see the flag of the Prophet (saw) flying over every land on the earth, but also to see all the people entering into this Din in large numbers. To see all of the people accept Allah (swt) as their Lord and Master. To see them submit to His (swt)'s Law. To see them follow His (swt)'s Messenger. For those of us who live for Allah (swt), what could be a sweeter sight for our eyes than this? This is the dream that we should be working day and night Insha Allah to bring to reality.

Is this not the way that dawah should be done? How much better is this than the way in which Muslims try to do dawah today? How much can you accomplish if you just speak to one person here or set up a dawah table there? Will you be able to get through to anyone? Even if you can convince one person that this Message is the Truth what is the chance that they will accept it? Even if they accept it what is the chance that in this secular world they will enter into this Din fully like Allah (swt) wants them to? What is the chance that they will live the life of a true Muslim? So while we all should do what we can to carry this Message to the non-Muslims that we know we have to realize that such is not the optimal way. Such is not the way that will achieve the most results. And we want to achieve the best results. We have to realize how serious this is. We are speaking here about the eternity for all mankind. We are speaking here about Paradise and Hellfire. You have with you the Message that can save mankind from the Fire. You have with you the Message that can grant them the Garden. You only need to make a little bit of an effort to convey it to them. Why then would you not want to do it in the best way? Why then would you not want to make every effort to get this Message out to as many people as you can? Realize that only the Islamic State will help you to achieve this. Only the State can bring about the reality that this ayah describes. A vision of the people coming to this Din in multitudes. A vision of them coming to Allah (swt) in multitudes. May Allah (swt) grant us this sight!

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾

3. So make Tasbih with Hamd for your Rabb and seek His Forgiveness, surely He has always been Oft-Returning.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to address the Prophet (saw). He (swt) tells him (saw) what should be done at this point. Now the Help of Allah (swt) has finally arrived. Now the land has been opened for Islam. Now the Muslims are free to practice their Din without fear of persecution or torment. Now the people have entered into the Din in large numbers. Now the base from which this Din can spread to mankind has been formed. Now all that is displeasing to Allah (swt) had been removed from the earth and all that is pleasing to Him (swt) had been established. So what should the Prophet (saw) do at this point? How should he (saw) respond to this bounty that his Lord has given him (saw)? This is what He (swt) tells him (saw) here. This also is what we need to do when our prayer is answered. We spoke previously about how this Surah teaches us how to deal with victory. It teaches us how to respond when our prayers are answered. It teaches how we can thank our Lord for what He (swt) has bestowed on us.

The first command that Allah (swt) gives for the Prophet (saw) is that he (saw) has to **"So make Tasbih with Hamd for your Rabb"**. First notice the word "So", this word is an indication that the command given here is a consequence of what Allah (swt) had said in the previous ayah. So in the previous ayah Allah (swt) had showed the Prophet (saw) how all of the people had entered into the Din in large numbers. He (swt) had shown him (saw) the fulfillment of what he (saw) had yearned for. The dream of the Prophet (saw) had come true. When then should the Prophet (saw) do at this point? How should he (saw) show his (saw)'s gratitude? This is what Allah (swt) tells him (saw) here. The Prophet (saw) needs to make Tasbih with Hamd. These two words are difficult to translate to English. The word Tasbih literally means "to float", to keep at a certain level and not allow to come down. We can say that the water of the sea makes tasbih for the ship and the wind in the sky makes tasbih for the plane.

What then does it mean to make Tasbih for Allah (swt)? It means to make Him (swt) the highest and to never allow Him (swt) to come down. It means to make Him (swt) as the zenith and the pinnacle and to never allow any weakness or deficiency in that. Now of course this does not mean that He (swt) is in some physical location and we are holding Him (swt) up in that location. May Allah (swt) save us from such blasphemy! He (swt) is exalted beyond the restrictions and the limitations of space and time! What we mean by this is that we have to always make Him (swt) as the Highest in every way and we should never allow Him (swt) to come down.

There are actually several different ways in which we can make Allah (swt) as the Highest. The first is that we have to make Him (swt) as the most important in our lives. Nothing else should be more important in our lives than He (swt). We have to live for Him (swt). We have to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure in every action that we take. This is the station that He (swt) has to have in our lives. Now one way in which we make Tasbih for Him (swt) is that we never allow Him (swt) to come down from this station. We never allow Him (swt) to cease from being the purpose of our lives. We never allow Him (swt) to cease to be the object of all of our striving and our endeavors. He (swt) is always the Highest for us. Higher than our family, higher than our wealth, higher than our desires, higher than our own selves. To make Tasbih for Him (swt) is to keep Him (swt) at this position. To never allow Him (swt) to come down.

Another way in which we make Him (swt) as the Highest is that we must always believe in Him (swt) as the Perfect One and we must never allow any weakness or deficiency in our belief in Him (swt). He (swt) is Perfect in all His (swt)'s Names and attributes. This is how we have to always think of Him (swt). We have to never allow any weakness or imperfection in our perception of Him (swt). So for example we cannot think for one moment that He (swt) cannot see us. We cannot think for one moment that He (swt) does not know what we are doing. We cannot think for one moment that there is something which He (swt) cannot do. We cannot think for one moment that He (swt) will never forgive us. We cannot think that He (swt) is restricted to a particular location. We have to always believe in Him (swt) as the absolute Perfect One.

This then is how we make Tasbih for Allah (swt). It is always believe in Him (swt) as the Perfect One, to remove any weakness or imperfection from Him (swt), and to make Him (swt) as the most important in our lives. Do you also see the connection between these two meanings of Tasbih? Once you realize that He (swt) is the Perfect One. Once you realize His (swt)'s Majesty and Glory, how then can you ever dedicate your life to other than Him (swt)? How then can you ever make anyone else other than Him (swt) as the most important in your life? If you truly realized the kind of Being that He (swt) is then you would see why He (swt) deserves everything from you. All of your problems would go away. You would realize that the only problem you have in life is how to be near to Him (swt), how to gain His (swt)'s Pleasure.

This is what Allah (swt) wants us to do whenever He (swt) grants us victory. Whenever He (swt) answers our prayers. Just like this is what He (swt) wanted the Prophet (saw) to do when Makkah was opened. But we do not need to wait for a great event to happen in our lives to make Tasbih of our Rabb. We can do it at any moment. Whenever the Help of Allah (swt) comes. Whenever He (swt) satisfies one of our deeds. And do you know what? The Help of Allah (swt) is always coming to you. At every moment He (swt) is sustaining you and keeping you alive. At every moment He (swt) is keeping some pain or some hardship from reaching you. At every moment He (swt) is keeping that Iman in your heart. So at every moment He (swt) is helping you in one way or another. What then is preventing you from making this Tasbih of Him (swt) when you realize all that He (swt) has bestowed on you?

But we can see from this ayah that not only does Allah (swt) want us to make Tasbih for Him (swt) but He (swt) also wants us to make Tasbih for Him (swt) with Hamd. This word Hamd is also a word with several dimensions of meaning. One meaning is thanks and gratitude. This meaning is connected with the first meaning of Tasbih that we said. That of making Allah (swt) the most important in our lives. So we have to make Allah (swt) the most important in our lives as a gratitude for all that He (swt) has given us. Not only for that particular favor or blessing, not only for that particular victory, but in fact for all that He (swt) has bestowed upon us. We have to think about everything that He (swt) has given us and we have to give Him (swt) the highest

place in our lives because of all this. So look now towards your life. Do you not find many things that you can be thankful to Him (swt) for? Just the fact that you are alive right now, just the fact that you exist right now. That in and of itself is a great blessing. Your health, the fact that you do not have any pain or life threatening illnesses. How many people are there in this world for whom every moment of their lives is one of pain? Either physical pain or even worse some form of mental anguish. Should you not be thankful that you are not one of them? What about the Iman that you have in your heart? The fact that Allah (swt) has guided you to His Din. What about the food in your stomach? What about the roof that covers you? What about the shoes on your feet? As Allah (swt) has told us in other ayahs of the Quran if we were to even try and number all of His (swt)'s favors and bounties upon us we will not be able to. But we should still bring them to mind. We should remember as many of them as we can. Especially those which are specific for us. We have to remember them and we have to remember how it was Allah (swt) Who had given them to us. This is what Allah (swt) is asking us to do here. To reflect and realize all of His (swt)'s bounties upon us and to draw closer to Him (swt) through that realization. That is how we make Tasbih for Allah (swt) with Hamd. We make Him (swt) as the pinnacle of our lives and we do this through showing gratitude for Him (swt) for everything that He (swt) has given us. The other meaning of Hamd relates to the other meaning of Tasbih. Recall how we said that the other meaning of Tasbih is to always think of Allah (swt) as Perfect. To never allow any weakness or deficiency in our perception of Him (swt). The other meaning of Hamd is to praise and to extol. So we make Allah (swt) as Perfect, we glorify Him (swt), by always praising and extolling Him (swt). You usually give praise to someone who is deserving of praise. For example you would praise the scholar for being intelligent, you would praise the warrior for being brave, you would praise the rich man for being generous, you would praise the poor man for being patient, you would praise the judge for being just, you would praise the woman for being beautiful. These people all have some attributes of perfection. They have something about them that is commendable. But now think about Allah (swt). Then think how much praise He (swt) deserves. How much is His (swt)'s utter perfection!

This is what we need to do anytime that Allah (swt) answers our prayers. This is what we need to do anytime that He (swt) gives us any success in this life. We have to make Tasbeeh for Him (swt) with Hamd. We have to double and re-double our efforts in making Him (swt) the most central focus of our existence. Shaitan will always come and try to put someone else or something else in this place that should only be for Allah (swt). He will always try to distract us away from Him (swt). This is what we must never allow. This is what we have to always fight. We have always bring to mind how much we are in debt to Him (swt). We have to always remember how much He (swt) has given us. If a person holds a door open for you for a few moments you feel obliged to say "thank you" for them. Now think about how much your Lord has given you. Think about how pathetic and miserable and worthless a creature you are when compared with Him (swt). He (swt) does not owe you anything. You have not done anything for Him (swt) You mean nothing to Him (swt). Yet He (swt) has still given you so much. How much then is the onus upon you to be grateful to Him (swt)? Why can't you give Him (swt) the place in your life that He (swt) deserves?

Not only do you have to thank Him (swt), but in addition you also have to glorify and extol Him (swt). He (swt) deserves all of the glorification and all of the exaltation. Just think about the kind of Being that He (swt) IS. How can you not praise a Being of such Perfection and Majesty? Especially when His (swt)'s Help descends upon you. Especially when He (swt) gives you a victory or an opening. Especially when you taste of His (swt)'s Mercy. At such times how can you not remember Him (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be remembered? How can you not glorify Him (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be glorified? When He (swt) grants you what you had asked for, when He (swt) suffices your need, why then can you not give Him (swt) His right? Why can you not put your face on the floor and exalt Him (swt) with the greatest of exaltations? Praise Him (swt), sing His (swt)'s praises morning and evening, and through that give Him (swt) the place that He (swt) deserves. If you could only realize the kind of Being that He (swt) IS. Our words cannot describe it. We cannot do Him (swt) justice. But you know that there is such a Being. How then can you not glorify Him (swt) as you know He (swt) deserves?

After we have made Tasbih for Him (swt) with Hamd, we then have to seek forgiveness of Him (swt). Now a question that you may ask here is why do we need to seek forgiveness when we have not done any sin. After all what has happened here is that Allah (swt) has given us a victory. He (swt) has given us what we seek. Does not then mean that He (swt) is pleased with us? Why is it then so important that we seek forgiveness of Him (swt)? Why do we have to do it especially at this point. When the victory comes. When the prayer is answered. It is because we are always and forever ever in need of His (swt)'s Forgiveness. Do any of us truly worship and serve Allah (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be? Have any of us even come close to repaying the debt that we owe to Him (swt)? Have we even given Him (swt) His (swt)'s rights over us? Of course not, none of us even come close. Not even the Prophet (saw). How much then are we in need of His (swt)'s Forgiveness. To cover all of our faults and shortcomings.

The Arabic word *ghafara* that we have translated here as "forgiveness" literally means to cover. It means to hide and conceal. This is the only hope that any of us have. We need Allah (swt) to conceal for us all of our wrongs and our failures. How many moments have we spent in heedlessness? How many moments have we spent not worshipping and serving Him (swt)? This is the greatest of injustice. Because this is injustice that is done against the Divine and the True. Our only hope is if He (swt) in His (swt)'s Sublime Mercy and Tremendous and unfathomable Love for us somehow covers us for us these mountains and mountains of sin. You do not need to go as far as looking at a woman or missing a prayer to commit sin. Just a moment of heedlessness. Just a moment spent in other than the worship and servitude of Him (swt) is sin enough. Although He (swt) may not have classified it as a sin in His Divine Law it is still doing injustice to Him (swt) when we consider all that He (swt) has done for us. The only hope that we have is in seeking forgiveness of Him (swt). Now look here at how Merciful and Loving He (swt) IS. He (swt) Knows that only in seeking forgiveness of Him (swt) do we have a chance at salvation. So He (swt) commands us to seek forgiveness of Him (swt). Even though our seeking forgiveness of Him (swt) will not benefit Him (swt) in the least. It will only benefit ourselves. It will only save ourselves. Still He (swt) tells us to do what is good for us.

So the first reason why we need to seek forgiveness of Allah (swt) is because we can never worship and serve Him (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be. We especially need to remember this fact when He (swt) grants us a victory. When He (swt) answers our prayers. Even for that blessing or bounty that He (swt) has bestowed on us, even for that we can never be truly grateful to Him (swt). Even if we do make Tasbeeh for Him (swt) with Hamd to the best of our ability, we still would not be able to give Him (swt) the gratitude that is due. But this is only the first of many reasons why we need to seek forgiveness at such moments.

Another reason why we need to seek forgiveness during moments of victory or success is because of any feelings of pride or arrogance that may appear in our hearts at such moments. Arrogance was the sin of the devil and it is this sin that he likes to inject into the child of Adam to lead him astray. The one moment when we are especially prone to this attack is during moments of victory or success. When everything goes our way, when the bounties and the favors descend on us, that is when Shaitan likes to inject within us feelings of arrogance and pride. He makes us to think that we are the best. He makes us to think that what we have been given is what we deserve on account of our greatness. Rather than attributing the blessing to Allah (swt), he makes us attribute to ourselves. To our hard work. To our talents. Of course this is utter foolishness and utter insolence. Every good thing that we have is only from Allah (swt) and not from our own selves. This is fact that we must never forget. But just in case we do. Even for a moment if we allow some small sense of pride and self-satisfaction to enter into our hearts at that moment of victory, then for that we have to ask forgiveness of Allah (swt). As Allah (swt) has told us in the hadith, pride is something that belongs only to Him (swt). No one is allowed to have any share of it. If they try to then they earn His (swt)'s Wrath and displeasure.

Yet another reason why we need to seek forgiveness of Allah (swt) during moments of victory or answered prayers is because of any despair that we may have had before the victory was granted to us. We know that we have to always make dua to Allah (swt). We know that we should never give up on Him (swt) answering our prayer. But sometimes, when moments pass without the prayer being answered, Shaitan may put the thought in our hearts that Allah (swt) is

never going to answer our prayer. If the situation becomes truly desperate, we may for a fraction of a second, believe him. This is not right. This is a sin. This is giving up on Allah (swt). So when the prayer is answered, when the victory comes, then we must seek forgiveness of our Lord for having done this. Only by His (swt)'s pardon and mercy may we be absolved.

Let us remind ourselves at this point that this command to seek forgiveness was directed first and foremost to the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) commanded him (saw) to seek forgiveness when he (saw) saw the people entering into the Din of Allah (swt) in large numbers. But you would think that if there is one person who can be absolved of this obligation to seek pardon it would be the Prophet (saw). He (saw) is the one who worshipped and served Allah (swt) more than any other human being who had ever lived. He (saw) is the one who more than anyone else dedicated every moment that he (saw) had for Allah (swt). There was not one moment that passed him (saw) by except that he (saw) was striving to please Allah (swt) in that moment. There was not one moment that passed him (saw) by except that he (saw) was remembering Allah (swt) in that moment. He (saw) is the perfect human being. He (saw) is the greatest of creation. Even greater than the heavens and the earth. Even greater than paradise, hell, and all the angels. So pure was he (saw) that his very sweat smelt of musk. He (saw) was also one who was safe from arrogance and pride. Even that day in Makkah as the Muslim army marched into the city, the Prophet (saw) was riding on a donkey. The donkey as we know is a meek and lowly rider, not magnificent and grand like a stallion. The Prophet (saw) could have ridden on a stallion if he (saw) wanted to, but he (saw) did not want to seek pride in this world. Not only was he (saw) riding on a donkey but he (saw) had his head down and covered in a shroud. Just imagine this sight. The Prophet (saw) was one who had once been driven out of Makkah. Now he (saw) had returned. He (saw) had returned at the head of a mighty army. Yet despite all this he (saw) does not gloat or show arrogance in any way. Rather he (saw) rides in with his head down, making Tasbih of Allah (swt) and seeking forgiveness. This is the perfect human being. So if there is anyone who can be said to not be in need of forgiveness from Allah (swt) then it would be he (saw). Why then does Allah (swt) command him (saw) to seek forgiveness in this ayah?

One reason could be because he (saw) is setting an example for us. He (saw) is teaching us. Although he (saw) may not be in need of forgiveness from Allah (swt), we certainly are. And since he (saw) is the example that we must follow, his (saw)'s seeking of forgiveness is something for us to observe and emulate. Allah (swt) gave him (saw) to us to be the example that we follow in everything that we do. He (saw) was always cognizant of this fact. That is why he (saw) did not do any action except that he (saw) realized how that action would be a Sunnah for his Ummah to follow. That is why he (saw) did not do any action except that he (saw) tried to please Allah (swt) with it. So much was his (saw)'s awareness of his (saw)'s being taken as an example by his Ummah. So much was his (saw)'s desire that his Ummah attain salvation as well. That often times he (saw) would do actions that were more for us than they were for him (saw).

This is one opinion among the scholars as to why the Prophet (saw) sought forgiveness. Another reason, and we believe an even stronger one, is that even he (saw) could not truly worship and serve Allah (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be. Even the Prophet (saw) could not give Allah (swt) the right that He (swt) deserves. So much has He (swt) given each and every one of us. So much are we all in debt to Him (swt). That even the Prophet (saw), who strove to the best of his ability with every single waking moment, to please Allah (swt), still could not give to Him (swt) the gratitude that He (swt) deserves. For this even he (saw) needed to ask forgiveness from Him (swt). We are not saying that he (saw) sinned in any way. We are saying that even as great as he (saw) was, he (saw) was still only human. And the very nature of the human is imperfection. The very nature of the human is limitation. So even he (saw) could never have done justice to the Divine. The Real and the True. The absolutely Perfect and Sublime.

Now just think that if even the Prophet (saw) sought forgiveness from Allah (swt), then how much more is the onus upon us. He (saw) never ever despaired of Allah (swt) answering his prayer. He (saw) was always certain that the victory would come. Even at the darkest of moments for the dawah. As we mentioned he (saw) was never arrogant or proud. And he (saw) always worshipped and served Allah (swt) to the best of his ability. Despite all this, if he (saw) still sought forgiveness then how about us?

Not only does this Arabic word *ghafara* give the meaning of covering and concealing, but it also gives the meaning of protection and safety. Thus when we seek forgiveness of Allah (swt) we are not only asking Him (swt) to cover for us the evil that we have done but we are also asking Him (swt) to save us from it. How dangerous are sins for us? How much harm can they do to us? First of all we should realize that every sin we do brings us one step closer to the Fire of Hell. Every sin that we do is one more weight in our scale pan of evil deeds. We know what is the terrible fate on the Day of Judgment for those whose scale of evil is heavier than their scale of good. That is why we need Allah (swt) to save us from our sins. To save us from their evil consequences. To save us from the pain and the torment that they can transform into.

Just as there are evil consequences for sins in the Hereafter there are also such consequences in this world. There is nothing that makes you more distant from the Divine than sins. There is nothing that makes your Iman weaker than sins. There is nothing that rusts and darkens the heart like sins. Sins are like a virus. They accumulate and they build on each other. So the more that you sin the more that you will love to sin. The first sin is always the hardest. It only becomes easier and easier after that. Soon you even fail to realize that you are sinning. Soon the pain and the guilt go away. This is what happens to those who allow themselves to be covered in sins. To those who allow themselves to be covered in heedlessness and negligence of the Divine. And as we said if we truly realized the right that Allah (swt) has over us then we would see every sin as a major sin. We would see every moment of heedlessness as a major sin. Although they are not really major sins in the Shariah, such should still be our perception of them if we give our Rabb the right estimation. That is why seeking forgiveness of Allah (swt) is so important. Not only for our sins to be covered and concealed. But also so that we can be saved from their evil consequences. Especially at those moments of happiness and joy. Especially when the victory comes. These are the moments when we are most likely to forget seeking forgiveness. These are the moments when we are most likely to forget all the evil that we have done. So these are the moments when we are most in need of protection from Allah (swt). We have to always remember that our Rabb only wants for us what is good for us.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us that “**surely He has always been Off-Returning**”. The Arabic word *tawab* means the One Who often turns or the One Who is always in a state of turning. This is Who Allah (swt) IS, and it is indeed one of His (swt)’s most beautiful Names. Once again it is important that we do not take this Name literally. Allah (swt) does not literally turn like one of us turns or like a body that is turning. No rather this Name is a metaphor to mean that He (swt) always turns to us in forgiveness and mercy. When we do sins, even when we become of the heedless and we do not remember Him (swt), then He (swt) becomes distant from us. He (swt) no longer looks to us as one of His (swt)’s creations that He (swt) is pleased with. But when we rush to seek forgiveness of Him (swt), He (swt) is One Who will always turn to us. No matter how many times we sin. No matter how many times we become distant from Him (swt). He (swt) will always turn back to us. For the big sins and the small sins. Time and time again. Such is His (swt)’s Nature. Such is the kind of Being Who He (swt) IS. How then can you turn away from such a Being?

Notice also how He (swt) says that He (swt) always has been *tawab*. This is to further emphasize the eternality of this attribute. This is how He (swt) always has been. There has never been a moment except that He (swt) has been *tawab* in that moment. It is part of His Being. This is also how He (swt) will always be. There is nothing that can change this attribute of His (swt). So how then can you ever give up on His (swt)’s Mercy? How then can you ever think even for one moment that He (swt) will not turn to you should you choose to turn to Him (swt)?

So we should never tire of seeking forgiveness of Allah (swt), and we should never tire of turning to Him (swt) no matter how many times we sin or become negligent. We have to realize the kind of Rabb that we have. In this Surah He (swt) has told us of the day when He (swt) gave victory for the Din. In the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw) He (swt) has given us the method by which we can achieve that victory again. But until that day comes. For all the small victories that we have over the course of our lives. For all those moments when we find happiness in our hearts. For all the times when our prayers are answered. We have to remember what He (swt) has taught us here. We have to learn how we can show Him (swt) the proper gratitude.