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Surah At-Tawbah
Part 2 (Ayahs 61-129)

وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أذنٌ قُلْ
 أذنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ
 لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



61. And from them are those who harm the Prophet and say “he is an ear”. Say “An ear of good for you, who believes in Allah and believes the believers, and a mercy for the ones who believe from you”. And those who harm the Messenger of Allah for them is a painful punishment.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe for us the hypocrites. He (swt) continues to describe for us their evil. This is done in order that we may take our precautions from them and also so that we might save ourselves from becoming like them. If you are still in doubt as to how evil these people are then consider how Allah (swt) describes them in this ayah. Consider what they have done to the Prophet (saw), the one human being who you have to love the most. In addition to describing these hypocrites, in this ayah Allah (swt) also describes our beloved (saw). Allah (swt) reminds us why he (saw) is deserving of our love, our prayers, and deserving that we follow him (saw). The Prophet (saw) is also the beloved of Allah (swt) and that is why He (swt) ends this ayah by telling us what He (swt) will do with those who hurt His (swt)’s Beloved.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**And from them are those who harm the Prophet and say “he is an ear”**”. Here Allah (swt) is telling us of what some of the hypocrites would say about the Prophet (saw). Many of them would say that he (saw) is “all ear”. What is meant by this is that he (saw) listens to whatever it is that is said to him (saw) and to whoever it is that is speaking to him (saw). He (saw) does not discriminate against anyone. He (saw) does not doubt or become suspicious of anyone. He (saw) does not reject or become angry with anyone. Rather he (saw) has such a pure heart, such kindness and compassion, that he (saw) always thinks the best of others. He (saw) always listens to and believes what is said to him (saw).

Now of course this is a quality for which the Prophet (saw) should have been praised. How many leaders take the time to listen to the complaints and the concerns of their people? Most of them care only for themselves and for those close to them. They do not care for the rest of their people and the suffering that they are going through. The Prophet (saw) was not like this. He (saw) was always concerned for this Ummah. He (saw) always thought to himself as to what he could do for them. Even though he (saw) was extremely busy he (saw) was still there for them. He (saw) had to fulfill the role of the Messenger, the head of state, the commander of the military, the leader of his household, the spiritual guide, the teacher of the religion, and others. Even though he (saw) had to play all these roles, he (saw) still found the time to sit with the Muslims and listen to their comments and concerns. So he (saw) should have been praised and applauded for this, but the hypocrites saw this as a weakness of him (saw). Something that they can find fault with and criticize him (saw) for. As we have mentioned, many of them did not care too much for him (saw). They saw him (saw) and the Message that he (saw) brought as a threat to their way of life and to their power and control over the people. That is why they had the intention from the first day itself to oppose him (saw). Here they decided to do this by finding fault with the way in which he (saw) listens to the people. Instead of praising him (saw) for it, they criticized and found fault with him (saw) for it. Not only would they speak such abominations about him (saw) to themselves but they would also spread it about the Muslim community. They would try and tell everyone that he (saw) is a fool because he (saw) listens to everything that is said to him (saw). The Arabic word *adhn* which Allah (swt) uses here to describe what these hypocrites have done gives the meaning of only a slight harm. Almost like an annoyance or nuisance. The Prophet (saw) himself was very forgiving and very compassionate, so he (saw) did not take much offence from what these hypocrites did. However Allah (swt) did take notice. He (swt) had such love and compassion for the Prophet (saw) that He (swt) did take notice of what these hypocrites did. Even though they had only mildly insulted the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) considered it to be such a great crime that He (swt) mentioned in His (swt)'s Book. From this we can take the lesson of how serious a crime it is to insult the Prophet (saw) in any way. Allah (swt), the Lord and Master, sees it to be the greatest of sins for anyone to even mildly insult him (saw).

Allah (swt) then tells the believers to say to these hypocrites **“An ear of good for you”**. Notice once again how Allah (swt) does not address these hypocrites directly. Rather He (swt) speaks to the believers who are then told to address the hypocrites. This shows us how displeased and angry Allah (swt) is with these hypocrites in that He (swt) will not even address them directly. They were saying that the Prophet (saw) was only an ear in that he (saw) listens to everything that is said to him (saw). Now was this a weakness in him (saw) or something for which he (saw) should be criticized? No, on the contrary Allah (swt) tells these hypocrites that it is good for them that the Prophet (saw) listens to them in this way. He (saw) is the leader of the entire of the Islamic State. He (saw) is the Messenger of Allah. He (saw) is the one to be followed without question. He (saw) could give any order and the believers would carry it out without any hesitation whatsoever. So these hypocrites mean nothing to the Prophet (saw). He (saw) is on a level much higher than they are. Still he (saw) takes the time to listen to them. He (saw) spends his precious moments to hear what they have to say. He (saw) also trusts them and believes what they have to say. When they come with excuses as to why they cannot go forth on an expedition he (saw) accepts their excuses. So how can they complain about him (saw) on this account? They should be grateful to him (saw) and they should love him (saw) for this. But as we mentioned these hypocrites had no sincerity whatsoever. From the beginning they had no desire to follow the Truth. They had no desire to submit themselves to Allah (swt) even though they knew that He (swt) was their Creator and Sustainer, their Lord and Master. That is why they complained about the Messenger of Allah (swt) for something which they should have praised him (saw) and loved him (saw). Their hearts were so dark that what was right was wrong and what was good was bad. This was how far astray they were.

Allah (swt) then describes the Prophet (saw) as the one **“who believes in Allah”**. Rather than being criticized the Prophet (saw) should have been praised. This is what Allah (swt) wants us to realize. The Prophet (saw) is indeed the best of mankind, the best of all creation. The first reason for this is because he (saw) believes in Allah (swt). What act could be a greater act for a human to do than to believe in Allah (swt)? Is this not the greatest act of all? Just to believe in Allah (swt). Not only did the Prophet (saw) believe but he (saw) believed with the most perfect of

belief. His (saw)'s Iman was the best. He (saw) had the absolute conviction. He (saw) was surer of his Lord than he (saw) was of the world around him (saw). One day he (saw) was sleeping and a disbeliever came towards him (saw) with a sword. When he (saw) woke up he (saw) saw this sword at his neck and the disbeliever asked him (saw) as to who would save him (saw). With absolute conviction and calmness the Prophet (saw) replied "Allah". What kind of a belief is this? What kind of certainty is this? Do we have this today? What would we have done in that situation? This was the belief that the Prophet (saw) had. This was how close he (saw) was to Allah (swt). How then could anyone find fault with such a soul? How evil are a people who would harm such a soul? When you realize the Greatness of Allah (swt) then you will realize the greatness of those who are close to Him (swt).

Allah (swt) then praises the Prophet (saw) by telling us how he (saw) **"believes the believers"**. If anyone just professes to believe in the Message that the Prophet (saw) came with, then they already have a special place in his (saw)'s heart. He (saw) loves them and he (saw) will believe what they have to say. Even if they are really hypocrites on the inside, even if they are the worst of sinners, as long as they claim to believe the Prophet (saw) loves them and he (saw) will believe them. So much was his (saw)'s love for the believers. He (saw) would trust their words. He (as) would trust and listen to them only because they were believers. How pure then was his (saw)'s soul? Was he (saw) not just the manifestation of love and mercy? The perfect human.

Allah (swt) then describes the Prophet (saw) as **"and a mercy for the ones who believe from you"**. This is who the Prophet (saw) was. A mercy for all the believers. In how many different ways was he (saw) a mercy for us? This Message which he (saw) brought to us from our Creator is a Mercy for us. It allows us to know Allah (swt). This knowledge gives us peace and tranquility. It saves us from grief, anxiety and fear. We are certain that whatever happens to us, Allah (swt) is always with us. He (swt) will protect us and take care of us. He (swt) will provide for us everything that we need. Any moment of difficulty in this world is yet another opportunity to be patient for Him (swt) and draw closer to Him (swt). This is only the small portion of mercy that the Prophet (saw) brought for us in this world. The mercy that we will receive in the Hereafter because of him (saw) is far greater. To be saved from the unending torment of the Fire. To be

placed in the eternal bliss of the Garden. To have a station close to the Divine. Are there even words to describe this mercy? It is only because of him (saw). He (saw) was this mercy for us.

Now that we realize what a perfect soul the Prophet (saw) had. How he (saw) was the very manifestation of love and mercy. How he (saw) strived and struggled and sacrificed only so that all mankind could receive this mercy from their Lord. What then should be our relationship with those who hurt him (saw) in any way? What should be done with those people who have any kind of animosity towards him (saw)? Allah (swt) says in the final part of this ayah “**And for those who harm the Messenger of Allah for them is a painful punishment**”. Allah (swt) promises such people a painful punishment. Notice how Allah (swt) even mentions specifically in the wording of the ayah that *for them* is a painful punishment. This shows us how displeased and angry He (swt) is with these people who would insult His (swt)’s beloved. Pain is a creation of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who has created every pain that you have ever felt. No doubt there have been times when you have felt a great deal of pain. There are others who have felt even more pain than you. But this world was not created for pain. It was only created for a test. The Hereafter is where the true pain lies. This is what Allah (swt) promises for all those who would harm the Prophet (saw) in any way. It could even be the slightest of insults. For example here all that the hypocrites said was that he (saw) listens to everyone. This is not a terrible insult. But this was so displeasing to Allah (swt) that He (swt) promised them the greatest of punishments because of this. Pain like we cannot even imagine. Pain that will last for all eternity. The burning of fire. The pricking of knives. The biting of animals. The ailments of diseases. All of these will be combined upon them and they will be made to suffer this forever. They will not even have a moment of respite. In fact at each moment the pain will only increase. This is what they have gotten for themselves for all eternity only because of that small insult that they made against the Prophet (saw). This is how beloved the Prophet (saw) is to Allah (swt). Such is His (swt)’s Wrath on those who harm him (saw) in any way.

One lesson that we can take from this is that we must always check ourselves when we are about to say anything about the Prophet (saw). We should realize how displeased Allah (swt) will become with us if ever we say anything whatsoever against him (saw). Even if it is the mildest

and most unnoticeable of words. Even if we were to think about the Prophet (saw) in a wrong way, we have to remember that Allah (swt) can see into our hearts. So we should be very careful. In today's world there are many people who speak against him (saw). They say against him (saw) the most vile and unfounded of lies and accusations. If we were to believe what they say for even a fraction of a moment then we have to realize what a precarious situation we have placed ourselves in. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) place within our hearts the love for the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) deserves!

In fact so great is the love that Allah (swt) has for His Beloved (saw) that He (swt) does not even want the people who insult him (saw) to live on His (swt)'s earth anymore after they had made that insult. Allah (swt) wants their punishment to begin right away. The people who would even mildly insult the Prophet (saw) are such evil people in the Sight of Allah (swt) that they should not even be allowed to breathe the air of His earth or drink the water of His earth or eat the food of His earth. They should be killed right away. That is why according to all the scholars, anyone who insults the Prophet (saw) in any way is to be killed. This is the Divine Law in our Din. Defaming the Prophet (saw) in any way, be it through the tongue or by the pen or by the actions, is a crime that is punishable by death. It does not matter if the one who committed this crime is man or woman, Muslim or non-Muslim, young or old. The punishment is the same.

Now of course this law as well is one that needs the Islamic State to be present in order to be properly implemented. Individual Muslims cannot carry out assassinations on their own. Even at the time of the Prophet (saw), he (saw) only ordered people to be killed for this crime after the State was established. The person who is found guilty of this blasphemy must be tried in the courts of the Islamic State and he is only to be executed once he is found to be guilty. Thus this is yet another reason why we need to work in this effort to restore the Law of Allah (swt). How many are the people who have dared to insult the Prophet (saw) in our days? There are people today who actually draw pictures of dogs and say that this is the Prophet (saw)! This is the extent to which it has reached. How can you see this going in the world today and still be silent? Imagine how displeased Allah (swt) would be with you if you lived contently in a world where this happened. Allah (swt) is promising a painful punishment in this ayah to those who insult the

Prophet (saw) in any way. If you were among those who helped them to do this by your silence and your inactivity then how can you be certain that you will be safe from such a punishment. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate! May Allah (swt) help us to restore the Islamic State so that the honor of His (swt)'s Beloved can be defended!

يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ لِيَرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا

مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

62. They swear by Allah to you so that they may please you, but Allah and His Messenger have more of a right that they please Him if they are believers.

There are two kinds of people in this world. There are those who when they look at the world they see the world. Then there are those who when they look at the world they do not see the world, but rather they see Allah (swt). They see the world only as a creation of Allah (swt). As a manifestation of His (swt)'s Power. The Muslims are supposed to be the latter of these groups. When you claim that you believe in Allah (swt) then this is the kind of belief that He (swt) expects from you. But there are many Muslims who are not from the latter of these groups but rather they are from the former. When they look at this world they only see this world. So they do all their actions only for this world. They keep their hopes only in this world. They do not have any other goal than the attainment of this world. They claim to be believers but they do not see the Real and the True. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to such Muslims. The ones whom we have to save ourselves from becoming.

We have to remember that this ayah is speaking first and foremost about the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) describes them to the believers here by saying “**They swear by Allah to you so that they may please you**”. Their only intention is to please the believers. They only want the believers to accept them into the community. In order to achieve this objective they will say whatever it may be to please the believers. They will say that they believe in Allah (swt) and in the Message that He (swt) has sent. They will say that they love the

Prophet (saw). They will sometimes even encourage the believers to do acts of righteousness such as prayer and fasting. They will say all of these only to please the believers. To make the believers think that they are one of them. They will even swear by Allah (swt) to the truth of what they are saying. But it will be all lies. Words that are on the tongue but not in the hearts.

Notice in the language of the ayah how Allah (swt) says that this is something which these hypocrites do for the believers. This shows us how all of this was only a show in order to please the believers. They had no sincerity at all in what they said. They would swear by the very Name of Allah (swt) but they would not think about Him (swt) at all. It would never occur to them that He (swt) hears all their words. They could not realize that He (swt) would take them to task for what they are saying and doing. For their pretensions and their deceptions. For their heedlessness and negligence. This was the situation of these people. This was how far they had become from the Divine. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

In response to such behavior on their part Allah (swt) says **“but Allah and His Messenger have more of a right that they please Him if they are believers”**. Here Allah (swt) shows us how twisted was the thinking of these hypocrites. They were trying to please the people around them. In their actions and in their words they were only seeking to please those around them. But they were completely heedless to the Real and the True. They did not think about Him (swt) at all even though they swore by His (swt)'s Name. Yet despite all this they still claimed that they were believers. They claimed that they believed in this Being Who is All-Hearing and All-Seeing and All-Knowing. This Being of Perfection and Majesty. This Being Who originated their existence and this Being to Whom they will soon return. They claimed that they believed in this Being. They also claimed that they believed in the Message that this Being has sent. They believed in this man who said that he has been sent by this Being. Yet their behavior was the opposite of the statements that they made. Their actions did not in any way reflect this belief that they supposedly had. They cared more for pleasing those around them than pleasing this Being and His Messenger. They worried more about upsetting those around them than upsetting this Being and His Messenger. They thought about the people before they thought about Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw). See now how far were their actions from their claims.

If they were truly believers then they should not have cared about what those around them thought. They should not have cared about whether they were accepted or rejected by those around them. All that they should have cared about was Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has more of a right that they should try to please Him (swt) than the people around them. Who are mere human beings when compared to Allah (swt)? How can you realize that there is such a Being and still care about others? So if they were true in their claim to be believers then should have cared more about pleasing Him (swt) than pleasing the people around them.

Although this ayah is speaking first and foremost about the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw), there are many Muslims today who behave in this way as well. Meaning that they are more concerned with pleasing those around them than they are about pleasing Allah (swt). They say that they are believers but this does not reflect at all in their behavior. At least the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) were trying to please the Muslims, but many so-called Muslims today are only trying to please the disbelievers. Some of them would even violate the Law of Allah (swt) only to please the disbelievers. To win their approval. To be accepted into their ranks. How many brothers today shave their beards? How many sisters take off their hijabs? Is this for any other reason than trying to please those around them? Trying to win their approval and avoid their censure. Even in many countries in the West where the law allows Muslims to have these symbols of our Din, you would see Muslims removing them. This is only because they want to fit into the society, they want to please those around them. This is not something that they do every now and then but this is how they live their lives. They live their lives only trying to please those around them. Trying to win their approval. Is this not hypocrisy? How could such Muslims say that they believe in Allah (swt) and still care more about the people than they do about Him (swt)? Do they not realize Who Allah (swt) IS? Can they not see that He (swt) has more of a right that they please Him (swt) if they are truly believers?

So the lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must strive to be among that group who sees Allah (swt) first before they see the world. We must always look to what is pleasing to Him (swt) before we think about what is pleasing to others. As long as our Lord is pleased with us then we should not worry about what others may think or say about us. We have

to realize that this is what it means to believe. Not empty lip service that we make with our tongues. Not a few rituals that we do every now and then. Not the way that we look or the language we speak. Anyone can say that they believe. Anyone can do the movements of prayer and they can even make the pilgrimage. But what distinguishes the believer from the hypocrite is not words or rituals. What distinguishes them is the state of their hearts. The heart must come to a realization that Allah (swt) and His Messenger have a more of a right on it than anyone else does. This is what it means to truly believe. May Allah (swt) help us all to reach this station!

Notice also the beauty of the language in this ayah. Allah (swt) does not say that He (swt) has more of a right that we please Him (swt), rather He (swt) says that both He (swt) and His Messenger (saw) have more of a right that we please Him (swt). What exactly does Allah (swt) mean by this? It is clear from the ayah that we must be striving to please Allah (swt). The One to be pleased is Allah (swt). But the ayah says that this right belongs both to Allah (swt) and to the Prophet (saw). Imam Shawkani explains this in his tafsir of this ayah by saying that the pleasure of the Prophet (saw) is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is pleased with whatever the Prophet (saw) is pleased with and He (swt) is displeased with what the Prophet (saw) is displeased with. So the hypocrites who lived at the time of the Prophet (saw) should always have been looking to please Allah (swt). This was the right that He (swt) had over them by being their Creator and their Sustainer, and most importantly by being Allah (swt). The Perfect One. The Majestic One. The One Whose Pleasure deserved to be sought. However one of the ways in which they could have achieved this goal is by trying to please the Prophet (saw). Because in the pleasure of the Prophet (saw) lies the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Thus instead of complaining about how the Prophet (saw) was “all ear” in that he (saw) listened to what was said to him (saw) and instead of finding fault with how he (saw) divided the Zakat they should have been looking to how they could please him (saw). When they pleased him (saw) they would have pleased Allah (swt). This is the right that Allah (swt) had over them.

Similarly for us today we also can seek to please Allah (swt) by trying to please the Prophet (saw). How exactly do we do that? Just imagine if the Prophet (saw) was alive and with you today. If he (saw) saw what you were doing with your life, do you think that he (saw) would be

pleased with you? You are one of his (saw)'s Ummah. You are the one whom he (saw) trusted to carry on his (saw)'s mission. Do you think that he (saw) would be pleased with you if you simply spent your days chasing after this world and forgetting about this mission? Especially considering the condition that his (saw)'s Ummah is in today. Especially considering the condition that the dawah is in today. Especially considering the condition that the Law of Allah (swt) is in today. Do you think that he (saw) would be pleased with you?

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَن يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا

ذَٰلِكَ الْخِزْيُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾

61. Do they not know that whoever prevents Allah and His Messenger that surely for him is the Fire of Hell abiding in it forever? That is the great disgrace.

Based on our study of this Surah so far we can see that there are two groups of Muslims. There are those who stand up for and support this Din and then there are those who oppose it. There are those who have given themselves to Allah (swt) and then there are those who have chosen themselves over Him (swt). There are those who participate in this effort to bring back the Law of Allah to the land and then there are those who oppose it and those who choose not to support it. At the end of the day every Muslim will fall into one of these two groups. These two groups were there at the time of the Prophet (saw), and they have been there for every generation in our Ummah, and they are there today. There is the group of dawah and jihad and then there is other than that group. Now for those Muslims who do not know what Islam truly is, for those who have been taught that it is only prayer, pilgrimage and fasting, perhaps they could be excused if they fall into the latter of these groups. But for those who of us who know the Truth. Those who know that this Din truly is. What excuse do we have? What excuse do we have if we do not do our part to support this dawah? To help establish the Din of Allah (swt) on the earth. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what will happen to us if we fall into the latter of these groups.

Allah asks us in this ayah **“Do they not know that whoever prevents Allah and His Messenger that surely for him is the Fire of Hell, abiding in it forever”**. Here Allah (swt) is asking us if we know about a particular kind of person. This person prevents Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). This person is the one for whom the Fire of Hell has been promised. He will stay therein forever. Let us remind ourselves at this point that this ayah appears in a set of ayahs which speak about the hypocrites. So this person whom Allah (swt) is describing in this ayah is from the hypocrites, he is not from the disbelievers. This means that he is a person who on the outside seems to be Muslim. He may even pray, and fast, and make pilgrimage and do other ritual acts of worship. But because he is guilty of this crime of preventing Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw), and for that he has been promised the Fire of Hell. So what does it mean to prevent Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw)? This is what we need to know to save ourselves from becoming this person. The Arabic word *hadd* means to prevent something or to curtail something or to deter something. Now what does it mean for a Muslim to deter Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw)? Of course we should all realize that none of us can deter Allah (swt) Himself. He (swt) is the All-Powerful and He (swt) does whatsoever that He (swt) pleases. So it is not deterring Allah (swt) Himself that this ayah is talking about. It is also not talking about deterring the Prophet (saw) since he (saw) is no longer with us. What then does it mean to deter Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw)? We believe that it is referring to deterring Allah’s (swt)’s cause. The cause of Allah (swt) as we know is to establish His (swt)’s Law in the land and to carry His (swt)’s Message to the people. This is what can be deterred. This is what can be opposed. So anyone who opposes this cause, anyone who deters this cause, anyone who in any way hinders this cause, has been promised the Fire of Hell. Even if they claim to be Muslim they have been given this promise. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate!

We also have to realize that there are many ways in which a Muslim may hinder this cause. One way, which is the most obvious way, is when you are openly against this cause. When you are working to destroy this cause. As surprising as it may seem to you, there are actually many Muslims today who are like this. There are even so-called “scholars” who are like this. They go in front of the entire Ummah and say that there is no political dimension to Islam.

They say that the restoration of the Islamic State is an idea that has been concocted by fundamentalists and that we as an Ummah should be happy living without the State. Some would admit that there is such a thing as the Islamic State but they would say that it not all that important in today's day and age and that we as an Ummah have more pressing concerns. All of these so-called "scholars" are preventing the cause of Allah (swt). They are discouraging the Muslims from joining in this effort and supporting this effort. They are telling the Muslims to be content with the status quo and not work for the change. If the Muslims will not work for this change then who will. In addition to these "scholars" who are feeding their poison to the Ummah, there are also their henchmen and foot soldiers. There are actually so-called Muslims who spy on their brothers and sisters who are involved in the dawah. They spy on them and they report their activities to the authorities. These hypocrites are also under the threat of this ayah. They are working to prevent the cause of Allah (swt) and for that they will have the Fire of Hell.

But there is another way in which a Muslim may hinder the cause of Allah (swt). It may not be so obvious as the previous ways we mentioned but it is also one that we must consider. Supposing for example that a Muslim chooses not to participate in this effort. He does not oppose this effort but he does not participate in it either. He just lives his life to chase after the material pleasures of this world much like the rest of mankind has done. He does not bother anyone or cause trouble for anyone. He just looks after his family and lives his life. Is such a Muslim in any way hindering the cause of Allah (swt)? Your first response would be that he is not. But think about it deeply. Is this Muslim fulfilling his purpose as a member of this Ummah? Is the life that he has chosen what it means to be a part of this Ummah? Simply to make some ritual acts of worship and then to live the rest of your life as you please. Is this the reason why Allah (swt) created you and guided you to this Din? Sometimes the lack of support is in itself a hindrance. The dawah can use your efforts, your talents, and your wealth. If you choose not to support the dawah then you are in a way hindering it because you are denying it what could help it. This is the reality that we must always strive to save ourselves. We must try our best not to become this person because this person as well is one for whom the Fire of Hell is being threatened. The only way in which we can save ourselves is to support this effort in whatever way that we can.

Now of course the reality of all of our situations is different. Many of us are in a situation where we are not able to give all of our time for the dawah. We may have family members who are dependent on us for support, and looking after them is as much an obligation for us as the dawah is. For those of us who are in such situations then we have to hope that Allah (swt) will forgive us for our shortcomings. However we still need to do what we can. If we cannot give all of our time for the dawah then we must give some of our time. If we cannot give our time then we can give our money. We can try to find those who are working in this cause and support them financially. At the very least we should support this effort by speaking to the few Muslims that we know and telling them about it. Insha Allah this knowledge and these ideas will spread through the Ummah like light. In the end Allah (swt) is the One Who will bring the victory. He (swt) only wants us to make the effort. That is why we should not belittle any good that we could do. We must all support the cause of Allah (swt) in whatever way that we can.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says “**That is the great disgrace**”. This is all that you would have if you choose to walk away from this path. Humiliation and disgrace. Both in this life and in the Hereafter. In this life your punishment would be that you would live for your own worthless self instead of living for the Real and the True. Allah (swt) created you for Himself (swt). Allah (swt) created you and sustained you and guided you to this Din to be His (swt)’s representative on this earth. But you chose to walk away from that purpose. You chose to live so that you can chase after the chattels of this world instead of living for Him (swt). What greater humiliation and disgrace can there be than this? From what heights would you have fallen and how low would have become? Most of the people in this world are not given this opportunity, even most Muslims are not given this opportunity, but it was given to you. Allah (swt) chose you for it. To help His (swt)’s cause. To help establish His (swt)’s kingdom on the earth. How worthless a person would you be if you walked away from it?

And just think of the life that you are choosing for yourself when you choose to walk away from this dawah. What would be the meaning of your existence? Only to get a paycheck. Only to pay a mortgage. Only to eat and defecate. Only to spend your hours idly chatting away with your friends. Is this what you will be remembered for? Is this the legacy that you will leave behind? Is

this all that your children will see from you? Will you hide from them the true reality of this Din? If you do not then what reply will you give to them when they ask you why you did not work to make this Din a reality in the world again? When they ask you why you allowed your brothers and sisters in the Ummah to suffer while you did nothing? What response would you give to them? There would be nothing for you to say. Because your life would be a life of deception. A life of a lie. You might even convince yourself that there is nothing more to this Din than prayers and fasting. Trying to justify for yourself your turning away from this path. This will be all that there is to your life. Is this not the greatest of humiliation?

But the greatest part of your humiliation is what awaits you in the Hereafter. Imagine being made to stand before Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment. Allah (swt) will ask you why you turned away from this path when He (swt) called you to it again and again. What will you say? What excuse will you give? In front of your family. In front of your friends. In front of all mankind. It will be said to you that you failed in the test for which you were created. Then it will be said to you to go to the Fire of Hell. In addition to the pain and suffering that awaits you, think about the humiliation and shame that will be upon you. For all mankind to see that you were given the greatest opportunity and you had walked away from it. Imagine the disgrace and the shame that you would feel at that moment. That is why Allah (swt) calls it the great disgrace. To turn away from Him (swt) is the great disgrace. To walk away from this life of dawah and jihad is the great disgrace. Only the lowest of the low, the most despicable of creatures would choose it. May Allah (swt) save us all from that fate! May Allah (swt) allow us all to make the right choice while we still can! The end of our test is sooner than we think!

يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي
قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلِ اسْتَهِزْ عُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْرِجٌ مِمَّا تَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

64. The hypocrites fear that a Surah will be revealed on them informing them what is in their hearts. Say “Go on mocking, surely Allah will bring out what you fear”.

We have seen in this Surah the two camps that Muslims can fall into. There are the sincere believers who are working on this path and then there are the hypocrites who have turned away from it. These two groups existed at the time of the Prophet (saw) and they exist today as well. Allah (swt) wants us to be from the former of these groups and not the latter. That is why in these ayahs He (swt) describes the hypocrites for us in great detail. It is so that we could avoid their ways. It is so that we could realize that even in this world their life is one of misery and confusion. These are a people who have turned away from Allah (swt) and from the path of dawah and jihad that He (swt) called them to. Because of this, He (swt) has began their punishment in this life as well. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about one of these ways in which they are being punished.

The hypocrites live a life of deception. Nothing for them is true. Since they have turned away from what they knew was the Truth, they themselves can no longer distinguish between truth and falsehood. Even when a particular reality seems obvious to them they no longer have the insight to follow it. They will turn away even from what is so obvious and plain. This is what Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. At the time of the Prophet (saw), some of the hypocrites were fearful that Allah (swt) would send revelation to the Prophet (saw) exposing them for who they really are. Exposing to the Prophet (saw) the kufr that they concealed in their hearts. Now of course they had every reason to have a fear such as this. Even if they may have been able to hide their hypocrisy from the Prophet (saw) and the believers, what made them think that they could hide it from Allah (swt)? The One Knows what is in the hearts. So many of them came to the realization that they would be exposed. Many of them even had a dreadful fear that they would be exposed. But did this make them change their ways?

Of course not. Despite their fear they continued in their hypocrisy. They continued in their kufr. They continued in their rejection of this Message. Their opposition to this dawah. This is because these were a people who are heedless to the reality just as they are heedless to the Real. Their lives had become so much of a deception that they themselves were not able to follow the truth even when they recognized it clearly. They knew the reality of their situation. They knew that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). They knew that Allah (swt) could send revelation at any time exposing them to the Prophet (saw) for who they really were. But even this realization did not make them change their ways. They had eyes to see, ears to hear, and a mind to think, but still they could not save themselves. This was how deluded they were. This was how astray they were. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

The essential problem with these hypocrites is that they did not realize in their hearts what they knew in their minds. There is a subtle difference between these two. It is possible for someone to know something with their minds but not to fully realize it in their hearts. Knowledge enters the mind through the senses. Once the truth of this knowledge has been verified and confirmed then it must seep into the heart. However for some people there is something that blocks this knowledge from flowing to the heart. This could be their desires or their arrogance or their jealousy. For any of these reasons they simply do not want to accept what they can see clearly with their eyes. These hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) knew that he (saw) was the Messenger. They were certain of this fact. They were even afraid that Allah (swt) would reveal to him (saw) a Surah in the Quran exposing them for who they are. But their hearts did not want to accept this knowledge that they were certain of. Their hearts did not want to change their ways. This is because they knew the consequences of this. If they were to accept the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger, and if they were to sincerely believe in him (saw) and support him (saw) on his mission, then they knew what would be the consequences of this. They would have to march forth in jihad. They would have to sacrifice their wealth and maybe even their lives in this path. They would have to give up many of their pleasures and their desires. They would have to treat all other Muslims as equals, even the lowly and the slaves. They would have to dedicate themselves to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). They knew that Allah (swt) demanded of

them no less than this. That is why they themselves placed this barrier between their mind and their heart. They did not allow themselves to come to this realization. They continued in their opposition to this Message even though deep down inside they knew that Allah (swt) was Seeing them. Deep down inside they had a fear of their Lord. But since they did not act on this fear, since they did not take the precaution, it meant nothing. It could not save them in this world or the next.

In response to such thinking and behavior Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) and the believers to say **“Go on mocking, surely Allah will bring out what you fear”**. By not acting on this knowledge that they had, by not allowing the realization of this knowledge to dawn in their hearts, they were in fact mocking Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). This mission that he (saw) carried was the cause of Allah (swt). The carriers of this mission after him (saw) are being protected by Allah (swt). Allah (swt) made the reality of this so clear even to the hypocrites. Allah (swt) gave them all the warnings and all the signs. If they chose to ignore all of these and continue in their opposition to this Message even after the clear knowledge has come to them, then what are they doing except mocking Allah (swt)? If this is the path that they have chosen to walk on then Allah (swt) allows them to walk on this path. Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) and the believers to say to them to go on mocking, but they should also know that very soon Allah (swt) will bring out what they fear. Perhaps Allah (swt) would not take them task immediately in the life of this world, we know that the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) were never singled out and identified as such. But in the end, in way or another, they will have to face the consequences of the choice that they made. At the very latest it will be the moment of their deaths, and we know that this is much closer than it seems. Then they will return to their Lord and He (swt) will deal with them in the way that He (swt) pleases. What they feared. What they failed to realize and protect themselves from. It will be made into a reality before their very eyes. They will taste the pain and the torment of what they used to mock. Allah (swt). The Real and the True. The One Whom they used to mock. The One Whom they chose to turn away from. He (swt) will make them to realize Him (swt) on that Day. He (swt) will bring into reality what they chose to turn away from.

وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ
 أَبِاللَّهِ وَعَايَنَتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

65. And if you ask them, they will say “We were only talking idly and joking”. Say “Is it with Allah and His Signs and His Messenger that you were mocking”.

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to another aspect of the thinking and the behavior of these hypocrites that we must strive to avoid. This is their utter disregard and insolence towards their Lord and Master. Towards Allah (swt). He (swt) is not a joke. He (swt) demands that we take Him (swt) seriously. He (swt) brought us into existence and placed on this earth for a great purpose. He (swt) is the One Who sustains us at every moment and He (swt) is the One to Whom we will return. He (swt) demands that we acknowledge this fact. He (swt) demands that we dedicate ourselves to Him (swt) as consequence of this. These hypocrites failed to realize this. They failed to realize the Magnitude and the Tremendousness of their Lord. Rather they took Him (swt) as a jest and a play. They allowed themselves to forget about Him (swt) and to live their lives in heedlessness to Him (swt). This is what we must strive to save ourselves from. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace because we cannot do it without Him (swt)!

Al-Wahidi tells us of one of the occurrences for the revelation of this ayah. When the Muslim army was marching out in the expedition for Tabuk, some of the hypocrites were talking amongst themselves. In their conversation they were questioning if the Islamic State could truly defeat the Roman Empire. They were doubting that it could be so. One of them even had the audacity to say that the Prophet (saw) was mad if he (saw) expected to defeat the Romans and march the Muslim army into the palaces of Caesar. They knew that he (saw) was the Messenger of Allah (swt). They knew that he (saw) brought to them the Book of Allah (swt). Deep down inside they even knew that Allah (swt) could hear the words that they spoke. But still they had such utter disregard and insolence towards their Lord that they spoke these words. What do you think will be the station of such people when they return to Him (swt) on the Last Day?

Unfortunately there are many so-called Muslims today who are like those hypocrites who said such evil words. All the Muslims today who call for a “reform” of Islam. All the Muslims today who say that the Shariah has to be “modified” in order to be “compatible” with the modern world. Even those Muslims who do not want to work for a change and who are satisfied with the status quo are like these hypocrites as well. Even they cannot deny the fact that there are hundreds of rulings in the Quran and Sunnah that need the Islamic State to be implemented correctly. Zakat, dawah and jihad being only a few of these. So by taking the stance which they have taken they are showing their insolence before their Lord. They are showing that they do not care too much if His (swt)’s Law is not being implemented and His (swt)’s Message is not being carried to the people. They are more concerned about their own personal safety and their own well-being rather than what pleases Allah (swt). They have taken His (swt)’s Din as a joke.

But in one way or another they will be exposed for the hypocrites that they are just like the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) were exposed. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah **“And if you ask them, they will say “We were only talking idly and joking””**. Allah (swt) actually revealed to the Prophet (saw) exactly what those hypocrites were talking about. Then when the Prophet (saw) went to them and questioned them about why they had made such statements they replied by saying these words. They said that they were only talking idly and jesting. In other words they were claiming that they were not serious in what they said. It was only a statement made in jesting. It was just something said in idle conversation to pass the time.

But do you think that Allah (swt) accepted such an excuse. No, of course not. He (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to say to these hypocrites **“Is it with Allah and His Signs and His Messenger that you were mocking”**. Is this the subject of your idle conversation. Your Lord. His Book. His Prophet. Is this what you have taken as a jest and an amusement. Allah (swt) is the Real and the True. The Tremendous and the Majestic. The Perfect One. The Being Whom every single creation is praising and glorifying for every moment of its existence. Do you think that He (swt) would be pleased with you taking Him (swt) as a jest? Is this for what He (swt) created you? Is this for what He (swt) sustains you at every moment? Despite what they had done the Prophet (saw) did not punish them. He (saw) left them to his Lord to deal with as He pleases.

لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِنْ نَعْفُ عَنْ طَآئِفَةٍ
مِّنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبْ طَآئِفَةً بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١﴾

66. Do not make excuses, surely you did kufr after your Iman, if We pardon a party from you then We will punish a party from you because surely they have been criminals.

If you still want think that you are not one to join this effort of dawah and jihad, this effort to establish the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth and to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Perhaps you believe that you have a valid excuse. Perhaps you think that there is some way in which Allah (swt) will pardon you. If such is your case then realize that Allah (swt) is addressing you in this ayah. He (swt) is addressing you with this ayah just like He (swt) addressed those hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw). They also thought that they could take this Din as a joke. They also thought they did not need to make Allah (swt) and working in His (swt)'s cause as the most important thing in their lives. So ponder closely what Allah (swt) is telling you in this ayah and re-think the choice that you have made.

The first thing that Allah (swt) says “**Do not make excuses**”. The effort to work to establish the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth is an obligation upon every Muslim. There are no excuses for anyone to turn away from this duty. Allah (swt) is no joke. His (swt)'s Din is no joke. He (swt) demands that we take Him (swt) seriously. This is what those hypocrites who were mocking about the Islamic State conquering the Roman Empire failed to realize. They had forgotten about Allah (swt). They only focused on the life of this world. When they saw only this world they could not see how the Muslims could ever be victorious. This is the mistake that we must strive to save ourselves from. We have to see Allah (swt) before we see this world. If we are not at this station then we must strive to reach this station. The way to reach this station. The path to Allah (swt) is to dedicate ourselves to this effort. To live for this mission. The more that we dedicate ourselves to this cause the closer to Allah (swt) we will become. Allah (swt) demands from us nothing less. If we choose not to give Him (swt) this then we have no excuses.

Allah (swt) then says **“surely you did kufr after your Iman”**. This is the station of all those who choose not to join this effort. They are in a state of kufr. They are in a state of kufr after they have been in a state of Iman. This ayah is not speaking about those hypocrites who are openly against this Message. Rather this is speaking about those Muslims whose Iman was weak. They had some Iman in their hearts. Allah (swt) describes them in the ayah as having Iman. But their Iman was weak. When the time came to prove themselves. When they were called on to march forward in this path of dawah and jihad they turned away. They doubted that the Muslims would have victory over the powerful Roman army. They doubted that the dawah would be successful when it was so weak and it had enemies that were so numerous. This doubt is what Allah (swt) describes in this ayah as kufr. On one level it is kufr because they are doubting Allah (swt). They are doubting His (swt)’s promise to give them victory when they are steadfast on this path. They are doubting His (swt)’s Power and His (swt)’s Ability to defeat the enemies of His (swt)’s Message. They are doubting His (swt)’s telling them that this life of dawah and jihad is what is best for them. In addition they are also in a state of kufr because of their ungratefulness to Allah (swt). After all the favors and bounties that He (swt) had bestowed on them. The greatest of which being His (swt)’s guiding them to this Din. His (swt)’s allowing them to be in the Ummah of His (swt)’s Beloved. His (swt)’s bestowing the Book which has His (swt)’s Words in it. After all this if they were to turn away from Him (swt) then what kind of ungratefulness would this be.

Now this does not only apply to those Muslims at the time of Prophet (saw) who were reluctant to march forth in the expedition of Tabuk, it also speaks of Muslims in every generation who have decided to turn away from this path of dawah and jihad. This is the life that Allah (swt) had chosen for them but they turned away from this life. If you say that you are Muslim. If you come into the fold of this Din. Then you have been raised to a station of great honor. You have become part of the greatest nation ever raised up for mankind. But this honor comes with a heavy responsibility. You have to do your part to establish the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth and to carry His (swt)’s Message to mankind. If you do not then you are in a state of kufr after having been in a state of Iman. You have gone from the highest of the high to the lowest of the low. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) allow us to do what we can to support this effort!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says **“if We pardon a party from you then We will punish a party from you because surely they have been criminals”**. From this we learn that in the end the matter is up to Allah (swt). He (swt) will pardon whomsoever He (swt) pleases and He (swt) will punish whomsoever He (swt) pleases. Even though you had no excuse to walk away from this path of dawah and jihad. Even though this was an obligation upon you. It still may be that Allah (swt) will pardon you. But for every group that Allah (swt) decides to pardon there will be another group that He (swt) will punish. Allah (swt) in His (swt)'s Knowledge and Wisdom Knows best Who is deserving of pardon and Who is deserving of punishment. He (swt) Knows the situation that each and every one of us was in. So if it was the case that this path truly was difficult for you. If He (swt) Knows that you sincerely did try to make it, but in the end you were overpowered by Shaitan and your desires, then perhaps He (swt) will forgive you. Perhaps you had too many responsibilities to your family. Perhaps the environment was too dangerous. Perhaps you had just not brought yourself to that level where you were dedicated wholly and completely to your Lord. You sincerely did try your best but you could not. If such is your situation then Insha Allah, He (swt) will pardon you for not joining this effort. Once Allah (swt) pardons you then the sin will be wiped completely from your register. It would be as if you had never committed the sin in the first place. That is how Merciful and Forgiving our Lord IS. So we should never lose hope. We should never despair. As long as we know that we tried our best, and we were sincere to Allah (swt), then we should have a hope that He (swt) will pardon us.

On the other hand if we were not sincere. If we truly did have the ability to do more but we chose not to. If we were lazy and did not make a sincere effort. If we told ourselves that we should just enjoy this worldly life while we have it. If we allowed ourselves to become among the heedless. If we allowed ourselves to fall into sin. Then we should also remember that there is a group whom Allah (swt) will punish. Allah (swt) describes this group as the criminals. This means that they are evil. This means that they are rebellious. They willfully turn away from Allah (swt). They think to highly of themselves to dedicate themselves to their Lord. Even though they know that it is their duty they turn away. Such are the people who have made themselves deserving of punishment. In the end this is the group that we must always save ourselves from becoming.

الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
 عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ الْمُنْفِقِينَ
 هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

67. The hypocrite men and the hypocrite women are of one another, they establish the *Munkar* and they destroy the *Ma'ruf*, and they withhold their hands, they forgot Allah so He forgot them, surely the hypocrites they are the transgressors.

Notice once again how many ayahs in the Quran Allah (swt) spends on the subject of these hypocrites. Do you now realize how important it is that we take seriously the threat that they pose to our community? How important it is that we take the necessary steps to prevent ourselves from becoming like them. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe to us their nature. So we should pay careful attention to what our Lord is telling us here. We should then look for these characteristics in ourselves and strive to remove them. This is the purpose of the Quran. It is a guide for our lives. If we do not allow it to show us the way to proceed, to show us the path to our Lord, then we have in no way benefited from this greatest of bounties.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**The hypocrite men and the hypocrite women are of one another**”. Here our Lord is telling us that these hypocrites come from each other. They are each of the other. In other words they feed of each other, they help and support each other in their evil. They encourage each other in their hypocrisy. They encourage each other to sin and to doubt. At the time of the Prophet (saw), recall that it was a group of hypocrites who were conversing with each other and jesting about how the Islamic State would never be able to defeat the Roman Empire. Each of one of these hypocrites was supporting the other and helping the other to do more evil. One of them would say something that was displeasing to Allah (swt) and the other would add to what he said. That is why Allah (swt) says that they are of each other. They come from each other. Their evil spawns from each other. Shaitan has misled them as a group and so they all help each other in becoming even more astray. With every word that they speak amongst themselves they take themselves further and further away from Allah (swt).

Also notice in this how Allah (swt) specifically mentions the females among them. The Arabic word *munafiqoon* that Allah (swt) uses already includes both male and female. However in this ayah He (swt) specifically mentions the females among them. This is to remind us that there are so-called Muslim women who are hypocrites as well. So all of our sisters need to take care. They should never feel safe from falling into hypocrisy. Shaitan comes to our sisters and tries to make them into hypocrites just like he comes to our brothers. There is no discrimination based on gender when it comes to this disease. We are all at risk.

Of course the lesson that we can take from this is that we must be careful of the company that we keep. We must be careful of the gatherings that we attend. The hypocrites come from each other. They breed of each other. If a group of Muslims gather together and they do not remember Allah (swt) and they only speak of the matters of this world in their gathering then you can be certain that Shaitan is with that gathering. You can be certain that he has taken the hearts of those Muslims away from their reason for being. This is what we must strive to avoid. We should always try to keep the company of those who remember our Lord instead of those who are heedless of Him (swt).

Allah (swt) then says about such hypocrites that “**they establish the *Munkar* and they destroy the *Ma’ruf***”. To understand this part of the ayah we have to know what Allah (swt) means here by the words ***Ma’ruf*** and ***Munkar***. The literal meaning of these two words is what is liked and what is disliked. However when these words are used in the Quran they specifically mean what is liked by Allah (swt) and what is disliked by Him (swt). So here Allah (swt) is telling us that these hypocrites establish all that is displeasing to Him (swt) and they destroy all that is pleasing to Him (swt). There are several ways in which they do this. The first and foremost way is that they seek destroy the Islamic State or to prevent its restoration. The Islamic State is what establishes on the earth all that is pleasing to Allah (swt) and it removes from the earth all that is displeasing to Him (swt). This is why these hypocrites hate the State. They are a people who are distant from Allah (swt). They do not want to see on the earth what pleases Him (swt) but they do want to see on the earth what displeases Him (swt). So if the State is already there then they will work for its destruction and if the State is not there then they will try to prevent its restoration.

During the time of the Prophet (saw) we saw the hypocrites doing the former of these and today we see them doing the latter. During the time of the Prophet (saw) they would strive to destroy the State in any way that they could. They would encourage the Jewish tribes around Madinah to break their treaties and attack the State, they would sow feelings of tribalism and nationalism within the Ummah to make the Muslims fight each other, they would criticize the Prophet (saw) as a leader to make the Muslims lose confidence in him (saw), they would even collaborate with the Romans and the Persians by informing them of the movements of the Muslim army. Today we see the hypocrites trying to prevent the restoration of the State. The so-called "scholars" among the hypocrites try to deceive the Ummah about their Din and say that it has no political dimension. They want the Ummah to believe that this Din is only rituals and morals. Some of them even have the audacity to say that there is no such things as the Islamic State. They tell the Muslims that we have to accept the status quo in the world today. They say that we simply have to be patient with the world as it is today and they say that this was the way of the Prophet (saw) in Makkah. However if look closely at the life of the Prophet (saw) in Makkah we see that even though he (saw) did not take up arms, even though he (saw) was patient with all that was done to him (saw) and the Muslims, at the same time he (saw) did work for a change. From the beginning we can see that the Prophet (saw) was making an effort to establish Islam as a political entity. So while we are patient with the Decree of Allah (swt), we ourselves have to work for a change. Allah (swt) is the One Who will bring the results but He (swt) wants to see us make the effort. Just like Allah (swt) is the One Who provides our sustenance but He (swt) wants us to make the effort, He (swt) will bring the Islamic State but He (swt) wants to see us make the effort. The rulers among the hypocrites today oppose and suppress all movements within their lands to restore the Islamic State. Why is it today that the majority of governments in the Muslim world are either dictatorships or monarchies? Why is it that the people are not given the freedom to speak or to choose their leaders? Why is there always such brutal and forceful suppression of any kind of dissent? These rulers know that there are Islamic movements working in their lands. They know that if the power is given to the people then the people will demand Islam. That is why they cling onto the power for themselves. That is why they suppress and hunt down the members

of such movements. These are all efforts that they are making to prevent the Islamic State from returning in their land. As Allah (swt) tells us in the ayah, they strive to establish what is displeasing to Him (swt) and they strive to destroy what is pleasing to Him (swt). They will not be removed by magic, rather an effort needs to be made by the Ummah.

Another way in which the hypocrites establish what is displeasing to Allah (swt) and destroy what is pleasing to Him (swt) is that they encourage the Muslims towards sin and they discourage them from righteousness. We know that Shaitan whispers into our hearts from both the jinn and the men. This is one of the ways in which he does this through men. There are many so-called Muslims today who will discourage us from doing what we know is pleasing to our Lord. Whether this be making our Salah, keeping a beard or wearing hijab, or working in this dawah. At the same time they also encourage us to do what we know is displeasing to Allah (swt). Whether this be dealing with interest, looking and mixing with members of the opposite sex, or being content with the world as it is and not working for a change. By doing this they are establishing what is displeasing to Allah (swt) and they are destroying what is pleasing to Him (swt). Do you then see how evil a people are? Can you imagine how much of the Wrath of Allah (swt) must descend on them? Would you then ever want to be close to such people?

Allah (swt) then says of such hypocrites that **“they withhold their hands”**. Not only do they seek to destroy the Islamic State or prevent its restoration, and not only do they discourage the Muslims from pleasing Allah (swt), but they themselves do not do anything to please their Lord. Most of the good works that we can do for Allah (swt) are done with our hands. Whether this be spending for Him (swt), or fighting His (swt)’s enemy, or writing the Truth for Him (swt). Allah (swt) describes the hypocrites here as restraining their hands. This means they pull their hands back and they do not use their hands to please their Master. They prevent their hands from doing any good. How ungrateful a people are they then for the hands that Allah (swt) gave them?

In order to save ourselves from becoming like them in this regard we have to always use our hands to do what is pleasing to Allah (swt). Look at your hands now, and think back to what you have done for Allah (swt) with these hands. How many times have you raised these hands in dua to Allah (swt)? How many times have you hugged your children with these hands? How

many times have you given to the poor with these hands? When these hands do work for you, do you then dedicate that work to Allah (swt)? The Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah dedicated their hands completely to Allah (swt). Even the trade and the farm work that they did with their hands they dedicated to Allah (swt). They used the money from this to help the poor and to support the dawah. Thus they were constantly using their hands to please Allah (swt). That was why He (swt) allowed those hands to build this Din. What do we as an Ummah use our hands for today? Then we wonder why we are like this.

The hypocrites on the other hand refuse to use their hands to serve Allah (swt). Rather they use their hands against this Din. They seek to establish all that is displeasing to Allah (swt) and they seek to destroy all that is pleasing to Him (swt). Why are they like this? What has brought them to such a station? Allah (swt) tells us in the next part of the ayah when He (swt) says **“they forgot Allah so He forgot them”**. The root of their evil, the cause of all their sins, was that they forgot Allah (swt). We have to remember that these hypocrites are not like the disbelievers. They know about Islam very well. They profess with their tongues that they are Muslims and they even do many of the acts that Muslims do. So they have no excuse whatsoever to forget Allah (swt). When they entered into this Din they made a promise that they would dedicate themselves to Him (swt), a promise that they would live their lives in His (swt)’s worship and servitude to Him (swt). So how could they have allowed themselves to forget Him (swt)? How could they have allowed themselves to be deluded by the life of this world? To prefer this world to Him (swt). To spend their existence for this world instead of for Him (swt). They claim that they are Muslims so they have no excuse for what they have done. They turned away from their Lord and walked away from Him (swt) after He (swt) had brought them near to Him (swt).

What did Allah (swt) do to them as a consequence of their forgetting Him (swt)? He (swt) tells us in the ayah that He (swt) forgot about them. This means that He (swt) allowed them to go further into misguidance and error. Although He (swt) could have guided them back to the Straight Path He (swt) allowed them to go astray. This was only because they chose to turn away from Him (swt) in the first place. Because they turned away from Him (swt), He (swt) turned away from them. There was a point in their lives when they knew Allah (swt), when they realized the

mission for which He (swt) had created them. This was the time when they had said the Shahadah and become Muslim. But then they allowed themselves to become more and more distant from Allah (swt). Instead of journeying towards Allah (swt), they became more and more heedless of Him (swt). Because of this He (swt) punished them by allowing them to increase in their misguidance. Soon they began to love sin and vice, and they hated obedience and righteousness. All that was pleasing to Allah (swt) was displeasing to them, and all that was displeasing to Him (swt) was pleasing to them. This was how far they had gone astray.

This ayah is yet another example of the many ayahs in the Quran where we cannot take the literal meaning, but rather we have to take the understood meaning. Allah (swt) did not literally forget these people like they had forgotten Him (swt). We know that Allah (swt) is always the All-Knowing and there is no knowledge that is ever absent from Him (swt). He (swt) Knows all things at all times. So to take the literal meaning of this ayah and say that Allah (swt) literally forgot like human beings forget would be kufr. That is why we have to take the understood meaning and say that what He (swt) means here by forgetting is that He (swt) allowed them to go further astray. As always Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says “**surely the hypocrites they are the transgressors**”. This is the reason why these hypocrites forget Allah (swt). This is the reason why they withheld their hands from doing anything to please Allah (swt). This is the reason why they worked to destroy the Islamic State and why they encourage the Muslims to vice and sin. It is because they are transgressing people. Recall how we said that the Arabic word *fisq* means to go beyond a limit. The limit that these people exceed is the Law of Allah (swt). They do not want to restrain themselves according to the Divine Law. They want to indulge in what this Law has forbidden. They want to permit adultery and fornication. Women showing their beauty in public. Banks taking interest and taxes. Homosexuality and other abominations. They want to create a world where they can permit all of these and rule according to their desires. They do not want to be limited and confined by the Law of their Creator. They want to break this Law and live their lives as they please. This is why they so vehemently oppose the Islamic State. They know that it is very manifestation of Allah (swt)’s Law on earth.

Among mankind there will always be those who submit themselves before Allah (swt) and those who rebel against Him (swt). The hypocrites are from the latter of these groups. However their evil is even greater because on the outside they seem to be from the former. They pretend that they have submitted to Allah (swt). They pretend to be one of the believers. But their hearts hide the greatest of evil. They will always oppose this Din in one way or another because they know what it stands for. They will even misguide many sincere believers. They are a people who have already chosen to turn away from Allah (swt).

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
 فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ ۝١٨

68. Allah has promised the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women and the ones who do kufr the Fire of Hell, it is sufficient for them, and Allah has cursed them, and for them is a lasting punishment.

We saw from the previous ayahs how evil a people these hypocrites are. We saw how their evil stems from the fact that they are a transgressing people. They want to transgress beyond the Law of Allah (swt) because they are a people who have forgotten Him (swt). They have chosen themselves over their Lord even though they know that He (swt) deserves that they submit themselves before Him (swt). We also saw that even though they rebel against Allah (swt) they pretend to be among those who submit to Him (swt). Because of this they deceive many among the believers. They lead astray many among the believers. Thus double upon double is the evil that these people do. They do evil by turning away from Allah (swt), they do evil by their deceptions and their lies, claiming to submit even though they are rebellious, and they do evil because they take many of the sincere believers away from Allah (swt) and away from what is pleasing to Him (swt). They even work to destroy the Islamic State, the very institution that represents submission to Allah (swt) on this earth.

As we have mentioned these hypocrites have existed in every generation of our Ummah. During the time of the Prophet (saw) there were the likes of Abdullah bin Ubayy and his companions. We spoke previously about all the ways in which they tried to destroy the Islamic State. During the time of Khilafah of Uthman (ra) there were the likes of Abdullah bin Saba. He was the architect behind the Fitna that led to the murder of Uthman (ra) and the wars that followed. He had an intention from the beginning to destroy the Islamic State and cause problems for the Muslims. At the turn of the twentieth century there was Mustafa Kemal. He was probably the worst of all because he was the one who finally brought about the destruction of the Islamic State in 1924. Today there are the rulers in the Muslim world who do not rule their lands according to the Law of Allah (swt) and who oppose all the Islamic movements that are working to bring back Islam in their lands. There are also the so-called “scholars” who speak against the return of Islam and who try to convince the Muslims that we should not work for a change. They are all from hypocrites. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah what they will get.

Allah (swt) promises the hypocrites, both the men and the women among them, the Fire of Hell. Can you even begin to imagine how frightening this is? Allah (swt) Himself is making a promise that these people will have the Fire of Hell. Now this is no longer something about which there can be doubt. We can no longer say that there is a possibility that Allah (swt) will pardon such people. This is something absolutely definite. It will happen. These people will have the Fire of Hell. Can you even begin to imagine how terrible this place is? A place of burning and torment for all eternity. The pain and the torment that a soul will feel in this place cannot even be described in words. Allah (swt), the Lord and Master of the universe, the Real and the True, promises this place for the hypocrites. Now there is absolutely nothing that they can do to escape it. They only have a short time, a few years at most, before they find themselves there.

Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah that the ones who do kufr will be in this place along with these hypocrites. Kufr as we know means to reject the Truth once you are certain of it, and it also means to be ungrateful. So for those people who clearly received this Message from their Creator and who still turned away from it, and for those people who lived a life where they did not show any gratitude to Allah (swt) for what He (swt) had given them, these people will join these

hypocrites in the Fire of Hell. They are all the same in the regard that they have all turned away from Allah (swt). They have all chosen themselves over Him (swt). This is the greatest of their crimes and this is what has made them worthy of such a place.

That is why Allah (swt) describes the Hellfire in this ayah as being “**sufficient for them**”. For the evil that they have done, the greatest of which is to turn away from their Creator and to oppose His cause on the earth, this is the recompense that is sufficient for them. As terrible and unspeakable as the torment is, it is nothing more than sufficient for what these people have done. In other words it is only what they deserve and nothing more than that. Allah (swt) does not do injustice to anyone. When He (swt) rewards those whom He (swt) is pleased with He (swt) gives them much more than they deserve, but when He (swt) punishes those whom He (swt) is displeased with He (swt) only gives them what they deserve. This terrible place. This Fire of Hell is only what these people deserve. It is only sufficient for them. Can you imagine then how evil of a people they are? Can you then realize how great is the right that Allah (swt) has upon us that we worship and serve Him (swt)?

These hypocrites knew Allah (swt) in all His (swt)'s Majesty and Glory and still they turned away from Him (swt). That is why He (swt) curses them as He (swt) tells us next in the ayah. Can you now see how much of the Wrath of Allah (swt) is on these people? How displeased and angry that He (swt) is with them. This ayah does not just say that the Curse of Allah (swt) is on them like other ayahs do, rather this ayah explicitly tells us that Allah (swt) curses them. The action of cursing is actually ascribed to Allah (swt). How evil and vile then must these people be that the Most Loving and the Most Forbearing and the Most Merciful would curse them in this way? The fact that Allah (swt) would curse them in this way is a testimony to their evil. How then can you allow yourself to be near them? How then can you not take the steps to prevent yourself from becoming them?

There are many ways in which Allah (swt) curses them. In the Hereafter He (swt) curses them by sentencing them to the Fire of Hell for all eternity. In this world He (swt) curses them by driving them away from this Din. They were once a part of this Din. They enjoyed the Mercy of this Din. But since they were averse to the servitude to Allah (swt) that this Din demanded of

them, since they preferred themselves to their Lord, Allah (swt) made the Din hateful to them. They no longer loved the Salah, they no longer loved to make *dhikr* and remember Allah (swt), they no longer loved to fast or to read Quran. Rather they started to love sin and vice. They started to love all that the Sacred Law had forbidden. Diseases such as arrogance and pride, envy and hatred started to grow in their hearts. At the same time virtues such as patience and thankfulness were removed from their hearts. They became more and more distant from their Lord and Master, their very reason for being. Because they turned away from Allah (swt) He (swt) turned away from them. He (swt) allowed them to become distant from Him (swt). This was yet another way in which He (swt) cursed them.

Finally Allah (swt) says **“and for them is a lasting punishment”**. Theirs is a punishment that knows no end. Their punishment begins in this life as soon as they decide to turn away from Allah (swt). The more distant that they become from Him (swt) the more they suffer. They suffer because all that they know is the life of this world. They do not see past this world. So any calamity or misfortune that strikes them in this world is a source of pain for them. Even when they have some pleasure they are suffering because of the knowledge that they have that this pleasure will end. As soon as their pleasure ends they are suffering because they are longing the next one. However this is only the beginning. Their true torment awaits them when they leave this world. They will suffer in their graves as they await the Day of Judgment. They will suffer on the Day of Judgment itself. Then they will know in the Fire of Hell pain and suffering like no creation has ever known before. Every moment that passes will only be worse than the previous. They will not be given even a second of respite. Just one fraction of a second in which the pain stops. Rather they will be made to feel it for all eternity. Nothing but pain and misery for all eternity. This is what awaits them because they turned away from Allah (swt). Remember that these were people who said that they were Muslims, but they sealed this fate for themselves when they chose to walk away from this path of dawah and jihad. Please make certain that you do not make the same mistake.

كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا
فَأَسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ فَأَسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلْقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي خَاضُوا أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ
أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

69. Like the ones before you, they were stronger than you in power and more abundant in wealth and children, they enjoyed their portion so you enjoyed your portion as those before you enjoyed their portion, and you engaged in idle play and pastime like those before you engaged in idle play and pastime, these are the ones whose works have become worthless in this world and in the Hereafter, these are surely the losers.

In this ayah Allah (swt) addresses these hypocrites directly. He (swt) lets them know that He (swt) Knows them very well. He (swt) Knows how they are spending their days. He (swt) Knows why they have turned away from this Message and why they have refused to support it. He (swt) Knows the heedlessness in their hearts. Their insolence and their rebellion. Allah (swt) then reminds them that their situation is just like the situation of those who came before them. Those people also preferred themselves to their Lord. They preferred relaxing and satisfying their desires rather than striving in the cause of Allah (swt). Because of this choice that they made Allah (swt) tells us here of the consequences that they had to suffer.

Allah (swt) begins by saying “**Like the ones before you, they were stronger than you in power and more abundant in wealth and children**”. So you are saying that you do not want to participate in this dawah. You are saying that you have better things to do with your time. You are content with having others make the needed sacrifices while you do nothing. Realize that such thinking comes from pride and arrogance. You think that you are above working in this effort. You think that you are above striving to your utmost for your Lord. If this is your thinking then here Allah (swt) asks you to consider those who came before you.

Allah (swt) is calling you to this path of dawah and jihad. However before He (swt) called you He (swt) called others besides you. This dawah has existed since the beginning. For thousands upon thousands of years. In that time Allah (swt) has called upon your brothers and sisters from among the children of Adam to rise up in this cause. If you think that you are the best then Allah (swt) is reminding you in this ayah that there were those better than you. They were stronger than you in power. They had more wealth than you and they had more children than you. So they had more of a right to be arrogant than you. But of course, Allah (swt) did not accept their arrogance just like He (swt) will not accept your arrogance. If any among them thought themselves to be better than working in this path then Allah (swt) dealt with them as He (swt) pleased. So realize then that you have no right to be among the arrogant. Those before you were greater than you in every measure by which you believe yourself to be the best.

Unfortunately today this disease is present among many of the Muslim youth who have grown up in the West. Many of us think ourselves better than our brother and sisters in Muslim lands. This arrogance comes from the fact that we believe we have been given more than them in wealth and power. We falsely believe that because Allah (swt) has given us this world more than He (swt) has given them then this means that He (swt) is more pleased with us than with them. We see ourselves as having more of the material goods of this world. We see ourselves as having a much higher standard of living. We see ourselves as having more freedom to speak and do what we want. Because of this we think that we are better than them. We think that we do not have to worry about working in this dawah. We hear about the great sacrifices that they make and we just cannot see ourselves as making the same sacrifices. Many of us have this thinking. Shaitan implants it deep within our hearts. Look into your heart and tell me that you have never tasted this despicable arrogance within yourself. So we should listen to what Allah (swt) is saying in this ayah. We are not the best. We are not the greatest. We are not above striving for this cause because of what we have been given of this world. There have been people who came before us who were given even more of this world than what we have. But Allah (swt) did not excuse them from working in this cause because of what they had been given? How then can we expect to be excused?

Take the example of a dawah carrier named Zainab al-Ghazali. She lived in our time and she stood up against the enemies of this Message. She was one of those who worked to bring back Islam in its totality. You should read her books to get a sense of all the sacrifices that she made for this dawah and all that she went through for this dawah. The things that the enemies of this Message did to her in their prisons are unspeakable. And she was a woman. Normally in this Din the role of the woman is not to go out in this path of dawah and jihad. Normally the role of the woman is to stay and home and tend to the family while the man goes out in this path. But she, may Allah (swt) have mercy on her, realized the urgency of this cause. That was why she did what she did. What excuse then do all the Muslim brothers have for refusing to speak because of cowardice? What excuse then do they have for not making the effort in this cause? How can you see the sacrifices that your sister had made and then keep silent and call yourself men? We are not men, but rather we are cowards. May Allah (swt) forgive us! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do for this Din even a tiny fraction of what she did!

Then Allah (swt) says **“they enjoyed their portion so you enjoyed your portion as those before you enjoyed their portion”**. Here Allah (swt) continues to speak about those who turn away from this path. The situation of such people today is just like the situation of such people in the past. They do not live for anything except for enjoying what little of this world that they have been given. Every one of us has been given a portion of this world, Allah (swt) created it just for us. However many of us do not live for anything more than just this portion that has been allotted for us. Many of us spend our entire lives just chasing after this small portion. Our entire lives we are either enjoying from this portion or we are striving only to get from this portion. We work day and night for this portion without realizing that it is what has already been written for us. So if you want to turn away from this path then Allah (swt) tells you here that such a life is all that you have. Just the temporary enjoyment of the small portion of this world that has been written for you. The people before you were also given a small portion and they lived only for that. You will be just like them if you turn away from this duty. Your entire existence would be nothing but enjoying the temporary pleasures of this world. You would not know your Creator. You would not be near to Him. You would only have lived for this world and its chattels.

Then Allah (swt) says “**and you engaged in idle play and pastime like those before you engaged in idle play and pastime**”. Is this not also an accurate description of those who turn away from this path of dawah and jihad? Their whole lives are nothing but play and pastime. When they are not striving for the fleeting chattels of this world by working day and night, they spend their time in idle play and amusement. Look at the way in which Muslims who are not working in the dawah spend their time. Watching television. Playing games. Talking about this world. Backbiting against others. This is their life. What a pathetic life is this when compared to the purpose for which they were created and the purpose for which they were allowed to be part of this Ummah? The people before them also engaged in such frivolities. Your parents also engaged in such frivolities. Did any good come out of their lives? Did they establish the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth? So realize that if you want to be a part of this effort, if you want there to be some meaning to your existence, then your entire outlook towards life has to change. You have to realize that there is more to life than this idle play. There is the dawah to Allah (swt).

What was the end result of these people who chose to live only for the life of this world? Allah (swt) tells us in the final part of this ayah “**these are the ones whose works have become worthless in this world and in the Hereafter, these are surely the losers**”. If you want to live only for this world. If you want to neglect this dawah. Then you can be certain that this will be your fate as well. All the actions that you did. All the moments of your life that you spent. It will all come out to absolutely nothing. Absolutely worthless. In the scales that Allah (swt) sets up on the Last Day, your days of heedlessness and play will have no weight whatsoever. As a result of this in the end you will be among the losers. The ones who have lost everything. You would have lost the Acceptance of your Creator. You would have lost the Garden and all the bliss therein. You would have lost salvation from the pain and the torment the Fire. You would have lost even a peaceful and tranquil life in this world. In every sense of the word you would be among the losers. How then can you turn away from this path? How then can you neglect your responsibility?

أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَأَصْحَابِ مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتِ أَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ
اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

70. Has there not reached them the news of those before them? The people of Nuh, ‘Ad, and Thamud, and the people of Ibrahim, and the companions of Madian, and the overthrown cities, their messengers came to them with clear signs, so Allah wronged them not but they wronged themselves.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to encourage us to join this effort. In the previous ayah He (swt) had reminded us not to take this Din, this responsibility, as a joke. There were people in the generations before us who had done this, and we all know what happened to them. All of their actions were rendered worthless because they had done these acts for other than Allah (swt). This was their penalty for turning away from Him (swt). They were destroyed both in this life and the next. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) gives us examples of such people. If we think for even one moment that Allah (swt) is not capable of carrying out this threat then we should consider what He (swt) is telling us here.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by asking “**Has there not reached them the news of those before them?**”. This question is addressed to the hypocrites. It is addressed to all those Muslims who choose not to join this effort. Has there not reached such people the news of those before them? We need to realize that we are not the first generation of mankind. There were countless generations before us. So if we think that we can ignore our duties to Allah (swt). If we think that we can walk away from this obligation. Then we should consider what Allah (swt) did with those before us who were disobedient to Him (swt). What He (swt) did to those before us who turned away from their duty to Him (swt). We know what happened to them. We know how they were utterly destroyed. So why then do we not take the lesson? How can we expect Allah (swt) to pardon and forgive only us? Why are we so special?

Allah (swt) then lists for us several of the nations of the past. The nation of Nuh (as). The mighty tribes of 'Ad and Thamud. The people of Ibrahim (as). The companions of the city of Madian to whom Shuaib (as) was sent as a prophet and messenger. And the overthrown cities of Sodom and Ghamora to whom Lut (as) was sent. These are but a few of the nations to whom Allah (swt) had sent messengers. They lived in different parts of the world and at different time periods. But what they all had in common was that they all turned away from Allah (swt). The messengers called the people of these nations to submit to Allah (swt) and to spend their existence in servitude to Him (swt). They were told exactly what was demanded of them. Yet they all turned from their messengers. They turned away even when they knew that it was wrong for them to turn away. They knew their Lord. They knew what He (swt) demanded of them. And still they turned away. Because of this they were destroyed. Because of this they were made to feel pain and suffering in this world, and an even greater pain and suffering in the next.

So for these hypocrites who chose not to march forward with the Prophet (saw) on the expedition to Tabuk. For all the Muslims today who choose not to work in this dawah. Has the story of these nations not reached them? Do they not know what happened to people of Nuh, the people of Ibrahim, and all of these nations? They know. They definitely know. The news of these nations has reached them. So how then can they turn away from Allah (swt)? Do they foolishly believe that Allah (swt) will spare them when He (swt) did not spare the previous nations? How could they be so arrogant? How could they be so naïve? Allah (swt) is no joke. This Din is no joke. This dawah is no joke. If you as a Muslim do not do your part then you will be replaced just like those before you were replaced.

Notice that Allah (swt) tells us of all of these nations how **“their messengers came to them with clear signs”**. Allah (swt) does not wish to do injustice to anyone. When Allah (swt) asks us to commit our lives to His Din and to its propagation He (swt) wants us to do it with absolute conviction. In other words He (swt) wants us to dedicate our lives to this Message only after we are certain that it is indeed from Him (swt). That was why all of the messengers came with clear signs. These signs proved to the people the Truth of this Message. So when they turned away they knew that what they were turning away from was the Truth.

Unfortunately this is not being done with the Ummah today. In our times Muslims are not being taught the proofs and evidences for this Message with which they may know for certain that it is the Truth. They are simply told to believe in it based on blind faith. That is why this Din has simply become an inheritance passed on from one generation to another. That is why Muslims view this Din as just something from their culture and not as a complete way of life. That is why many Muslims do not have conviction in this Din. That is why many Muslims are weak in practicing this Din. That is why many Muslims are not working in the dawah. They have not been shown the Clear Sign that the Prophet (saw) has been sent with, they have not been shown the Quran. In order to alleviate this problem we have to reconnect the Ummah with the Quran. We have to build their conviction in this Din through the Quran. An effort has to be made to teach the Arabic of the Quran, because to truly taste its Miracle you need a sound understanding of classical Arabic. This way Insha Allah you can see how the Quran uses the Arabic language in a way that no human writer could possibly have done. We also have to show the Muslims the deep and profound meanings of the Quran. So that they can realize how such a Book could only have come from the Divine. So that they can have conviction in this fact.

It is only when Muslims have this conviction in their belief that they will be willing to make the sacrifices that the dawah demands of them. If a Muslim has any doubt in his heart, if somewhere within himself he doubts that this Message is true, then he may not make the sacrifices that this dawah demands and he may not strive to his utmost like this dawah demands. At that moment of testing, when the time comes to prove himself, Shaitan may come to him and suggest to him the possibility that this Message is not the Truth. Then Shaitan will ask him if he is willing to make such sacrifices for something which may not be the Truth. That is why it is only when Muslims have that absolute conviction in the Truth of this Message, like the Sahabah (ra) had, that is when they will be willing to make the greatest of sacrifices. The Sahabah (ra) were more convinced of what Allah (swt) told them in the Quran than they were of the world around them. That was why they strove hard for this dawah day and night. That was they made all the sacrifices. They saw the true reality that most of us are blind to. In order to reach this level of conviction we once again have to carry Islam with its proofs and evidences.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says “**so Allah wronged them not but they wronged themselves**”. First notice the word “so” in this part of the ayah. This word connects the meaning in this part of the ayah with the meaning in the previous part. In the previous part Allah (swt) had told us that He (swt) had sent the messengers to these people with clear signs. Now here He (swt) tells us that He (swt) did not do any wrong to these people but it was they who wronged themselves. So the reason why Allah (swt) did not do any wrong to them is because He (swt) had sent them the clear signs. It was absolutely clear for these people that this Message was indeed the Truth. So when they turned away from it they knew that they were turning away from the Truth. They knew that their Creator was calling them and they still turned away from Him (swt). They turned away from Him (swt) even when they knew that they owed to Him (swt) their worship and their obedience. They knew that Allah (swt) was the Perfect Being to Whom they should have dedicated themselves completely. They knew that He (swt) had given them everything that they have for which they owed to Him (swt) gratitude through submission. That is why Allah (swt) did not do any wrong to them when He (swt) destroyed them. Rather this was what they deserved for the terrible crime that they committed. They chose to walk away from Allah (swt) and they got what they deserved for this choice.

The hypocrites who thought that they could turn away from this path of dawah and jihad should have realized this. They should have seen what Allah (swt) did with those who came before them. If they turned away from Allah (swt), if they turned away from their responsibility to worship and serve Him (swt), then they would be wronging their own souls. They would be bringing the punishment of Allah (swt) upon themselves. Why then could they not have realized this? How can we as Muslims today be lazy in our obligations to Allah (swt) and not realize this? Allah (swt) demands from us our obedience, He (swt) demands from us that we submit completely to Him (swt). This was the reason why He (swt) created us and this is the reason why He (swt) sustains us at every moment. If we fail to realize this. If we continue to delude ourselves into thinking that our lives are ours to live as we please, then what kind of stupidity is it for us to think that the punishment will not touch us as well?

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
 وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ
 وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

71. The believing men and the believing women, they are *awliyya* to each other, they establish the M'aruf and they destroy the Munkar, and they establish Salah and they the give Zakat, and they obey Allah and His Messenger, these are the ones on whom Allah will have mercy, surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.

The Quran is a Book of Guidance. It guides us to Allah (swt). It shows us what is pleasing to Him (swt) and what is not pleasing to Him (swt). If we can make the effort to do what is pleasing to our Lord and to stay away from what is not pleasing to Him (swt) then Insha Allah we will find ourselves with Him (swt). We will be in the Divine Presence. We will be among those who “see” Allah (swt) at every moment of our lives. However this wonderful experience does not come cheap. It demands of us that we dedicate ourselves completely to our Lord. In this ayah He (swt) shows us how we can do that. He (swt) shows us how we can journey to Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**The believing men and the believing women**”. These are the people whom Allah (swt) is pleased. He (swt) does not care if you are male or female. He (swt) does not even look at that at all. Nor does He (swt) look to the color of your skin or how tall you are or any of your physical features. These all mean nothing to Allah (swt). These are all merely the surface of the human being. Just the shell. They do not define who you really are. Rather what matters to Allah (swt) is what is inside of you, most importantly what matters to Him (swt) is the Iman in your heart. This is why the first description that Allah (swt) gives of those whom He (swt) is pleased with is that they believe. They believe in Him (swt) and in the Message that He (swt) has sent. So if you want to be close to Allah (swt) then the first step in your journey is that you must believe in Him (swt). Once you have believed then you must always work on strengthening your belief. Iman. This is what is most important. It cannot be stressed enough.

How do we strengthen our Iman? How do we come closer to Allah (swt)? It is by doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). Once we strive to please Allah (swt) then He (swt) will guide us to Him (swt). That is why in the reminder of the ayah Allah (swt) describes what it is that these believers do. These are the actions that are the most pleasing to Him (swt). First and foremost Allah (swt) says of these believers that “**they are *awliyya* to each other**”. This word means that they are close friends and supporters of each other, and it also means that they are protectors and patrons of each other. So if you want Allah (swt) to be pleased with you then you must try your best to come close to your Muslim brothers and sisters. Your efforts to build relationships with your fellow believers, your patience in forgiving them their faults and shortcomings, your forbearance in overlooking your differences, is indeed part of your worship to Allah (swt), and it is among the best of deeds that you can do for Him (swt). Shaitan wants to create rifts and divisions in our community. He knows that when we are divided then we are weak and when we are united then we are strong. He knows that as long as the Ummah is divided then the dawah will be weak, and when the dawah is weak then that is more of an opportunity for him to take more of the children of Adam to the Fire with him. That is why he is working day and night to foster malice and hatred, to sow conflict and dissension, between members of this Ummah. Especially between those believers who are working in the dawah. So for you to make the effort to come closer to your brother or sister. For you to be the one to give the first Salam. For you to be the one to make peace if there is a conflict between you and them. Then this is among the best of deeds that you can do for your Lord.

In his tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb asks us to notice how Allah (swt) did not describe the hypocrites as *awliyya* of each other even though they were so close to each other in thinking and behavior, and even though they shared a common goal that they were working towards. This shows us how this *wilayya* is something special for the community of the believers. If we as a community were to lose this *wilayya* then we would be much closer to the community of hypocrites rather than the community of believers whom Allah (swt) is pleased with. This unity and closeness in ranks is a very characteristic of the community of the believers. If the believers were to lose this closeness, if they allow divisions to form between them, then are they believers?

This unity and closeness is also essential for the success of the dawah. This mission can only be carried by a group of believers working together. Even the Prophet (saw) himself carried this dawah with the help and support of a group. It is essential for the success of this group that there be extreme this closeness between all the members. Each member of the group must love each other, each member of the group must sacrifice for the other, each member of the group must strive to please the other, each member of the group must be willing to go through torture and even die for the other. Only when the group has this level of closeness between all its members does it have any chance for success. This is because in the end the victory comes only from Allah (swt). And Allah (swt) will only give victory for a group when they please Him (swt).

Not only are the believers extremely close to each other, but they are also protectors of each other. This fact also should be a reason why we should strive to work in this dawah. From this ayah you can see that Allah (swt) has made you into a protector for the rest of this Ummah. So you have a responsibility to look after your Muslim brothers and sisters. You have to see to their well-being and make sure that they are protected from all harm. So for every Muslim man that will be killed, for every Muslim woman who will be raped and dishonored, for every Muslim child who will starve to death, Allah (swt) will ask you what you did for them. What did you do to protect them and look after them? In His Book Allah (swt) told you that you were the protectors for them, so what did you do for them? The Prophet (saw) has told us that whenever we seek to do anything then we must do it in the best way possible. Now the best way for us to help our Muslim brothers and sisters who are oppressed and suffering is not to go and fight their enemies, or to spend all of our wealth in charity for their sake. This may alleviate the suffering of some but it will not cure the problem as a whole. Rather the best way to protect the Muslims is to restore the Islamic State. The Prophet (saw) has told us that the Imam is a shield for the believers. This means that the Khalifah protects the Ummah from all those who would seek to harm them, both physically and spiritually. When the Islamic State was present and powerful, then there was no one who even thought of harming the Muslims, So if you want to please Allah (swt), if you want to alleviate the suffering of your brothers and sisters, if you want to be the protector for this Ummah that Allah (swt) has told you to be, then you should do whatever you can for this effort.

In his tafsir of this ayah, Imam Shawkani comments on this bond between the believers. He says that first and foremost it is a bond that has been formed by Allah (swt). In other words this Ummah, this community of believers, has been brought into being by Allah (swt). Now do you think that Allah (swt) would be pleased with you if you were to break this bond for some personal reasons. For some hatred or malcontent that you may have towards your brother. This bond that He (swt) created. Next Imam Shawkani brings our attention to the fact that the basis of this unity is Iman in Allah (swt). Even in this ayah Allah (swt) addresses us through our Iman in Him (swt). He (swt) calls out to the believers. So no matter whatever minor differences you may have with your brother, you should always look to what you have in common with him. You both have the same Iman, you both believe in the same Lord, you both read the same Book, and you both follow the same Messenger (saw).

The next description that Allah (swt) gives for the believers is that **“they establish the M’aruf and they destroy the Munkar”**. As we have mentioned previously, this means that they do dawah. This means that they join this effort to establish the Islamic State. The M’aruf is all that is pleasing to Allah (swt) and the Munkar is all that is displeasing to Him (swt). The government is what prevents much of the Munkar in a society from being removed and the government is what prevents much of the M’aruf in the society from being established. Think about all the bars, banks and clubs that there are in Muslim countries. Do you think that you will be able to remove these evils without first removing the government which protects them? That is why our scholars say that in order to properly carry out this command, we have to work to establish the Islamic State. For a more detailed description of this command please see our tafsir of the 105th ayah of Surah Imran. In there we clearly show how this command for the Ummah today is a command to work for the establishment of the Islamic State.

Then Allah (swt) says of the believers that they **“they establish Salah and they the give Zakat”**. As important as the Salah and the Zakat are for this Din, notice how Allah (swt) mentioned the dawah and the unity of the Muslims even before this. This shows us how working in this effort, and maintaining close relationships with the believers is as important to Allah (swt) as Salah and Zakat, if not more so. Yet how many Muslims today recognize this fact? How many

Muslims are involved in the dawah? How many have committed their lives to this dawah like the current situation of our Ummah demands of them to? Muslims today think that if only they make their Salah and pay their Zakat, then they are the most righteous of the righteous. How wrong is such thinking? How far away are they from the ideal that Allah (swt) expects of them?

This being said it does not in any way mean that Salah and Zakat are not important. They are very important, they are the two strongest pillars upon which the rest of the Din is established. Our Salah establishes our connection with Allah (swt). We do all that we do only for Him (swt). We work hard and sacrifice in this dawah only for Him (swt). So when we pray five times a day, we become close to Him (swt). We reestablish our connection with Him (swt). We remind ourselves of what our life is all about. We leave the corruption and ugliness of this worldly life, and we ascend to a station near to Him (swt). As we know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw), when we are in prostration before Allah (swt) then we are closest to Him (swt), what other goal is their worth striving for in this world than that? Just to be near to your Lord. Just to submit yourself completely before His (swt)'s Majesty and Perfection as He (swt) has created you to do. This is why the Salah is extremely important, and this is why every believer should strive to increase their Salah and increase in their presence of heart in their Salah.

Just as it is important for the believers to establish their Salah, it is also important for them to pay their Zakat. As we mentioned in ayah 60, even the Zakat is a command that cannot be implemented correctly today since the Islamic State is missing. But we must still do what we can. We must still try to spend that portion of our wealth on those whom we feel are the most deserving of it. First and foremost because this will purify our wealth. It will remind us that our wealth is not everything. It will remind us that there is more to life than simply the accumulation of money and property. One of the main reasons why many Muslims turn away from this path of dawah and jihad is because of their love for wealth. They think that their wealth will suffer a decrease if they were to devote their time and efforts for the dawah. However once you spend your wealth for Allah (swt) then you realize that life is not about wealth. You realize that your wealth is only a means by which you can draw closer to your Lord. Then you realize that this is the true purpose of life. Not the material things of this world but rather Allah (swt).

The next description that Allah (swt) gives of those whom He (swt) is pleased with is that **“they obey Allah and His Messenger”**. How can you expect to draw near to Allah (swt)? How can you expect for Him (swt) to be pleased with you unless you obey Him (swt)? Allah (swt) has commanded you to do certain actions, and He (swt) had told you to refrain from certain actions. Some of these laws can be found in the Quran itself, but most are from the words of the Messenger (saw). Now we know that the Prophet (saw) does not speak except from revelation so obedience to him (saw) is really obedience to Allah (swt). Thus we must obey Allah (swt). We obey Him (swt) through the Prophet (saw). It must be a complete and unreserved obedience. It must be an obedience in every sphere of our lives. We cannot obey Allah (swt) only in matters of worship and then ignore His (swt)’s commandments when it comes to government and economics. Rather we must obey Him (swt) in everything. Anything less is unworthy of Him (swt).

This is what the believers do for Allah (swt). They maintain close relationships with each other. They protect each other and look out for each other. They work to establish all that is pleasing to Allah (swt) and to destroy all that is displeasing to Him (swt). They establish the Salah and they pay the Zakat. They also obey Allah (swt) in all that He (swt) has commanded them to do. This is what the believers do for Allah (swt), what does He (swt) do for them? He (swt) tells us **“these are the ones on whom Allah will have mercy”**. Who among us does not want mercy from Allah (swt)? Who among us does not crave this mercy? Can you imagine where you would be for even one moment if His (swt)’s mercy was removed from you? Every single thing in the universe is in desperate need for the mercy of Allah (swt) for every moment of its existence, how then can you hope to survive without it? But if you work in this cause, if you serve the Din of Allah then He (swt) is promising you in this ayah a special kind of mercy. A mercy that is in addition to the mercy that the rest of creation is already enjoying. This mercy is so tremendous that you will find it both in this life and the Hereafter. In this life this mercy is to be close to Allah (swt). To be in the Divine Presence. Once you are at this station then at almost every moment of your life you are remembering Allah (swt). You see Allah (swt) before you see the world around you. Once you are at this level then nothing can make you grieve and you will never have fear. You will only know Allah (swt). You will see everything as coming from Him (swt) and you will be content.

Another aspect of this mercy in this life is the enabling grace to do the deeds that are pleasing to Allah (swt). This enabling grace is known in Arabic as *Tawfiq*. Now you know from this ayah what is pleasing to your Lord, but do you think that you have the strength to do it on your own? Do you think that you yourself can muster up the resolve to complete an obligatory task or you by yourself can create enough patience to stay away from something forbidden? No, you by yourself would never be able to do it. Rather you need this *Tawfiq* from Allah (swt). It is the willpower and the strength that He (swt) puts in your heart. Out of only His (swt)'s Love for you and His (swt)'s desire to please you and reward you does He (swt) grant you this *Tawfiq*. You by yourself have done nothing to deserve it. And this is only a part of His (swt)'s mercy for you in this world.

Yet another aspect of His (swt)'s mercy for you in this world is that He (swt) will give you the provisions of this world and He (swt) will take care of your needs in this world. You had a meal not to long ago, you have a bed on which to sleep, you have a roof that covers you, and walls to keep you warm, Insha Allah you also have a family who loves you. Who do you think gave you all of these things? Allah (swt) gives you of this world, and for you when He (swt) gives it is only to reward you and not to punish you. You can enjoy and partake of these things, and you can show gratitude to Him (swt) for it. Then even your gratitude will be a reason for Him (swt) to reward you. All of these provisions and all of these bounties are only a portion of the mercy that He (swt) will have on you if you take up this effort.

Another part of the mercy of Allah (swt) for the believers in this world is that He (swt) will give victory for this Din and save this Ummah from the oppression that she is suffering from. Because the believers are so closely knit together, they are in pain when their brothers are in pain. Because the believers love Allah (swt), they are in pain when His (swt)'s Law is not implemented on the earth. So if the believers stick to this path of dawah and jihad, this path of striving to bring back the Law of Allah (swt) to the earth, then He (swt) will reward them by allowing them to reach this objective. This will relieve them of their pain. They will see brought back to the earth what is pleasing to their Lord. They will see their brothers and sisters relieved of their suffering. How much of a mercy will this be for them?

But the greatest portion of this mercy of Allah (swt) for the believers who walk on this path will be in the Hereafter. This is what He (swt) is going to tell us about in the next ayah Insha Allah. But before that He (swt) also reminds us that He (swt) is Mighty and Wise. Allah (swt) is Mighty in that He (swt) can do whatsoever that He (swt) wants to and there is no one who can stop Him (swt) or even frustrate Him (swt) in the least. His (swt)'s Will is what will always be accomplished. So if Allah (swt) chooses to reward you with His Mercy then there is no one who can prevent this Mercy from coming to you. He (swt) can reward you in ways that you cannot even imagine because He (swt) is the Mighty. The reward that Allah (swt) gives you for working in this effort, the mercy that He (swt) shows you, is also from His (swt)'s Wisdom. If you are sincere to Him (swt) then you have to believe that He (swt) will only do to you that which is the best for you. Whatever it is that He (swt) gives you, both in this world and the next, is from His (swt)'s mercy for you. It is what He (swt) Knows through His (swt)'s Wisdom is the best for you. Realize always that He (swt) is the Wise and you are not. Realize always that He (swt) Knows what is better for you even more than you do. So if you make yourself among the believers and do what is required of a believer, then not only would you receive the Mercy of Allah (swt), but you would receive the very best of His (swt)'s mercy. The mercy that only He (swt) has the power to give and mercy that He (swt) Knows is the best for you.

. Allah (swt) is also Wise in that these laws which He (swt) has given us are what is best for us. When Allah (swt) legislates a code of living that we must follow, He (swt) legislates it from His (swt)'s Perfect Wisdom. Thus this is the Perfect Law. The One for all mankind to live by till the end of time. So first and foremost Allah (swt) described the believers in this ayah as doing dawah. Their dawah is their effort to establish this Law on the earth. They know that this Law is the correct way of life. The way of life that comes from the Most Wise. That is why they strive to establish this Law on the earth. They know that it is the Law of the Most Wise. When you know that a way of life has come from the Most Wise then how can you not live by it? How can you not make every effort to bring it to the world?

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
 أَكْبَرَ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٧٢﴾

72. Allah has promised the believing men and the believing women gardens under which rivers flow, to stay therein forever, and homes of purity in Gardens of Eternity, and the Pleasure of Allah is the greatest, that is the supreme achievement.

In this ayah Allah (swt) gives us the greatest incentive of all for us to join this effort. In the previous ayah He (swt) had told us about the portion of the reward for this effort that could be found in this world. In this ayah He (swt) tells us of the portion of the reward that will be in the Hereafter. Now of course we know that there will be the Garden and the sensual delights therein. Allah (swt) even reminds us of that fact in this ayah. However there is another reward that is even greater than the Garden. Far greater such that you cannot even compare the two. This is what Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah. This is the greatest of rewards that any creation could ever aspire for. Once you realize just what Allah (swt) is offering you here then it would be sheer madness on your part not to join this effort.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**Allah has promised the believing men and the believing women gardens under which rivers flow**”. First of all realize that this is a promise from Allah (swt). When Allah (swt) makes a promise then is there any doubt to it coming true? This is a promise that Allah (swt) makes for both the believing men and the believing women. He (swt) promises them that they will have gardens under which rivers flow. However way we try to describe these gardens, we will not do them justice with our limited words and the limitations of the English language in describing realities. So we will not even try. Rather we just ask you to remember that these places were created just to give you pleasure and joy. There was no other reason for the creation of these gardens other than to please you. So just try and imagine how pleased you will be in them. In how many ways could Allah (swt) please you if He (swt) wanted.

However we also have to remember that it not just for any believers that this reward has been promised. This ayah was revealed in the context of other ayahs encouraging the Muslims to go forth in this path of dawah and jihad. The hypocrites were identified in the previous ayahs as those who chose not to go forth on this path. The ones who made excuses. The ones who neglected their obligations. So are we to believe that this promise is for just anyone who claims to be Muslim and who prays every now and then. Is that all that would be required of one to get the great reward that Allah (swt) is promising here? What would be the difference between such a person and a hypocrite? No, rather this reward is for the true and sincere believers. The ones who spend their lives trying to please Allah (swt). The ones who work in the cause of Allah (swt). The ones who go forth in this path. These are the ones who Iman is reflected in their actions, in the very life that they live. Their Iman is not just words on their tongue, but their very life and how they choose to live it testifies to their conviction. They give up many of the pleasures of this world, they give up chasing after this world, they give up almost everything that is not connected to helping them in this cause. This cause to establish the Din of Allah (swt) on the earth and to win His (swt)'s Pleasure through it. These are the ones for whom Allah (swt) promises this reward. Not for those who say that they believe with their tongues but who do not live up to what they say.

This should also remind us that whenever we study ayahs of the Quran we also have to study the context in which that ayah appears. This ayah appears in the context of Allah (swt) encouraging the Muslims to go forth in this path. From this context it is clear that the great reward that Allah (swt) is promising in this ayah is not for just anyone who claims to believe, or for anyone who thinks that they believe. Rather it is for those who prove their beliefs with their actions. It is for those who join this effort and strive hard in it to the best of their ability. However if you were only to read this ayah by itself you would not get this meaning. Rather you would think that all that would be required of a person to get this great reward is only to believe. As we saw such thinking would be wrong. Now it is true that someone who believes will eventually go to the Garden. But if they do not have many good deeds on their scale then they may have to go the Fire for a while. These are not the believers whom Allah (swt) speaks about here. Rather the believers whom Allah (swt) speaks of here are the ones who dedicate themselves to Him (swt).

What is best part of being in the Garden? Allah (swt) tells us in the next part of the ayah when He (swt) says **“to stay therein forever”**. Of all the bounties and pleasures of the Garden there is nothing better than this. Eternity. Timelessness. To know that you will never taste death or non-existence ever again. What could be better than this? You may be reluctant to make the sacrifices that this dawah demands of you because of your love for this world. Shaitan may tell you to enjoy the moments that you have left in this world. But why would you ever listen to him when you know that this world is fleeting. You know that this world will soon end. If you live only for this world then you are deluding yourself. You are living for something that you know will end. How can you trade the Hereafter for this? The Hereafter is something that will never end. In this very ayah Allah (swt) is promising you eternity. Once you know that eternity is waiting for you, how then can you throw it away for what is temporal and fleeting?

Then Allah (swt) continues to describe the reward that the workers in this effort will receive by saying **“and homes of purity in Gardens of Eternity”**. The word for “homes” in this ayah is derived from the Arabic word *Sakeena*. Recall how we said that this word means peace and tranquility. Calmness and rest. Such will be the homes of the righteous in the Garden. They will be places of peace and calmness. Tranquility and rest. You will never get angry, you will never even get upset in any way. You will always get exactly what you want so the only state that your heart will know is one of contentment and satisfaction. Compare this to your life here. When even in the best of days that you have there is something that bothers you, something that did not happen exactly as you wanted. Have you ever had even one day in the life of this world when you did not have any sadness or any fear? No, because the very nature of this world is such that we will never find true peace and contentment in it. Such a state can only be found in the Hereafter. Where Insha Allah the very homes in which we dwell will be places of peace and contentment. Allah (swt) also tells us here that such homes are to be found in Gardens of Eternity. The very nature of such Gardens is that they are eternal. So Allah (swt) is emphasizing for us once again the fundamental difference between this life and the Garden. One is temporal and the other is eternal. How then can you choose the former instead of the latter? What utter stupidity is it? Realize that there is a life everlasting waiting for you if only you dedicate yourself to Allah (swt).

As wonderful as these Gardens and these homes are, they are not the greatest of rewards that Allah (swt) gives for those who dedicate themselves to Him (swt). There is something far greater that He (swt) has kept reserved for these servants of His. He (swt) tells us about this in the next part of the ayah when He (swt) says “**the Pleasure of Allah is the greatest**”. This is the greatest of rewards that any of us can ever attain. There is nothing that is greater than this. Just think about Who Allah (swt) IS. A Being of such Perfection and Majesty. A Being Who has brought you into existence from non-existence, Who has maintained your existence for every moment of your life, Who has given you everything that you have. When you think about such a Being, then what could you desire more than for Him (swt) to be pleased with you? Just to have His (swt)’s Acceptance and Contentment with you. Is there anything else in all of the creation that could possibly compare to that? In fact why would you want to seek the creation when you can seek the Creator? What is the creation when compared to the Creator? This is why many of the ‘*arifeen*’ of the past, those who truly knew Allah (swt), desired His Pleasure much more than they desired the Garden. In fact many of them said that they would rather be in the Fire if that would get them the Pleasure of Allah (swt) than be in the Garden and not have His (swt)’s Pleasure. This was how much they desired their Lord. May Allah (swt) help us all to reach this station! May Allah (swt) help us to realize why this is the greatest of rewards!

Now we are not saying that we do not desire the Garden. We do desire the Garden and we do desire to be saved from the Fire. How could any sane person want to feel pain instead of pleasure? We all desire the sweet drinks, the delicious foods, the beautiful companions, the peace and serenity, and all the other bounties that await the righteous in the Garden. But more than the Garden we desire the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The Pleasure of Allah (swt) is the reason why we strive in this effort. We are not seeking to establish the Islamic State or to destroy the enemies of this Message or to uplift the Ummah. These are all but steps that we are taking towards our final goal and that is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Everything that we do is only for Allah (swt). He (swt) has ordered us to work in this effort, and that is the only reason why we are doing it. Now for working sincerely in this effort, if He (swt) grants us victory, if He (swt) rewards us with the Garden, then we are pleased with that. But what we truly desire is only Him (swt).

So the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is the goal that we should all be working towards. In the final part of this ayah He (swt) describes this goal as **“the supreme achievement”**. Different people desire different things in this world. Some people desire power, some people desire money, some people desire women, some people desire honor and respect. This is what they desire and so they spend their lives working towards these goals. They tell themselves that when they have accumulated this much money then they are successful. Or when they buy this house then they are successful. Or when they get this promotion or they get this position then they are successful. Or when they get married to this woman then they are successful. Or when they put their children through this school then they are successful. These are all different measures that the people have placed for success in this worldly life. However none of these are the true measure of success. All of these achievements are from this world, and as we know this world is a place that we are destined to leave. So how can you hope to find success in this world, how can you hope to find the fulfillment of your existence in this world, when you know that you have to leave this world? What can your job or your degree or your car or your wife or your children do for you when you are in that hole in the ground? What can they do for you when you are being judged in the Divine Court? So realize from here what should be your true goal in life.

Once you realize what true success is then you should also realize how easy it is for you to attain it. You do not need to go to five years of medical school, you do not need to work overtime and on weekends, you do not need to make sacrifices in your Din and with your family only for a few measly dollars, all that you need to do is dedicate yourself to Allah (swt). This is what you were created to do. This is what you are being sustained to do. You just have to try your best throughout your life to do the actions which you believe will be the most pleasing to your Lord. If you can do this then you have already attained the greatest success. The supreme achievement. And that is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) does not care about the results of your actions. In fact it is He (swt) Who brings about the results and not you. All that He (swt) wants to see from you is for you to make the effort. If you can make the effort sincerely and only for Him (swt) then you have already attained your goal.

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ
 جَهَنَّمُ وَيَبْسُ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾

73, O Prophet strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be unyielding against them, and their home is Hell, and evil is the destination.

Now we know what is the goal towards which we must strive. The Pleasure of Allah (swt). This is the greatest bounty and gift any among the entire creation could ever hope to receive. In fact if you were to take all the other gifts and bounties that could be conferred upon the creation they still would not even be a tiny fraction of this gift. So the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is a Bounty, it is a gift from Him (swt). But Allah (swt) will not give this gift to just anyone. Rather you have to earn it, you have to work for it. Now we know that there are many actions that we could do to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We could do the five pillars, we could make more dhikr, we can give in charity to the needy, we can behave with others in the best way, and we can be dutiful to our parents. These are but a few of the actions that we can do with which we can hope for the Pleasure of our Lord. However in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us of the one action that is the most pleasing to Him (swt). This is the fastest and the surest of paths that lead to Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**O Prophet strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites**”. Even though this ayah is addressing the Prophet (saw), the scholars tell us that this ayah also addresses his (saw)’s Ummah who follows him (saw). Allah (swt) is telling us here to strive hard against both the hypocrites and the disbelievers. Now the scholars also tell us that the nature of this striving is different for each of these groups. In other words we strive hard against the disbelievers in one way and we strive hard against the hypocrites in another way. The way in which we strive hard against the disbelievers is that we fight them until they submit to the Authority of the Islamic State. So this ayah is yet another where Allah (swt) is commanding us to march forward in jihad against His (swt)’s enemies. Against those who would prevent His (swt)’s Law from being established in the land. Against those who keep His (swt)’s Message from reaching the people. As we mentioned this command needs the Islamic State.

Now the way in which we should strive hard against the hypocrites is completely different from the way in which we strive against the disbelievers. The first way in which we strive against the hypocrites is that we do not allow them to influence us. We do not allow them to turn us into hypocrites as well. So the next time you hear a fellow Muslim discouraging you from joining this effort, or they are discouraging from wearing your hijab or keeping a beard, or praying in public then you should not listen to them. Rather you should realize without a doubt that such people are hypocrites because they are trying to take you away from Allah (swt). They would talk about “moderation” and avoiding “extremism”. But such thinking is foolish. When one is journeying towards Allah (swt) then how can one be anything but extreme. In other words how can you do anything less than your very best. How can you allow the moments in your life to pass you by without doing something to please your Lord in those moments. The Sufis have said that to trade the moments in this world only for this world is like trading pearls for pebbles. Every moment in your life is more valuable than anything else in this world because it is a moment in which you can draw closer to your Lord, This reward that Allah (swt) is giving you is the best of reward, so how can you hope to attain unless you try your very best. The hypocrites in our community however will say otherwise. They will tell you to be “moderate” in your religion. They will tell you to live a little and to enjoy your youth and your life while you have it. With such words they might as well be telling you to walk away from Allah (swt). They might as well be telling you to make Shaitan as your lord and master. Because this is in essence what their “advice” amounts to. So the way in which we strive against the hypocrites is that we do not allow them to influence us with such advice. We do not allow them to take us away from this path of dawah and jihad. We do not allow them to take us away from Allah (swt). Now perhaps many of these people are not even true hypocrites. Perhaps their Iman is just weak. However regardless of this, if they are advising you to do something which you know will be displeasing to Allah (swt), then that is shade of hypocrisy in them. So you must strive hard against them and not allow yourself to be overcome by their temptations. This is regardless of if they are your parents, your siblings, your friends or even if they are so-called “scholars”. They have gone astray from Allah (swt) and from the life that He (swt) wants from us, now they want to do the same for you. You must strive against this fate.

Then Allah (swt) commands us to **“be unyielding against them”**. Both the hypocrites and the disbelievers have the same goal and that is to take us away from Allah (swt). The disbelievers will fight us on the open battlefield, and they will attack with material force. They will also attack us intellectually by trying to put doubts in our Iman. The hypocrites are even worse in that they will try to be our friends and they will pretend like what they are telling us is what is best for us. But in the end what they are saying is the same poison as the disbelievers. They are also telling us to give up on asking for the implementation of Islam in its totality. They are also telling us to change this Din to make it conform with the modern world. In the end the goal of both of these groups is to take us away from Allah (swt). It is to frustrate the mission that Allah (swt) has charged us with. This is what we must never allow them to do. We must be firm and unyielding to them. The more that they strive against us, the stronger that our resolve against them must become. We must not give them even one inch, we must not compromise with them even one bit. We must not settle for anything less than the full and complete implementation of this Din. This is because we are the representatives of the Lord and Master of the universe. We are struggling and striving only for Him (swt). When we realize the Majesty and the Tremendousness and the absolute Perfection and Purity of the Lord whom we serve then how can we weaken in our resolve even one bit? This Din is the Truth and you cannot compromise on the Truth.

Imam Shawkani tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that this command to strive against the disbelievers abrogates all previous commands to be forgiving, forbearing and relenting with them. We know that in the Makkan phase of the dawah, the Prophet (saw) was commanded to be patient with the disbelievers and to pardon them all the wrong that they did to him (saw). Even though they used to torture and oppress him (saw) and the believers, he (saw) was not given permission to fight back. Shawkani tells us that this ayah abrogates all those ayahs revealed in Makkah preaching restraint and non-violence. Now the only relationship that Muslims can have with the disbelievers is one of jihad. However as we mentioned the jihad with the material force is only permissible after the Islamic State returns. But we should still realize from this ayah the urgency for the need to restore the State so that this jihad can continue. Jihad is a command from our Lord. It is very much part of our Din. How can we return to Him (swt) having neglected it?

In the final part of the ayah Allah (swt) says of the hypocrites and the disbelievers that **“their home is Hell, and evil is the destination”**. Their home is Hell. The place in which they will abide forever is Hell. They will never be allowed to leave it. It will be their final destination. The word that Allah (swt) uses to describe their home in the Fire gives meanings of evil, wretchedness and deprivation. It is a place in which they will suffer for all eternity. They will not be given even a moment of rest. Not even a moment of respite when the pain is not there. Not a moment of peace or contentment. They will find nothing to quench their thirst or to satisfy their hunger. In fact the longer that they remain in this terrible place the worse that their situation will become. This was a place that was created for one reason and one reason only. To make them suffer.

Realize then from this how displeased and angry that Allah (swt) is with such people. Realize then the evil that they have done when they turned away from Allah (swt)'s Message and when they prevented its establishment on the earth. Now if Allah (swt) is so angry with them that He (swt) has given them such a terrible punishment, then how do you think that He (swt) will feel about you if you allow yourself to become close to them. If you allow yourself to listen to their advice. If you allow yourself to be influenced by their thinking and their behavior. Do you think that Allah (swt) would be pleased with you then?

Not only that but if you allow yourself to be close to these people then what guarantee do you have that they would not make you like them? What guarantee do you have that you will not adopt their thinking and their behavior? These are a people who are distant from Allah (swt). This in and of itself should be more than enough of a reason to avoid them. But from this ayah you can see how much of the Wrath of your Lord these people have brought down upon themselves and you can see the terrible punishment that has been promised for them. Once you realize this then do you still want to be near them? Do you still want them to influence you or your family? Your only salvation lies in the command that Allah (swt) has given you in this ayah. You have to strive against them with all of the strength that you can muster. You must be as strong and unrelenting as you can towards their efforts to influence and pull you in that direction. Realize now the final abode towards which they are trying to take you.

يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا وَلَقَدْ قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ
 وَهُمْ أُو۟لُو۟ا۟ بِمَا لَمْ يَنۢتَالُوا۟ وَمَا نَقَمُوا۟ إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
 فَإِن يَتُوبُوا۟ يَكُ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَإِن يَتَوَلَّو۟ا۟ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا فِي الدُّنْيَا
 وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

73. They swear by Allah that they did not speak, but certainly they did speak the word of kufr, and they did kufr after their Islam, and they resolved to do that which they were unable to, and they did not have hatred except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them from His Bounty, so if they repent then it will be better for them, but if they turn away then Allah will punish them with a painful punishment in both this world and the Hereafter. And there is for them on the earth neither protector friend nor helper.

Allah (swt) revealed this ayah in response to two incidents that happened when the Muslim army was returning home from Tabuk. These two incidents are examples of how the hypocrites were trying to destroy this dawah even in the time of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) brings these incidents to our attention so that we would realize what kind of people they are. So that we would realize how evil that they can be even if they may claim with their tongues to be Muslims. If they were this vile and this determined to do evil even when the Prophet (saw) was in their midst then think how much more evil and how much more determined they must be in our time. So realize from this ayah that the greatest enemy for this dawah, the most serious threat that stands between us and completing this mission, lies within.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying **“They swear by Allah that they did not speak”**. This refers to the first incident. It was when Abdullah bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, said of the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims that they are like “the dogs that bite the hand of the one who feeds them”. Abdullah bin Ubayy was angry at the Prophet (saw) at having lead them into this difficult expedition to Tabuk. He saw his people, the Ansar of Madinah, as having done a big favor for the Prophet (saw) in giving him (saw) shelter from the enemies of this Message, and

allowing him (saw) to establish the Islamic State in their city. He also saw the Prophet (saw) as having betrayed his people for that hospitality and kindness by leading them on this difficult and dangerous expedition. It is in reference to this that he made such a vulgar and insolent declaration against the Beloved (saw). By making such a bold statement he was hoping to weaken the support for the Prophet (saw) from among the Ansar. He was hoping to start a revolution to overthrow the Prophet (saw) and destroy the Islamic State. Then he could set up a government where he could rule with his desires rather than by the Divine Law. He hoped to take the Ansar back into the darkness after Allah (swt) had brought them into the Light. This was the evil intention that he had when he spoke such fowl words. One of the Muslims however heard what he said and went and reported it to the Prophet (saw). When the Prophet (saw) questioned Abdullah about these words of his, he denied ever speaking them. He even swore by Allah (swt) that he did not speak such words. This response of his is what Allah (swt) tells us about in this part of the ayah.

We should realize from this ayah just how evil a person this Abdullah bin Ubayy was. This is what can happen to a heart when it becomes distant from Allah (swt). First of all this man rejected the Message that he was sure had come to him from his Creator. He knew very well that the Prophet (saw) was truly the Messenger but still he rejected him (saw). However even though he rejected this Message he pretended to accept it. He pretended to be a believer, and this deception is yet another level to his evil. Then once he had accepted this Message and come into this Din, he then worked from the inside to try and destroy it. It was not enough for him that he himself had turned away from Allah (swt) but he wanted to turn as many other people as he could away from Him (swt) as well. He wanted to destroy this very Message that Allah (swt) had sent so that all mankind for generations on end would be deprived of its guidance. They would all be deprived of the peace and contentment that comes from knowing one's Creator. Then on top of all that he insulted and mocked the Prophet (saw). The one who was the most beloved out of all the creation to Allah (swt). Then when he was questioned about what he said, he replied by saying that he had never spoken such words. He even swore to Allah (swt) in this falsehood that he testified to. This is how dark a heart can become when it turns away from Allah (swt).

In response to Abdullah bin Ubayy denying that he had made such statements against the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) says “**but certainly they did speak the word of kufr**”. Notice how Allah (swt) refers to Abdullah bin Ubayy’s insult of the Prophet (saw) as “**the word of kufr**”. This reminds us how it is an act of kufr for anyone to insult the Prophet (saw) in any way. Any kind of insult that anyone makes in anyway against the Beloved of Allah (saw) is an act that is punishable by death. Allah (swt) Himself considers it to be the most evil of actions that a human could possibly do and that is why He (swt) legislated such a severe punishment for it. This also shows us just how beloved the Prophet (saw) was to Allah (swt) that He (swt) would prescribe a punishment such as this only if someone were to even mildly insult him (saw).

Then Allah (swt) says of these hypocrites “**and they did kufr after their Islam**”. The crime of Abdullah bin Ubayy and the hypocrites like him was not only that they would speak such insults against the Prophet (saw), but it was that they would speak such even after entering into Islam. How can you at one point testify that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah and then say such words about him (saw)? Does it not occur to you that Allah (swt) hears the words that you speak? Have you forgotten that he (saw) is the Messenger and the Beloved of Allah (swt)? What kind of a human being is it that will not even live up to the words that he testifies to? By saying the Shahadah and entering into this Din they had made a solemn oath to submit themselves before Allah (swt). But then because of the evil words that they spoke against the Prophet (saw) they had rebelled against that submission. That is why Allah (swt) says that they had done kufr after Islam. They had rebelled after they had submitted. How evil then a people are they? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

So we can see from this ayah that as far as Allah (swt) is concerned those few words that these hypocrites spoke was enough to take them out of Islam and put them in a state of kufr. But compare these words to some of the words that many Muslims today say. There are Muslims today who say that Islam is outdated and antiquated, they say that it has no relevance in the modern world. When they make such statements they are in essence calling Allah (swt) a liar and the Prophet (saw) a charlatan. Can you even begin to imagine the enormity of such words? How can you love Allah (swt) and still remain silent when such words are spoken.

Then Allah (swt) says “**and they resolved to do that which they were unable to**”. This refers to the second incident that happened to the Prophet (saw) when he (saw) was coming back from Tabuk. There were hypocrites in the Muslim army at that time who actually wanted to kill the Prophet (saw). They resolved to kill him (saw) at night when his camel would pass through a narrow valley. They were determined on this plan. Shaitan made this great sin a small matter in their eyes. So when the night came they all covered their faces with hoods so that they would not be recognized. Then they charged towards the Prophet (saw) as his camel was passing through the valley. But they were unable to achieve their goal. The Sahabah (ra) who were with the Prophet (saw) were able to fight them off. These hypocrites were then forced to run away because remaining behind and fighting would mean exposing their identities. So not only were they evil but they were cowards as well. This incident is what Allah (swt) speaks about in this ayah. Notice how He (swt) does not even mention explicitly the great crime that they were planning to commit. It was such an enormous sin that He (swt) did not even want to mention it in His (swt)'s Book. Rather He (swt) wanted to expose to the sincere believers how evil of a people these hypocrites are. How careful we have to be of their presence and their plots against this Din.

Now think for a moment that if there were hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) who were this evil, how much more evil must they be today? How much more resilient and determined must they be today in their efforts to destroy this Message. Remember that when those hypocrites attacked the Prophet (saw) that night, they were not attacking him (saw) as a person but rather they were attacking the Messenger of Allah. They were trying to destroy the Message by destroying the Messenger. The same can be said of the hypocrites today. They are working to prevent this Din from being established once again. And the steps that they will take, and the measures that they will resort to, are almost beyond belief. You will ask yourself how it is that Muslims could do this? They will change the meaning of the Quran and Sunnah, and give the people a distorted interpretation of the text only to fool them into believing that this Din is only rituals and morals. They will keep the Ummah distracted on minor issues and ignore the major. They will torture and persecute all the sincere believers who are working for the Din. There is no limit to their evil and no limit to their deception. They will do this and still call themselves Muslim.

Then Allah (swt) says “**and they did not have hatred except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them from His Bounty**”. Why do these hypocrites have such resentment towards this Din? Why are they working so hard for its destruction? Did Allah (swt) do some injustice to them when He (swt) sent them this Message? Do they really think that they were better off before they became Muslim? Here Allah (swt) answers these questions. He (swt) tells us why they have this hatred for this Din. It is only because Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) enriched them from the Bounty of Allah (swt). The Bounty of Allah (swt) is this Din. It is the greatest of gifts that Allah (swt) can ever confer on any of the creation. What is better than guidance to Allah (swt)? What is better than to know your Creator and be close to Him (swt)? What is better than gaining His (swt)’s Acceptance and Pleasure? Is there anything in the world that can compare to this? This was the great bounty that Allah (swt) bestowed on these people. Allah (swt) made them rich beyond all measure by giving them this Bounty of Islam. But instead of being eternally grateful to Him (swt) for it, they hated it. They rebelled against it and sought its destruction by any means possible. How evil a people then are they?

Then Allah (swt) says “**so if they repent then it will be better for them**”. How Merciful is Allah (swt)? How merciful is the Prophet (saw)? Even after these two incidents the Prophet (saw) did not take any action against these hypocrites. Even though they had spoken words of such evil. Even though they had even tried to kill the Prophet (saw). He (saw) still did not do anything against them. If the Prophet (saw) wanted, he (saw) could have investigated the matter further and brought them to justice. He (saw) could have proved to the people that Abdullah ibn Ubayy did speak such words, and he (saw) could have found out the identities of those hooded raiders who attacked him (saw) that night. But the Prophet (saw) let them be. He (saw) did not punish them in any way, or bring them to task in any way. This is because he (saw) is a messenger of mercy sent by a Lord of Mercy. Allah (swt) is so Forbearing and Forgiving that He (swt) allowed these hypocrites to repent from their hypocrisy and submit to Him (swt). If only they did this it would have been better for them. They would have been saved from a life of misery and suffering in this world. They would have been saved from the torment in the next world. Most importantly they could have sought after that which they were created to seek after. Allah (swt).

However if these hypocrites choose not to mend their ways then they should also know that **“if they turn away then Allah will punish them with a painful punishment in both this world and the Hereafter”**. We should always know our Lord as He (swt) truly IS. As He (swt) has described Himself for us. Now it is true that He (swt) is the Most Merciful, but as we see from this ayah He (swt) is also Severe in Punishment. Insha Allah we have to strive to remember both of these Names of His (swt). We have to remember that we have a Lord of Mercy Who can forgive any sin, but we must also remember that we have a Lord Whom if He (swt) pleases can punish with a painful punishment both in this life and the next. So we must never be at that state where we constantly sin and keep a false hope in the Mercy of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has told us that the wise man is the one who does not keep false hopes but rather he is the one who knows he will be judged so he strives to prepare. At the same time we must also not be at that station where give up totally on the Mercy of Allah (swt) and think ourselves to be sinners without a hope of salvation. It is a sin to give up on the Mercy of Allah (swt) so no matter how many sins that we commit we must never think ourselves to be beyond His (swt)'s Mercy.

As for these hypocrites they will taste the painful punishment from Allah (swt) both in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah (swt) will punish them in this life by keeping them deprived of Guidance. Allah (swt) will not bring them back to the Straight Path even though He (swt) could. They will continue to live a life of pain and misery as they know nothing but the life of this world. They do not know what it means to be close to Allah (swt). They will only taste the emptiness and the deprivation of being among the heedless. They will be caught between the two demons of desire and despair. They will always be desiring something and they will always be in despair because they cannot attain it. They will never find peace and contentment. They will never be satisfied with themselves. This is only their punishment in this world. What awaits them in the Hereafter is far worse. We know that it is nothing less than the Fire. What more can we say about it. This is what awaits those who oppose the dawah to Allah (swt). This is what awaits those who prevent the Din of Allah (swt) from being established on the earth. This is what awaits those who misguide the sincere believers away from this path. Even if they claim to be Muslim, this is what awaits them because they have opposed Allah (swt) and those who call to Him (swt)

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says of such hypocrites **“And there is for them on the earth neither protector friend nor helper”**. If they choose to turn away from this path. If they choose themselves over their Creator. If they choose to destroy this Message and those who carry it then they should realize that they have made themselves into the enemies of Allah (swt). Once they become the enemies of Allah (swt) then is there anyone who can save them or protect them from Him (swt)? What is the power of the creation when compared to the Power of the Creator?. Allah (swt) will punish them both in this life and in the Hereafter and there is no one who can prevent or delay this punishment from descending on them. If they wanted a protector then there is no one to protect them. If they wanted a friend then there is no one to befriend them. If they wanted help then there is no one to help them. They are alone with Allah (swt). It is only their soul and Him (swt). If He (swt) pleases He (swt) may have mercy on them, but if He (swt) pleases He (swt) may also punish them. They are completely at His (swt)'s Mercy.

So realize from this ayah that there is only one path for us to walk on. One path on which our salvation lies. This is the path leading to Allah (swt). The path of living our lives for Him (swt). The path of striving in His (swt)'s cause to establish His (swt)'s Law on the earth and then to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. If we choose to turn away from this path then we have to realize that we may have made Allah (swt) into an enemy. We may be among those whom He (swt) is displeased. If such is our situation then what hope do we have? Is there anyone or anything that can protect us from Him (swt)? Is there anyone who can help us to attain salvation and success other than Him (swt)? Is there any friend that we can turn to other than Him (swt)? So we should realize from this ayah that we do not have anyone else besides our Lord. Our only hope lies in Him (swt). If we dedicate ourselves to Him (swt) then He (swt) is all that we could ever need, but if we turn away from Him (swt) then we have nothing and no one.

﴿ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ عَاهَدَ آللَّهَ لَئِنِ ءَاتَيْنَا مِن فَضْلِهِ لَتَصَّدَّقَنَّ

وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

75. And from them there are those who have made a covenant with Allah (saying) “If He gives us from His Bounty we will surely believe and spend and we will surely be from the righteous”.

In order to prevent ourselves from becoming like these hypocrites we have to know them very well. We have to know how they think and how they behave. We have to know what it is that motivates them. We have to know where their hopes and aspirations lie. We have to know the goal that they seek to reach. In essence we have to know the path upon which they walk. This is what Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah. He (swt) shows us their path so that we can save ourselves from following it. We saw in the previous ayahs the terrible fate that awaits these hypocrites. We saw how displeased Allah (swt) was with them. When we are a people who only live to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) then how important is it for us to avoid their path.

Before the expedition to Tabuk, the Prophet (saw) was calling on all the Muslims to spend generously in order to help finance this campaign. There were many sincere believers who desperately wanted to accompany the Prophet (saw) on this expedition, but they could not afford to buy a mount or weapons. That was why the Prophet (saw) called out to all those who did have some wealth in order for the pay for those Muslims who did not have anything. The Prophet (saw) was calling on them to demonstrate their belief by spending from what they have. This was when Abu Bakr (ra) donated in the Way of Allah (swt) everything that he had. He (ra) gave away for this expedition every last penny that he (ra) had. When he (ra) was asked as to what he (ra) had left for his family, he (ra) replied “Allah and His Messenger”. This means that he (ra) relied upon the Bounty of Allah (swt) and the mercy of the Prophet (saw) to provide for his family. This was the level of Iman that Abu Bakr (ra) had. He (ra) was willing to sacrifice everything that he (ra) had only for this cause.

However the hypocrites had an attitude that was the opposite of this. They came and told the Prophet (saw) that if Allah (swt) were to give them more from His (swt)'s Bounty only then would they spend in this cause. In other words they are saying that they would only spend for this if Allah (swt) were to increase them in wealth. They even claim that they made a covenant with Allah (swt) to this effect, saying that if He (swt) would give them then they would spend. Can you see from here their desire and greed for the things of this world? Can you see from here their insolence before their Lord in that they would put conditions upon Him (swt) before they do what He (swt) commanded them to do? This is a heart that is distant from Allah (swt). A heart that only cares for the life of this world. This is the heart that we have to save ourselves from having.

We all have a natural desire within us to hoard the things of this world. Some of us may even be like these hypocrites whom Allah (swt) is describing here. We are not willing to give up what we have purely for the sake of Allah (swt) and because of our love for Him (swt). If we are to give up something for Him (swt) then we are expecting something of this world in return for it. Unless we have a solemn covenant from Allah (swt) Himself that He (swt) is going to replace what we spend then we are not willing to spend. Unfortunately this is the thinking that many of us have. This is because we still have hearts that are attached to this world, that are attached to the pleasures and material things of this world. We care more for these things then we do for our Lord. So this is what we have to strive to rid from ourselves. We have to constantly remind ourselves and enforce within ourselves the fact that there is nothing more important in our lives than Allah (swt) and striving to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. This fact alone should make us want to give up everything that we have only and solely to attain this goal. Nothing else should matter for us. Although we will never be at the station of Abu Bakr (ra) it is the goal towards which we should always be journeying.

If we look at the language of the ayah what the hypocrites are being called on to do is to have *sidiq* and to be among the *saliheen*. There are several dimensions of meaning for each of these words. *Sidiq* means to be truthful to one's covenant and promise, it also means to believe with utmost conviction, and it also means to spend what you have because of your belief. The *saliheen* are those who set right what has gone wrong and they conform themselves by the

Divine Law. Now the hypocrites put the condition that only if Allah (swt) gives them of this world would they strive to reach these two states. They would have *sidq* and be among the *saliheen* only if Allah (swt) were to give them of this world. So to save ourselves from being like them we have to reach these two states without putting any conditions upon Allah (swt). We have to reach these two states only for the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and nothing else. We have to believe with utmost conviction in this Message that Allah (swt) has sent to us, we have to be truthful to the covenant that we made to Allah (swt) to support His (swt)'s Din by helping to establish it on the earth and carry it to the rest of mankind, we have to spend from what we have been given to support this Din and this effort, and finally we have to be among those who always conform to the Law of our Lord and set right what has gone wrong. We also have to remember that what is right are the systems of Islam and what is wrong is everything other than it. This is how we could have *sidq* and be from among the *saliheen*, and Insha Allah we could do so seeking only our Lord and nothing in return for it.

Now this does not mean that we should not desire the Bounty of Allah (swt). We should always desire that Allah (swt) bestows upon us from His (swt)'s Grace. Everything that Allah (swt) gives us in this world is from His (swt)'s Bounty and we should always want it as long as it is good for us. Even the Iman in our hearts, the knowledge of the Din that we have, our family, our character and personality, all of these come from Allah (swt) just like our material possessions and sustenance comes from Him (swt). These are all from His (swt)'s Bounty and we should always desire this and we should always pray to Him (swt) to grant this to us. The only thing is that we must not place the material goods of this world at a higher level than Allah (swt). We must not say to Allah (swt) "O Allah if only you give me that and if you give me this, then I will spend for you". Rather we must spend what we have only for Him (swt) and for no other reason. We do not desire the things of this world for their sake but we only desire them in the hope that they will bring us closer to our Lord. Everything that we do is only for Him (swt) and we always dedicate ourselves to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) help us to reach this state! May Allah (swt) allow us to live only for Him (swt) and for nothing else!

﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِّن فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ

76. Then when He gave them out of His Bounty they became stingy with it, and they turned while they were averse.

The scholars tell us that this ayah and the previous one were revealed specifically about one hypocrite at the time of the Prophet (saw). Although these two ayahs were revealed about that person, they do have a general meaning that is applicable for all hypocrites at all times. The very nature of the hypocrite is that he cares more for this world than he does for Allah (swt). The only way that he will work in this cause is if he is given something of this world in return for his efforts. He is unable to work sincerely for the sake of Allah (swt), desiring only the Contentment of his Lord as a recompense for his striving. He wants a covenant from Allah (swt) that he will be repaid from this world for his efforts. This is who we have to save ourselves from becoming.

Now the specific person about whom this ayah was revealed was a man named Thalabah ibn Hatib. In the beginning he was a very pious and devout Muslim. He would support the dawah, he would help the Muslims with his wealth, and he was always present in the masjid for the five daily prayers. However in his heart he still had some attachment for the things of this world. He still had not reached that level yet where he had given himself completely to Allah (swt). Because of this, one day he came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) to make dua to Allah (swt) for him to increase in wealth. The Prophet (saw) told Thalabah that wealth may not be what is best for him, and that he should not wish for it. Thalabah however insisted and he continuously asked the Prophet (saw) to make this dua for him. He even swore by Allah (swt) that if he is given this wealth then he would spend it for Allah (swt) and be from the righteous. Finally the Prophet (saw) agreed and made the dua that Thalabah had asked for.

The scholars say that as soon as the Prophet (saw) made this dua, the number of sheep that Thalabah had started to multiply like worms. Soon he had so many sheep that he could not remain in Madinah anymore, he had to find a house in the countryside so that he would have

enough pastureland for all those sheep. However the terrible consequence of this that Thalabah did not realize at that time was that moving out of Madinah took him away from the company of the Prophet (saw) and the righteous believers. So he was alone. Alone with his wealth and with his desires and with Shaitan. Now he had to travel some distance to go to Madinah, so as the time passed he would visit the Prophet (saw) less and less. Soon the time came when he would make only Dhuhr and Asr Salah in the masjid and he would pray the others at home. This caused his heart to become more and more heartened as he himself became more and more distant from Allah (swt). Soon all that he cared about was his wealth. Counting his wealth. Thinking of ways to increase his wealth. He forgot the reason why Allah (swt) had created him. He forgot the mission that being a part of this Ummah obligated from him. After that he chose not accompany the Prophet (saw) and the believers in any of their military campaigns. He was content to sit at home and count his sheep. Then when Allah (swt) revealed the Law that Zakat had to be collected from the wealthy Muslims, the Prophet (saw) sent the Zakat collectors to Thalabah's house. The Zakat collectors presented to Thalabah a letter from the Prophet (saw) telling him that he needed to give a small portion of his wealth in Zakat. However Thalabah refused. He said that this Zakat was unfair and he referred to it as "the sister of Jizya". Meaning that this is not something that Muslims should be required to pay. He thought that he knew better than Allah (swt). Then when the Zakat collectors returned to the Prophet (saw) and told him (saw) what Thalabah had said and done, that was when Allah (swt) revealed these two ayahs. In the first ayah Allah (swt) speaks of the promise that Thalabah had made to spend the wealth in the Way of Allah and to be among the righteous. In this ayah Allah (swt) speaks of how his wealth had made him niggardly, and how it had caused him to turn away from his Lord in aversion. Now one of the friends of Thalabah heard that these ayahs were revealed about him, so he rushed to inform him. Only when Thalabah saw that Allah (swt) had revealed Quran specifically addressing what he had done did he then realize the severity of his crime. Only he realized the enormity of his sin. So he rushed to the Prophet (saw) with his Zakat hoping to make amends for what he had done. However when the Zakat was offered to the Prophet (saw) he (saw) told Thalabah that Allah (swt)

had forbidden him (saw) from taking his Zakat. Even when Thalabah insisted, the Prophet (saw) still refused. None of the Khulafah who followed the Prophet (saw) ever accepted this Zakat.

As we mentioned there is a general lesson for us as well in this story. This is that we must do all that we can to prevent ourselves from becoming like Thalabah. Recall that at one point he was a very practicing and devout Muslim. He had entered into this Din and tasted of its sweetness. He was among those who had made prostration before Allah (swt). Yet despite this he was lead astray by the life of this world. Not only did his love for this world cause him to neglect his duties and neglect the advice of the Prophet (saw) , but it also made him niggardly and it made him turn away from Allah (swt). Those Zakat collectors who came to his house were asking him to give a small portion of his wealth for Allah (swt). But even this he refused to do. He forgot that Allah (swt) was the One Who had given him his wealth. Rather he thought that this wealth was his because of what he had done and because of what he deserved.

This is what we have to save ourselves from. We have to save ourselves from being miserly with our wealth, our time, and our efforts. We should always be ready and willing to give it all away for Allah (swt). This willingness must come from the realization that He (swt) is the Lord and that we are the slaves. We owe Him (swt) everything and He (swt) owes us nothing. It should also come from the realization that He (swt) is the One Who has given us everything that we have even though we did not in any way deserve it. So why should we not be willing to return a small portion of what He (swt) gave us to Him (swt)? In our pride and arrogance have we actually reached a station where we think of ourselves to be better than Him (swt)? Or do we actually love the material goods of this world more than Him (swt)? How utterly foolish is such thinking?

Just as we must save ourselves from being niggardly, we must also save ourselves from turning away from Allah (swt) when He (swt) calls to us. Allah (swt) describes hypocrites like Thalabah by saying **“they turned while they were averse”**. When the Zakat collectors sent by the Prophet (swt) came to Thalabah he turned away from them. By doing this in essence he had turned away from Allah (swt). Not only did he turn away but he was averse to the idea of giving Zakat. Meaning he hated it and he wanted to do anything possible to avoid it. This had now become his attitude towards his Creator and serving Him (swt). Insha Allah this is what we have

to save ourselves from. When Allah (swt) calls to us we must respond. We must respond to the best of our ability because all that we care about is pleasing Him (swt).

فَأَعْتَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ مَا
وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

77. So He punished them with hypocrisy in their hearts until the Day on which they meet Him, because they failed Allah in what they promised Him and because they were liars.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what is the punishment He (swt) gives for people like Thalabah. People who choose themselves over Him (swt). We have been created and placed on this earth for one purpose and one purpose only and that is to worship and serve Allah (swt). Now all of us fail in this duty at some point in our life or another. All of us commit sins and we all fall short in our obligations during some time or another. But there are some Muslims like Thalabah who constantly choose to walk away from Allah (swt). For them it is not that they fall into sin every now and then, rather their very situation is that they have turned away from the servitude to their Creator. They do not live a life of dawah. They do not live a life of striving to please Allah (swt). They do not live a life where they are struggling for the Cause of Allah (swt). Rather they have already made up their minds that they are not going to work in this effort. They have already made up their minds that they are going to live for themselves instead of for their Lord. These are the kind of “Muslims” that we have to save ourselves from becoming. In this ayah Allah (swt) motivates us by telling us of what will be the fate of such both in this life and in the Hereafter.

Allah (swt) says “**So He punished them with hypocrisy in their hearts until the Day on which they meet Him**”. Allah (swt) punished them for their hypocrisy by causing them to increase in their hypocrisy. These people already had hypocrisy in their hearts to some extent, that is why they turned away from their obligations despite the fact that they claimed be Muslims. However because they turned away again and again, and because they constantly chose not to live a life of servitude to Allah (swt), He (swt) punished them by allowing their hypocrisy and to grow and to remain in their hearts till their deaths came. Even though Allah (swt) could have

removed this hypocrisy. Even though He (swt) could have guided them He (swt) did not. Because they chose to turn away from Him (swt), He (swt) chose to turn away from them.

We know what awaits them in the Hereafter because they died with such hypocrisy in their hearts. In other ayahs of the Quran Allah (swt) has told us that the lowest level in the Fire is promised for such people. This is the punishment of Allah (swt) for those who claim with their tongues to be Muslims but who walk away from the responsibility that being in this Ummah entails. How displeased must Allah (swt) be with such people? How much of His (swt)'s Wrath must descend upon such people. At least the disbeliever admits that he has turned away from Allah (swt), as evil as this may be at least he admits it. The hypocrite however will not even come to this admission. Rather he pretends to submit before Allah (swt) in order to fool the Muslims around him, but in his heart he turns away. He lives inside this Din and sees its beauty but still he works for its destruction. These are the worst of people in the Sight of Allah (swt) and this is why He (swt) has promised them the worst of punishments.

Then Allah (swt) tells us exactly why these hypocrites have made themselves worthy of such a terrible punishment when He (swt) says **“because they failed Allah in what they promised Him and because they were liars”**. When someone takes the Shahadah and enters into Islam they make a solemn covenant that they would live their lives in servitude to Allah (swt). They promise Allah (swt) that they would spend their lives in servitude to Him (swt) and in return He (swt) promises them the Garden. Now the hypocrites are those who fail in this promise. As we mentioned their case is not that they simply fall into sin every now and then, rather their case is that they choose to live lives of heedlessness. They choose to live for themselves instead of for Allah (swt). They do not remember Allah (swt) at any time during their day, nor do they make any sincere effort to please Him (swt). They may do a few rituals every now and then but this Din does not permeate into their lives. For all purposes they are only Muslim by name. This is how they have failed Allah (swt) in the promise that they have taken from Him (swt). In addition they are also liars. They say that they love Islam. They say that they love the Prophet (saw). They say that they care about the Muslim Ummah and all the suffering that she is going through. They speak about the importance of dawah and of spreading this Message to mankind. Yet they do not

take any steps to achieve these objectives. They even oppose the dawah and oppose those Muslims working in this path. Thus the statements of their tongue are not in their actions.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to remind ourselves once again that we are on a journey. We are all travelling to Allah (swt) and very soon we will meet Him (swt). So we must always think about this meeting with our Lord. Every day, every hour, and even at every moment, we should strive to bring to mind this reality that we will all be facing very soon. When we were but souls we all gave a promise to Allah (swt) that we would live our lives only to please Him (swt). Then when we took the Shahadah and returned to Islam we renewed and reaffirmed this promise. How then will it be if we were to return to Allah (swt) with Him (swt) being displeased with us? What excuse can we give for not living our lives to serve Him (swt)? What excuse can we give for neglecting this obligation of dawah? If such is our situation then we would be returning to Allah (swt) with hypocrisy in our hearts. We would have failed to do what we promised that we would. Two times we gave Allah (swt) this promise and our entire lives would be a testament of how we failed in these promises. How can we save ourselves on that Day if such is our situation? How can we face Allah (swt)? This is what we must always be thinking about, and these thoughts should be a reminder for us to strive even harder in the service of His (swt)'s Din.

If we ever choose to be content with the life of this world. If we decide that we do not need to strive hard and struggle in the cause of our Lord. Then we should remember the threat that He (swt) gives here. He (swt) may punish us by increasing the hypocrisy in our hearts. Once Allah (swt) has placed hypocrisy in our hearts, then that will remain in our hearts till the Day on which we return to Him (swt). What would be our situation if we were to return to Him (swt) with such hypocrisy in our hearts? You know what is the final abode for hypocrites. The way that we save ourselves is that we have to check ourselves. The hypocrite is usually the last person to know that he is a hypocrite. So we must never be content with ourselves, we should always be looking at our shortcomings and our weaknesses. We must always remember our sins and beg for forgiveness for them from Allah (swt). We must always be looking to improve ourselves, at each moment we should ask ourselves what is the most pleasing of actions that we can do for our Lord in that moment and strive to do that action. Insha Allah this is how we can save ourselves.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ وَأَنَّ
 اللَّهُ عَلِيمُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٧٨﴾

78. Do they not know that Allah Knows their hidden thoughts and their secret gatherings, and that Allah is Knower of the Unseen?

Allah (swt) so far has given us so many descriptions of these hypocrites so that we may know them and so that we may save ourselves from becoming them. Now in this ayah He (swt) gives us the most telling of all these descriptions. In this ayah He (swt) tells us what is the root of their evil. If you can understand what Allah (swt) is saying here, if you can inculcate this warning in your life, then Insha Allah you can save yourself from becoming like such people. In fact this is the reason why there are so many Muslims today who behave like hypocrites. This is the reason why so many Muslims neglect their obligations in the Din, and why they allow themselves to fall into sin. So ponder deeply what your Lord is saying here.

Allah (swt) asks us in this ayah “**Do they not know that Allah Knows their hidden thoughts and their secret gatherings, and that Allah is Knower of the Unseen?**”. These hypocrites are living a double life. When they are with the sincere believers they behave in a certain way, and when they are with are alone or when they are with their devils they behave in a different way. They think that they only have to pretend to be like Muslims when they are with the believers. They think that when they are alone or when they are with their devils then they can do whatever they want. But they forget that there is One Who can see them wherever they are. They forget that there is One Who Knows them even more than they know themselves. This is the root of their evil. They have allowed themselves to forget Allah (swt), they have allowed themselves to become completely heedless of Him (swt).

How could they have done this to themselves? How could they have become so heedless of the Divine when His (swt)’s Signs are in the universe all around them? When they taste of His (swt)’s Bounty and Blessing every day of their lives? They are behaving as if they have no knowledge of Allah (swt). They are behaving this way even though they call themselves

Muslim. Do they not know that the most basic and fundamental requirement of a Muslim is to know his Lord? How can they call themselves Muslim and still be so heedless of the Real and the True? Who but the darkest of souls can forget Him (swt)?

Allah (swt) reminds us in this ayah of two specific instances when these hypocrites fall into heedlessness. One is concerning their hidden thoughts. These are the thoughts that go through their minds but they do not manifest with their words or their actions. They forget that Allah (swt) is Aware of such thoughts. Allah (swt) Knows of even the most fleeting of thoughts that runs through the hearts of the sons of Adam. There may be a thought that came into your heart for only a fraction of a moment and you yourself barely noticed it. But Allah (swt) Knew it, He (swt) Knew it even better than you did. The other instance when these hypocrites fall into heedlessness is when they are in their secret gatherings. They gather together in secret and make plots against this Din. They discuss amongst themselves as to how they could destroy this Message that Allah (swt) has sent as a Mercy for all creation. When they do this they become completely heedless of the Real and the True. They forget that there is One Who is watching them very closely. They do not say a word or even have a thought in such gatherings except that He (swt) was witness to it and He (swt) has recorded it in a clear Book.

Thus the lesson that we can take from this is to realize that heedlessness to the Divine is the root cause of hypocrisy. When a Muslim forgets about Allah (swt), when a Muslim does not remember Allah (swt) throughout his day, that is when he becomes close to the station of the hypocrite. When we say that Islam is a complete way of life then we have to realize what this truly means. It means that our lives have to be for Allah (swt). We have to always strive to reach that station where we are conscious of Him (swt) at every moment and we strive to dedicate that moment in our life for Him (swt). So it is not fitting for a Muslim to forget about Allah (swt), it is not fitting for a Muslim to allow several hours to pass by in his day without remembering his Lord. This is the behavior of the hypocrites as we can see from this ayah. These hypocrites became heedless of their Lord and that is why they fell into such sin. To save ourselves from becoming them we have to remember Allah (swt) more and more. This is the reason why we were created.

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ
 لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ
 اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾

79. The ones who find fault with those who give charity willingly from the believers, and with those who do not find (anything to give) except their own striving, then they mock at them, soon Allah will mock them and for them is a painful punishment.

We saw in the previous ayah what was the most essential characteristic of the hypocrites. We saw that the root of all their evil was that they forgot about Allah (swt). But what made them this way? What made them to forget their Lord? They could see so many signs in the universe testifying to His (swt)'s Existence, Oneness and Sovereignty. They could hear the Quran being recited onto them. They were taught the Din of Truth and they were a part of the greatest Ummah ever raised up for mankind. Yet despite all this they became hypocrites. Despite all this they still became among the heedless. Why was this? It was because they had something in their hearts that was more important than their Lord. What else could this be other than this world? Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah just how much these hypocrites are in love with this world.

Allah (swt) begins by saying “**The ones who find fault with those who give charity willingly from the believers**”. We mentioned previously how there were two forms of charity that a Muslim could give. One is the obligatory Zakat that is due on all Muslims, and the other is the voluntary charity. As for the latter the Islamic State does not enforce its collection in any way. Now for the expedition to Tabuk, the Prophet (saw) called on the Muslims to donate all that they could but all of it was from such voluntary charity. Nobody was forced to donate in any way. Yet still the sincere believers would give more and more. As we mentioned Abu Bakr (ra) gave away all his wealth. Umar (ra) gave away half his wealth, and Uthman (ra) gave a significant amount as wealth as well. These sincere believers gave away so much even though it was purely voluntary on them. The hypocrites however found fault with this. They could not understand how

a people could part with their wealth so easily and so willingly. They who loved their wealth more than anything else in this world. They for whom it was so painful to give away even a small portion of it. They could not understand how the believers could do this. That was why they found fault with the believers on account of their giving away so much in charity.

There are two ways in which the hypocrites would find fault with the sincere believers. On the one hand they would criticize them and tell them to stop giving so much away. They would say that it is foolish to “throw away” money in such a way. They would encourage the believers to spend their money on themselves and on their pleasures rather than giving it away for Allah (swt) and to support His (swt)’s cause. The other way in which the hypocrites would find fault with the believers is that they would mock them and ridicule them. They would call them “fools” on account of their giving away so much. Can you imagine how evil a people they are that they would find fault and mock those who spend for Allah (swt)? What more noble act can a human being do than giving away what he has only to seek the countenance of his Lord? How vile then are a people who would mock such a person?

Look even at the word that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah to describe those who spend their wealth freely for Him (swt). He (swt) calls them *mutawveen*. This word is derived from a root word that means no compulsion or force in any way. This is how the sincere believers spend their wealth. They do it purely for the sake of Allah (swt). They are not forced or compelled to by any other means. All that they seek from their spending is their Lord. They do not seek to please the people, or to please their own selves. They are not expecting a favor in the future, or trying to be better than others. All that they care about is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Not only do the hypocrites find fault with those who spend so much voluntarily but they also find fault with those **“do not find (anything to give) except their own striving”**. This refers to the poor among the believers. The ones who earnestly want to give away wealth for Allah (swt) but who cannot find any to give because they are so poor. So all that they could offer Allah (swt) are their sincere and utmost efforts. Their striving in His (swt)’s way. Even though these Muslims are poor. Even though they may have difficult lives and face many hardships because of their poverty, they still strive to their utmost to serve the Din of Allah (swt).

The hypocrites would mock and criticize such believers. Believers who are trying their utmost to please Allah (swt). Believers who are giving their lives and everything that they have only for Him (swt). These hypocrites would mock at them. What then does Allah (swt) have to say about such mocking, He (swt) tells us in the final part of the ayah "**soon Allah will mock them and for them is a painful punishment**". These hypocrites were enjoying themselves when they mocked the believers in such a way. They were laughing at the believers who gave away all or most of their wealth for Allah (swt). They were laughing at those poor believers who had nothing to give but who were striving their utmost on this path. These hypocrites were laughing and mocking at the sincere servants of Allah (swt). Keeping their wealth underneath their feet and sitting comfortably at home they would mock at the believers. But Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that soon He (swt) will mock them. These are a people who have earned His (swt)'s Wrath. So when He (swt) says that He (swt) is going to mock them then just imagine what He (swt) is going to do them. In how many ways could He (swt) punish them if He (swt) wanted to.

So we see from this ayah that it is the life of this world that has made the hypocrites forget Allah (swt). They are a people who are attached and in love with this world. That is why they cannot understand it when the believers so freely and voluntarily give away what they have of this world. Not only do they not understand it but it fills them with jealousy and hatred. It fills them with jealousy and hatred to see the believers so easily part with their money when for them it is so difficult. So they would criticize the believers, they would mock at them, they would laugh at them, only for doing what they were created to do. Only for answering the call of Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). So the way that we save ourselves from becoming like the hypocrites in this regard is to remove from ourselves the love of this world. We should always remind ourselves of how temporary and fleeting this world is. How we will one day soon have to leave it. Then we will return to our Lord and it only He (swt) Who will then determine our eternity. Why then should we ever care about any but He (swt)?

أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ
يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

80. Ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them, even if you were to ask forgiveness for them seventy times still Allah would never forgive them, that is because they are a people who have done kufr to Allah and His Messenger, and Allah will not guide a transgressing people.

In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us just how despised and hated these hypocrites are to Him (swt). When you know that there is a Being as Tremendous and as Majestic and as Pure as Allah (swt) then would you ever want to be among those whom He (swt) is displeased with? When you live for Allah (swt) then would you ever want to be among those who are the most distant from Him (swt)? Realize that the only thing which matters in your life is the journeying to Allah (swt). To strive to please Him (swt) and to come closer to Him (swt) through your efforts. Once you realize this then how important is it that you save yourself from becoming like these hypocrites whom He (swt) is most displeased with. If you do not make the journey to your Lord. If you do not strive to make the effort, then realize that you might become a hypocrite and not even know it. Are you content with this happening to you? Do you realize what the consequences of this are? Look here at what Allah (swt) has to say about such people.

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that He (swt) is never going to forgive these hypocrites. Can you realize just how frightening this is? Allah (swt) tells us here that even if we ask for forgiveness for them seventy times or even seventy million times, He (swt) is still never going to forgive them. It does not matter how many times that we may ask Allah (swt) forgiveness for such people, He (swt) is never going to forgive them. Recall also that this ayah was first addressed to the Prophet (saw). So Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) here that even if he (saw) asked

forgiveness for these hypocrites as many time as he (saw) could, still Allah (swt) would not forgive them. Remember that one of Allah (swt)'s Names is the Most Forgiving. Forgiveness is part of His (swt)'s Essence, His (swt)'s Nature. So if even He (swt) is not going to forgive these people, then how vile and evil a people must they be? Realize also that the Prophet (saw) is the most beloved of Allah (swt). If even his (saw)'s prayer for these hypocrites was not enough for Allah (swt) then how evil a people must they be? How much must they have earned His Wrath to put themselves in such a station? Even more importantly how much should we fear becoming them? We know what is the final destination of any soul that is not granted forgiveness on the Last Day. How much then should we strive to save ourselves from becoming them?

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us exactly why they have become so hated a people to Him (swt) when He (swt) says **“that is because they are a people who have done kufr to Allah and His Messenger”**. They have been ungrateful to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has given them. Allah (swt) has told us in other ayahs that if we were to even try and number all of the favors and bounties that He (swt) has conferred upon us we would not be able to. Now these hypocrites are also aware of this fact. They are aware of just how much they are in debt to Allah (swt). Now not only do they not serve Him (swt) and strive to please Him (swt) as they were created to do. But they reject this Message that He (swt) has sent to them and they choose to live for themselves instead of living for Him (swt). Not only do they reject this Message but they pretend as if they have accepted it. They lie to the Prophet (saw) and the sincere believers and say that they are with them when in reality they are not. Not only do they lie to the believers but they even try to divert the believers away from Allah (swt). They tell the believers not to participate in this effort to restore the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth and to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. They encourage the believers to be lazy in their obligations to Allah (swt) and they encourage them to sin. They tell them to enjoy life while they have it. These hypocrites know Allah (swt) and they know all that He (swt) has given them and still they do all this. How ungrateful are they then to Him (swt)? Are there even words to describe their ingratitude? Despite all the favors and bounties that Allah (swt) had given them there is none that is greater than guiding them to this Din. To the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). How evil are they if they will not

even show gratitude for this. How many among mankind live and have lived in darkness and misguidance. Not knowing why they were created. Not knowing where they are going. Not knowing their Creator. These hypocrites got this gift of guidance that so many among mankind were denied. Yet they still chose not to show gratitude for it. They still chose to walk away from it.

As we see from the ayah not only were they ungrateful to Allah (swt) but they are also ungrateful to the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) gave away his (saw)'s entire life only so that these people could be guided to their Creator. Only so that they could be saved from the Fire and placed in the Garden. Only so that they could know the peace and tranquility that comes from knowing Allah (swt). Only so that they could be saved from the oppressive systems of man to the just system of their Lord. He (saw) strove to the utmost of his (saw)'s ability and gave away everything that he (saw) had only so that they could have all this. He (saw) cried and bled only so that they could have this guidance. And how do they repay him (saw) for this? They turn away when he (saw) calls them to march forward in this path. They do not support him (saw) or help him (saw) in his (saw)'s mission in any way. They even discourage others from helping him (saw). How ungrateful a people then are they? Are there even words to describe their ingratitude? This is why Allah (swt) promises us in this ayah that He (swt) will never forgive them. So much have they earned His (swt)'s Wrath.

One narration tells us of a time when these hypocrites actually came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) to ask forgiveness for them from Allah (swt). At this time the Prophet (saw) knew that these were hypocrites. However he (saw) still fulfilled their request and prayed for forgiveness to Allah (swt) on their behalf. That was when Allah (swt) revealed this ayah wherein He (swt) told the Prophet (saw) not to pray anymore on behalf of these people. See here how merciful and loving was the Prophet (saw) towards his (saw)'s Ummah in that he (saw) would even pray for people whom he (saw) knew to be hypocrites. However the narrations tell us that after the Prophet (saw) received this command to stop praying for the hypocrites, he (saw) stopped. Even greater than his (saw)'s love for the Ummah was his (saw)'s servitude and obedience to his (saw)'s Lord.

What had these people done to bring themselves to such a situation? Allah (swt) tells us in the final part of this ayah when He (swt) says “**Allah will not guide a transgressing people**”. These were a people who preferred rebellion to obedience. They did not care too much for the Law of Allah (swt). They wanted to violate this Law and do what He (swt) had forbidden. They wanted to transgress further than the limits allowed for them in this Law. They wanted to commit adultery, mix freely with women, back-bite, steal, deal in usury, drink wine, oppress the people, and divide themselves by tribe and nation. In other words they wanted to live a life where they lived for themselves instead of for their Lord. They did not want to restrict their actions according to His (swt)’s Divine Law. This is why Allah (swt) calls them a transgressing people and this is why He (swt) promises that He (swt) will never guide them.

The important lesson for us in this ayah is to see just how displeased Allah (swt) is with these hypocrites. Just the fact that He (swt) promises never to forgive them no matter how many times the Prophet (saw) asks for their forgiveness is enough to show us. Now we have realized Allah (swt). We have realized how Perfect and Majestic and Sublime a Being is He (swt). Once we have become this close to our Lord how can we ever become distant from Him (swt) again? How can we ever reach that state where we are so far from Him (swt) that He (swt) Himself declares that there is no way for us to come back to Him (swt). That would truly be the greatest of tragedies. To be in a state where the Real and the True is so displeased with us. So that is what we must always be striving to avoid. If you want to say that you are a believer. If you want to say that you are not a hypocrite. Then realize that it cannot be only words on your tongue. Rather your belief must be reflected in your actions. It must be reflected in your striving on this path of dawah and jihad. Because how can you say that you are a believer and not do anything when the Law of your Lord is absent from the world? How can you say that you are a believer and not do anything when the Ummah is suffering so greatly? You must do what you can to help bring about the restoration of the Islamic State. This is the only way that you can save yourself from becoming among the hypocrites. May Allah (swt) give us all the enabling grace!

فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلْفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرِهُوا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ
جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

81. The ones who stayed behind rejoiced at their staying behind the Messenger of Allah, and they hated striving with their wealth and themselves in the Way of Allah, and they say “Do not march forward in the heat”, say “The Fire of Hell is far more intense in heat”. If only they understood.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe for us the path that leads away from Him (swt). The path of the hypocrites. The path of those who are distant from Him (swt). Allah (swt) not only shows us the actions of these hypocrites but He (swt) shows us their thinking and mentality as well. This is so that we may make the effort to save ourselves from becoming like them. So ponder deeply on what your Lord is telling you in this ayah and see if you have any of these descriptions in you. If you do then pray to Allah (swt) to remove it from you, and at the same time make the effort yourself. Remember that Allah (swt) comes to you at speed if only you would take one step towards Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins to describe such people by saying **“The ones who stayed behind rejoiced at their staying behind the Messenger of Allah”**. This refers first and foremost to the hypocrites at the time of Prophet (saw). The ones who asked permission to remain behind from the expedition to Tabuk. Recall that the Prophet (saw) gave them this permission when they asked for it. Then after the Prophet (saw) and the believers had left Madinah, Allah (swt) tells us here how these hypocrites were rejoicing. They were happy that they did not march forward with the Prophet (saw) in this path of dawah and jihad. They were more than content to just sit at home and do nothing for this Din. Once again they demonstrated how they cared more for themselves than they did for their Lord and Master. How they preferred amassing wealth and satisfying their lusts rather to struggling and striving for their Creator and Sustainer.

Does this remind you of any people that you know today? How accurate a description is this for all those Muslims today who choose not to participate in this dawah? Those Muslims who are content with just practicing a few rituals and thinking that this is enough for Allah (swt). Not only do they not participate in this dawah but they are happy that they do not participate. They rejoice at the fact that they are not striving and sacrificing like their brothers and sisters in the dawah are doing. They have no sense of remorse whatsoever. As long as they can satisfy their lusts, and be safe from harm, and accumulate their wealth, then they could care less what happens to the Ummah, to this Din, and to the dawah to mankind. Be honest with yourself and realize that there are many people in the Muslim Ummah like this. Even we ourselves may sometimes be like this. So this is what we have to save ourselves from. We should always remember that this life of dawah and jihad is much better than the life of chasing after this world. We should realize how much of the Wrath of Allah (swt) that we are bringing down on ourselves if we choose to remain behind and not follow His Messenger (saw) on this path. At the very least we should have some remorse. If for whatever reason we are not able to dedicate our life for this effort, then at the very least we should have remorse in our heart because of this. We should not become like these hypocrites who rejoiced at the fact that they had stayed behind while the Messenger of Allah (saw) had gone forth. Rather we should be eager to follow him (saw) wherever he (saw) goes. Even if we have to follow him (saw) to our deaths.

Allah (swt) then continues to describe these hypocrites by saying “**and they hated striving with their wealth and themselves in the Way of Allah**”. This also shows us how distant they were from Allah (swt). How blind were they to Him (swt). He (swt) is the True Reality, but they could not see Him (swt). They only saw the world around them. They only thought about themselves, and their wealth, and their desires. Because they did not remember Allah (swt) and all that He (swt) did for them, they found it difficult to strive hard in His (swt)’s cause. They did not see the reason for their striving. They were blind to Him (swt) even though He (swt) was so close to them. Because of this blindness, because of this distance, for them to make any kind of effort or any kind of sacrifice was difficult for them. So they hated it. The most beautiful and noble of actions had become hated for them because they chose themselves over Allah (swt).

In our case for us to save ourselves from becoming like them, not only should we strive with our wealth and our persons in the Way of Allah (swt) but such striving should also be beloved to us. We should not look upon it as a chore but rather we should look at it as something that gives us pleasure. Something that we long to do. Exerting the utmost of our effort only for Allah (swt), making all sacrifices needed only for Allah (swt), these should be beloved to us. They are beloved to us because He (swt) is beloved to us. We love Him (swt) because of His (swt)'s Majesty and Perfection. We love Him (swt) for His (swt)'s Mercy upon us and His (swt)'s Forgiving so many of our sins. We love Him (swt) for all that He (swt) has given us from His (swt)'s Bounty. We love Him (swt) because He (swt) deserves to be loved more than anyone or anything. Because of our love for Him (swt), we love to sacrifice for Him (swt) and we love to strive for Him (swt). Instead of causing us pain this striving and these sacrifices bring us joy. They bring us joy despite the difficulty involved because we are doing it for Him (swt). The sweetest pleasure for our hearts is just the hope that at this moment our Lord is Seeing and He (swt) is pleased with us. This is all that matters for us in life.

Allah (swt) then tells us how these hypocrites say “**Do not march forward in the heat**”. Once again there is a meaning for this ayah that was specific for the time of the Prophet (saw) and there is a meaning for us today as well. At the time of the Prophet (saw), the heat here refers to the actual physical heat. We know how hot the deserts of Arabia can be, and the Tabuk expedition was during a summer month when the heat was especially intense. These hypocrites did not want to bear this heat. They wanted to remain in their homes and in their gardens where they were cool and comfortable. They were not even willing to put themselves through this discomfort for the sake of their Lord and Master. Not only did they not march forward in the heat but they were even discouraging other Muslims from doing so. They would remind the Muslims about how uncomfortable and painful the journey through the desert would be. They would mention each difficulty specifically so that they could discourage as many people as possible from marching with the Prophet (saw). So they would take about how their tongues would ache because they are parched with thirst. They would talk about the pain of the heat on their heads. They would mention all this and more only so that they could keep the Muslims away from jihad.

Today also the hypocrites speak something similar. Only now the heat refers to the difficulty and danger involved in participating in the dawah. We all know what is the current situation even in the Western world after the recent terrorist attacks. If you speak about Islam in a certain way then you are identified as a threat. Even if you believe that now is not the time for jihad with material struggle. Even if you believe that non-combatants should never be targeted. Even if you have no desire to see the people harmed but rather you want the best for the people. Despite all this you will still be targeted only because you speak about Islam in a way that the powers be perceive to be a threat. This is the heat that encompasses the environment of dawah today. However despite the danger involved, Allah (swt) still wants us to make the effort. For the sake of our Lord we should speak the Truth even if there may be consequences. We should fear Him (swt) more than we fear the security forces and the secret agents of this world. However the hypocrites will discourage us from this. They will tell us not to go out in this heat. They will put fear in our hearts by telling us that we may be monitored and followed, they will tell us that we might even be detained and arrested. Tortured, executed, or made to spend life in prison. These are the different scenarios that they will put in our hearts in order to scare us.

What should be our response to these hypocrites and their threats? Allah (swt) tells us to say to them **“The Fire of Hell is far more intense in heat”**. If they were worried about the discomfort of the heat then they should have been more concerned about the searing pain of burning. If they were worried about being thirsty then they should have been more concerned about the fact that they would have nothing except boiling water, which does not satiate thirst in any way for all eternity. If they were worried about what men in this world might do to them then they should have been more concerned with what the angels of Hell would do to them. The Fire of Hell is far more intense than the heat of this world, as is the pain and suffering. And the heat of this world, in fact any pain or discomfort in this world, will eventually come to an end. However there is no end to the pain and the torment of the Fire. Hell is a place that was specifically made for punishment. It is a manifestation of the Wrath and Anger of Allah (swt). Now just imagine what kind of a place it must be. Is there anything in this world that can compare to it? You would choose to be in the hot desert sun for your entire life rather than to be there for even a moment.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying **"If only they understood"**. The problem with these hypocrites is that they do not understand. They do not understand the true reality of this universe. They do not understand that this world is only temporary. That it is only a place of testing. They do not understand that Allah (swt) created them only to serve Him (swt) and that they would be tested on how well they carried out that servitude. They do not understand that the pleasure and the pain in this world is nothing when compared to the Hereafter. Most importantly they do not understand Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s right over them to be served and worshipped. Because of this lack of understanding on their part, because of their ignorance and their heedlessness, they prefer a life where they serve themselves to a life where they serve Him (swt). They want to create a version of Islam that is tailored to suit their desires. An Islam that does not require them to fight in jihad or to oppose the powers be. They want to reduce this perfect and all-encompassing Din which Allah (swt) sent only to the five pillars and some morals. That is all that they want Islam to be. That is all that they are willing to give to Allah (swt). This is only because they do not truly understand Him (swt), they do not understand why He (swt) created them, and they do not understand what He (swt) deserves.

Once again we have to remind ourselves that the root cause for this thinking and this behavior on the part of the hypocrites was their lack of Iman. Their lack of conviction in Allah (swt) and in the Message that He (swt) has sent. What they were being asked to do was truly difficult. To march forward in the blazing heat of the desert. To spend weeks away from their families and away from the comfort of their homes. To fight an enemy that was much stronger than they were. Having to face the possibility of pain from injury, death or even torture. Why would anyone put themselves through this unless there was a very good reason to. The reason is Allah (swt). So if we are going to ask the people to make the necessary sacrifices for this Din then we first have to build within in them this conviction. They have to be certain that Allah (swt) is their Creator and Sustainer, their Lord and Master, and that they will return to Him (swt). Only when the people have this conviction will they be willing to make this effort. Thus we see that one of the crucial requirements in encouraging the people to join this effort is to build their Iman. Only when the people have this conviction will they be willing to make the sacrifices and strive to their utmost.

فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

82. So let them a laugh a little, and then cry a lot, a recompense for what they used to earn.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what should be done with these hypocrites. He (swt) tells us what is the true reality of their situation. Without a doubt it often times may seem that they are enjoying themselves. That they are living the “good life”. They are enjoying all the bounties and riches of this world that Allah (swt) has conferred on them. They are not struggling hard and striving like the sincere believers are. They are just living their lives for themselves without caring much about what happens to this Message and to this Ummah. So it may sometimes seem like they have made the correct decision in not participating in this dawah. They may seem to be better off in the world because of this. However such thinking is wrong. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us what their situation truly is and He (swt) reminds us what is waiting for them.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**So let them a laugh a little**”. First notice the Arabic word *fa* which begins this ayah. This word connects the meaning of this ayah with the previous ayah. In the previous ayah these hypocrites were discouraging the believers from marching forth in the Path of Allah (swt). They were telling them to sit at home where they would be cool and comfortable rather than having to face the blazing heat of the desert. The blazing heat of this life of dawah and jihad. Now the reason why they were discouraging the believers from this path is not because they were sincerely concerned for the believers and because they wanted them to be safe from harm. Rather the reason is because they had a plot from the beginning to destroy this Message. To destroy this Din. They did not care too much for Allah (swt) and for this Message that He (swt) has sent. They saw it as coming to curtail their desires and take away their wealth and their power over the people. And they knew that the best way to destroy this Din is to prevent the Muslims from striving for it. If they can convince the Muslims to leave this path of dawah and jihad then they know that this Din is as good as destroyed. That is why they discouraged the Muslims from this path. They told the Muslims to be just like them. Now what were they doing with their time? How were they spending their days?

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that they were laughing. They were enjoying themselves. They were relishing in their heedlessness. This was the kind of people that they were. All that they cared about was pleasing themselves. All that they desired was instant gratification. They did not care for Allah (swt) even though they knew that He (swt) is their Creator and Sustainer. They did not care for this Message that He (swt) has sent to them. They did not care for their brothers and sisters in this Ummah. They did not care for their brothers and sisters in humanity. Since they did not care for Allah (swt), He (swt) does not care for them. That is why He (swt) allowed them to laugh. Let them enjoy themselves with their games and their vain talk and their frivolities of this life. Allah (swt) reminds us here that their laughter, their enjoyment is but little. They may be laughing now but they will not be laughing for long. Soon their pleasure and their enjoyment will end. Soon they will find themselves under the earth. Then they will find themselves in the Divine Court. Then they will find themselves in the Fire of Hell. Where is their laughter then? Where are their enjoyments and their pleasures then?

What then will they be doing once death catches up to them? Allah (swt) tells us how they will then **“cry a lot**. These people who loved to laugh so much in the life of this world will do nothing but cry in the Hereafter. Once they see the angel of death all of their laughter will be turned into tears and these tears will never stop. They will cry for all eternity. Just the fact that they will cry so much shows us the desperateness and the hopelessness of their situation. Imagine for a moment what it will be like. Remember that these people lived amongst the Muslims. So they knew the Quran. They also knew that they had a duty to worship and serve Allah (swt). They also knew that they had failed in that duty. They had stayed behind when after they were commanded to march forward in the path of dawah and jihad. They chose to oppose this Din and those who work for it instead of supporting them. Now they know what is waiting for them. It is nothing less than the Fire of Hell for all eternity. When they realize this fact then can you imagine how they will cry? Can you imagine the sorrow and the grief that will envelop them? This is what we have to save ourselves from Insha Allah. We have to realize that it is not worth it to sacrifice our eternity in the next life for a few moments in this life. We have to realize that the ones who laugh and enjoy themselves in this world are the ones who will cry in the next.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says “**a recompense for what they used to earn**”. The Fire of Hell. This sorrow and grief that makes them cry. The utter desperateness of their situation. It is all nothing but a recompense for what they have done. This is what they have earned for themselves with the life that they have chosen. They heard the Prophet (saw) calling on them to march forward on this path of dawah and jihad. They knew that it was a responsibility that they had on themselves. A duty that they owed to Allah (swt) for Him (swt) creating them, and sustaining them, and guiding them to the Truth. They knew this and still they turned away. They knew the Majesty and the Glory and the Sublimity and the Tremendousness of their Lord. They knew the servitude that He (swt) demanded because of this and still they chose themselves over Him (swt). Not only did they not support His (swt)’s Din but they even opposed it. They made plots against it. They tried to drive the true and sincere believers away from it. They encouraged its enemies to attack it. They knew that this Din belonged to Allah (swt). They knew everything that He (swt) had done for them and all that He (swt) had given them. They knew how Glorious and Majestic a Being He (swt) IS. They knew all this and still they turned away from Him (swt). They turned away from Him (swt) and they worked to destroy this Din. This is what they had done and so this is the punishment that they had earned for themselves. These are the sins that they carried on their necks. Is anything less the fitting recompense for such sins? What other punishment is enough to pay them back for all this injustice that they did to their Creator? If you truly realized Allah (swt) and what He (swt) deserves, then you would see that this is indeed the fitting punishment. It is what they deserve for turning away from Allah (swt).

So the lesson that we can take from this ayah is to remind ourselves once again how every action that we do in this world has a consequence in the Hereafter. These people chose to laugh and enjoy themselves in this world and as a consequence of this they were made to cry and suffer in the Hereafter. If we choose their path then we can be certain that we will share their fate, after all we are all the children of Adam. How are we different from them? How are we in any way better than them other than in the choices that we make? The only way that we can save ourselves from them is if we turn away from them and their way of life? If we choose instead to dedicate ourselves to Allah (swt) and to working for His (swt)’s Din.

فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسْتَعْذَنُوكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ فَقُلْ لَّنْ تَخْرُجُوا
 مَعِيَ أَبَدًا وَلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ
 أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَافْعَدُوا مَعَ الْخَالِفِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

83. So if Allah brings you back to a group of them, and then they ask permission from you to march forth, say “Never shall you march forth with me, nor will you fight with me any enemy, you were content to sit behind the first time, so sit with those who remain behind”.

This ayah is also an ayah that should put fear into us. Imam Shawkani tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that this ayah is not only speaking about those hypocrites who were openly working to destroy the Islamic State like Abdullah bin Ubayy. Rather this ayah is also speaking about those Muslims who were sincere believers. Those who sincerely wanted to serve the Din but who held back from marching forth with the Prophet (saw) because of some fear and some laziness that Shaitan put in their hearts. The prime example of this was the case of K’ab bin Malik (ra) and the other two with him (ra). Insha Allah we will discuss their story later on in this Surah. But this ayah should terrify us as well when we see what Allah (swt) is commanding the Prophet (saw) to say to such people. Such people who choose the life of this world over the life of dawah and jihad. Such people who choose not to march forward in this path. Just imagine how disastrous it would be for you if you were to be among such people.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**So if Allah brings you back to a group of them**”. Here is Allah (swt) is addressing the Prophet (saw). Notice the Arabic word *fa* with which Allah (swt) begins this ayah. This word connects the meaning of this ayah with the previous ayah. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) had told us how these were a people who loved to laugh. They loved to enjoy their time in this world. They did not want to sacrifice any time for the dawah because they were too busy enjoying themselves. When the Prophet (saw) marched forward with the believers on the expedition of Tabuk they chose to remain behind. Enjoying themselves and keeping themselves comfortable was more important for them than striving in this path of dawah

and jihad. Here Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) what to do with such people. In other words when the Prophet (saw) returns from the expedition, if he (saw) returns to such people, then what should he (saw) do with them. What should he (saw) say to them. Notice also how Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) that it was He (swt) who returned him (saw) from the expedition. It was He (swt) Who took the Prophet (saw) on this journey and it was He (swt) Who brought him (saw) home. There is a lesson for us in this as well. Whenever we go out on any journey we should always remember that it is only Allah (swt) Who takes us on our journey and it is only He (swt) who returns us safely home. How then can we not be grateful to Him (swt)? How then can we turn away from His (swt)'s worship and servitude?

Allah (swt) then says “**and then they ask permission from you to march forth**”. Now these Muslims realized their mistake when they chose not to march forth with the Prophet (saw) on the expedition to Tabuk. They realized how Shaitan had gotten the better of them. So now they come back to the Prophet (saw) and beg him (saw) to allow them to go with him (saw) the next time that there is an expedition. They know that no one will be allowed to march forth unless first the Prophet (saw) gives his (saw)'s explicit permission. So they come to him (saw) and they ask him (saw) for permission. All that they want is to go forth with him (saw) and the believers once again. All that they want is to walk in this path of dawah and jihad once again. All that they want is to be in Allah (swt)'s Pleasure once again. So they come and beg of the Prophet (saw) to grant them permission.

In response to their request Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to say “**Never shall you march forth with me**”. Look at the harshness and the sternness of this response. Look at the force with which it is delivered. This is what Allah (swt) has to say about those Muslims who turn away from this path. This is what Allah (swt) has to say about those Muslims who prefer a life of serving themselves rather than serving His (swt)'s cause. He (swt) is so displeased with them that not only does He (swt) not forgive them for what they have done but He (swt) even makes the Prophet (saw) swear that they will never accompany him (saw) in an expedition again. Even if they came and begged to be allowed to walk on this path again they should not be able to. This is

how displeased Allah (swt) is with such people. If such was the situation of Muslims who were the companions of the Prophet (saw), then how terrified should we be today?

Then Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to say “**nor will you fight with me any enemy**”. Not only would these people never be allowed to march forth with the Prophet (saw), but they would not even be allowed to fight alongside him (saw) either. Recall that in Madinah the life of the Prophet (saw) was one of dawah and jihad, so because they had turned away from this duty, they were in essence being denied his (saw)’s company. Whenever the Prophet (saw) would go forth in an expedition they would have to remain behind. They would not be allowed to accompany him (saw) and keep his (saw)’s company. To fight against the enemies of Allah (swt) alongside the Prophet (saw), what sincere believer would not desire this? But this pleasure is what these Muslims had denied themselves. This is only because they chose to stay behind from Tabuk. When the Prophet (saw) called them to this expedition they turned away from his (saw)’s call. The Prophet (saw) is calling us today as well. Calling us to this path. How will we respond?

Notice also in this part of the ayah how Allah (swt) describes the Prophet (saw). He (swt) describes him (saw) as fighting the enemies. This was the role of the Prophet (saw) in Madinah, it was to fight against the enemies of Allah (swt). Many so-called Muslims today, who want to change what Islam truly is, try to hide this aspect of the Prophet (saw)’s personality. Those hypocrites who call themselves Muslims who are content with the status quo. The ones who are content with a world without the Islamic state. The ones who say that Islam did not come to dominate over all others ways of life. These people try to hide this aspect of the Prophet (saw)’s personality. They try to paint a picture of him (saw) like he (saw) was some kind of Buddhist monk. Like someone who would not even harm a fly. This is not who the Prophet (saw) was at all. He (saw) was a warrior. He (saw) fought in many battles. He (saw) even killed with his (saw)’s own hands. This was who our Prophet (saw) was, and we should still love him (saw) more than any other human being. We should take him (saw) as he (saw) is. We should not try to change the person that he (saw) was only to please ourselves or to please the disbelievers. We have to realize that fighting a just war against the enemies of Allah (swt) is one of the best of actions that a person can do. So never should we hide this noble act of our beloved (saw). Allah (swt) is

pleased with him (saw) and that is all that matters. However if we want Allah (swt) to be pleased with us then we have to love him (saw) as well. We have to love him (saw) for who he (saw) is.

Then Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to tell these people exactly why they were being forbidden from marching out with him (saw) and fighting with him (saw) when He (swt) says **“you were content to sit behind the first time”**. They were content to sit behind at home while the Prophet (saw) and the sincere believers marched forward in this path. The Prophet (saw) and the believers had to face the heat of the desert and the difficulty of the journey while these people were sitting comfortably in their homes. They were content with this. They were content to sit behind while the Prophet (saw) and the believers were out in the path of Allah (swt). This is why they have earned the Wrath of Allah (swt). This is why He (swt) has forbidden them from ever being able to march forth with the Prophet (saw) again.

The lesson that we can take from this is to see how much of the Wrath of Allah (swt) we will draw down upon ourselves if we turn away from this path. The situation of this Din today is much more desperate than it was during the time of the Tabuk expedition. At the time of the Tabuk expedition, there was only the possibility that the Romans would invade the State. But today they have already invaded and they now occupy our lands. At that time there was only the possibility that they would harm and kill the Muslims, today they have already shed much Muslim blood and they continue to do so. So how much more is the onus upon us to march forth against them. If Allah (swt) was so displeased with the companions of the Prophet (saw) for staying behind from this path of dawah and jihad at that time, then how much more displeased is He (swt) with all those who stay behind today. How then will you stand before Him (swt) on the Last Day? What excuse will you give? You know on that Day what will be the final destination for those whom He (swt) is not pleased with. Put your hand over a flame now and see if you can bear it.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says **“so sit with those who remain behind”**. This is what Allah (swt) has to say for those who stay behind. If you want to remain behind then do so. Sit at home with the young children, the retarded, and the elderly. At least these have an excuse. What excuse would you have? You would not have any. You would be completely useless. Not doing any service or good for Allah (swt), for His (swt)'s Din, for the Ummah, or for

mankind. Just being a factory for urine and feces. Just consuming the resources of this world. If this is the path that you choose then Allah (swt) allows you to continue on this path. When you return to Him (swt) then you will feel the consequences of that choice. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate! May Allah (swt) allow us to choose Him (swt) over this world!

وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّتَّاتَ أَبَدًا وَلَا
تَقُمْ عَلَىٰ قَبْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ
فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

84. And do not ever pray over any of them who has died, and do not stand over their graves, surely they have done kufr to Allah and His Messenger, and they died while they were transgressors.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to show us how displeased He (swt) is with these hypocrites. The ones who claim to be Muslim but who do not reflect their belief with their actions. The ones who choose to stay behind instead of marching forth in the path of dawah and jihad. The ones who prefer to enjoy themselves in this world rather than striving and struggling with their wealth and their persons for their Lord. Allah (swt) shows us just how displeased He (swt) is with these people. Allah (swt) wants to reinforce this concept in our mind again and again so that we would make the best effort possible to save ourselves from becoming like them. It is to make us realize that this Din is not just about prayer and fasting, rather it is about dedicating every moment of our lives to Allah (swt) by striving to please Him (swt) in it.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**And do not ever pray over any of them who has died**”. This is addressed first and foremost to the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) specifically commands him (saw) not to pray over any of the hypocrites. Over any of those who chose not to march forth in the path of dawah and jihad. Notice the emphasis and the certainty that Allah (swt)

places on this command. He (swt) says to the Prophet (saw) that never ever should he (saw) pray over these people. This is how much they have earned His (swt)'s Wrath, this is how He (swt) displeased is with them. The funeral prayer in Islam is a prayer where forgiveness is sought for the deceased person. So what does it mean when Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) here not to pray this prayer for the hypocrites when they die? It means that He (swt) is never going to forgive them. Do you realize now how terrifying this is?

Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that the funeral prayer is an honor that is bestowed on the deceased Muslim. Now because these hypocrites have turned away from the path of dawah and jihad they do not deserve this honor. They do not deserve the honor of the Prophet (saw) and the believers praying over their body. They do not deserve the honor of souls seeking forgiveness on their behalf. By turning away from this path even though they claimed to be Muslims they had demonstrated their utter worthlessness. They had demonstrated how they preferred their own selves to Allah (swt) even though they claim to be His (swt)'s sincere servants. Because of such arrogance, because of such laziness, because of such deception and falsehood, they do not deserve to be prayed over at their deaths. This is how angered Allah (swt) is with them and now they are returning to Him (swt) being completely under His (swt)'s Power. How frightening is such a return?

Then Allah (swt) says **“and do not stand over their graves”**. Allah (swt) gives this command to the Prophet (saw) in order to further emphasize the command that He (swt) gave in the previous part of the ayah. In essence it is the same command. Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) not to pray over the graves of those who passed away while neglecting the obligation of dawah and jihad. Allah (swt) repeats it here with a different wording for emphasis. Once again the lesson that we can take from this is to see how displeased Allah (swt) is with these people. Allah (swt) does not even want the Prophet (saw) to stand over their graves, that is how much they have earned His (swt)'s Wrath because of their choice to stay away from this path. The call to arms was sounded, to defend the Islamic State and the Muslims, to establish the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth, to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. They heard this call and

they turned away from it, now this is what they have gotten for themselves for the terrible choice that they made. Even the Prophet (saw) is forbidden from praying at their grave.

What choice are you going to make? Do you not hear the Prophet (saw) calling you? Are you going to respond by saying “At your service O Messenger of Allah” or are you going to respond by turning your back to him (saw) like these people did. This is the most important of any decisions that any Muslim can make. Do we dedicate ourselves to Allah (swt) and this cause or do we just live for ourselves or our job or our family? Allah (swt) is greater than all of these.

Then Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) exactly why he (saw) was forbidden from praying over them when He (swt) says **“surely they have done kufr to Allah and His Messenger”**. Once again we see how Allah (swt) equates turning away from this path of dawah and jihad to kufr. As we mentioned there are many levels to kufr, so this does not necessarily mean that anyone who walks away from this path is a disbeliever. However the language that Allah (swt) uses here shows us how displeased He (swt) with such people. The lower level of kufr which even many believers can be guilty of is ungratefulness. By turning away from this path these people have been ungrateful to their Lord and to their Messenger. How much has Allah (swt) given them? How much has the Prophet (saw) strove and sacrificed for them? By refusing to help the Prophet (saw) on his mission of carrying the Message of Allah and establishing the Law of Allah they are showing this ungratefulness.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying **“and they died while they were transgressors”**. We all make different choices over the course of our lives, but it is always the end of our states that matters the most. It is always the end upon which we will be judged. The hypocrites whom Allah (swt) speaks about in this ayah are those who died in a state of hypocrisy. The ones who died on disobedience to Allah (swt). Again and again the Prophet (saw) called them to this path, and again and again they turned away. They also continued to make plots against this Message. Allah (swt) gave them one chance after another. Every day that the sun would rise on them was another chance for them to repent from their error and come back to the Straight Path. The path of dawah and jihad. But they constantly turned away from this path. They persisted in disobedience and sin. They persisted to be in a state where they were transgressing the Law of

Allah (swt). So realize from this that to turn away from this path of dawah and jihad. To work against restoring the Islamic State or not to support this effort is also a sin just like zina and lying are. The evidence for this is in this ayah itself. Allah (swt) calls these people who turned away from this path, who did not support this effort, He (swt) calls them sinners. Their sin is opposing the dawah. This is the sin which they died upon for which they were being punished by having the Prophet (saw) being forbidden from making their funeral prayer. May Allah (swt) save us from this sin! May He (swt) allow us to do what we can to support this effort!

وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي
 الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

85. And let not their wealth and their children amaze you, Allah only wants to punish them with these in the life of this world so that their souls may depart while they are in kufr.

In this ayah Allah (swt) repeats exactly what He (swt) had told us in ayah 55. The exact wording is repeated once again. The reason for this is emphasis and certainty. Allah (swt) wants to reiterate this point in our hearts again and again. As we mentioned ultimately our Muslim Ummah can be broken up into three camps. Those who are striving on this path of dawah and jihad. The effort to establish the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth and carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Those who are ignorant of this responsibility and ignorant about the true nature of this Din. And finally those who know this path and its obligation but who still choose to walk away from it. Now we know that Allah (swt) wants us to be from the first of these groups. This entire Surah is noting but an exhortation for us to join this first group. But once we do join this first group we have to contribute a significant amount of our time and our money for this effort. This means that we may not have as much of this world as those who do not join this effort. They may have more of this world than we do. This might create a feeling of resentment and envy in our hearts. It is this feeling that Allah (swt) addresses here. He (swt) shows us what is right perspective that we must have to the chattels of this world that they have been given.

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah once again not to allow the wealth and the children of these people to amaze us. This means that we should not stare in amazement and wonder at all the things of this world that such people have been given. We should not even look to these things. Shaitan makes us look at those people who have been given of this world. Then he makes us wonder in amazement at all these things. Then he puts envy and hatred in our hearts. At this point he has taken us away from Allah (swt) because he has made us focus our hearts on the things of this world instead of on Allah (swt). This would then make us angry and miserable. In wretched despair because we think that we have denied ourselves of this world. This is what will happen to us if we ignore the command of our Lord here. If we allow ourselves to be seduced by the material things of this world that they have been given.

Then Allah (swt) reminds us that the only reason why He (swt) has given these people all of this world is because He (swt) intends to punish them with it. Look at this, all the pleasures and riches of this world that these people have are actually a punishment for them. These things take them away from Allah (swt). These things make them heedless to the Divine. What greater punishment could there be for a Muslim other than for him to be among the heedless? Even though he is a Muslim for him to become of the heedless. What greater punishment could there be? So realize that the things of this world are not worth it for you to sacrifice your relationship with Allah (swt) for. Know that if you choose to give up striving in this effort only so that you could chase after this world and increase your wealth and children then know that you will be putting yourself into this greatest of punishment. Allah (swt) guided you to this Din. He (swt) made you a part of this Ummah. He (swt) gave you the Quran. He (swt) gave you the opportunity to be near to Him (swt). If you choose to walk away from this path then you would be throwing away all of this only to be among the heedless. To become like those who only know this world and who are blind to the Real and the True, even if they call themselves Muslims. Is this the existence that you want for yourself? Are you willing to make this trade? To give up Allah (swt) only for this world. It is not worth it. This is the realization that we must come to. We must realize that to walk away from this path and chase after this world will only put us in punishment. A terrible punishment in this world before the most terrible punishment in the Hereafter.

Finally in this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again how He (swt) intends to take their souls while they were in a state of kufr. These people have done such great evil by turning away from this path again and again that Allah (swt) wants death to take them while they are in state of kufr. While they are in a state of heedlessness and ingratitude. Having never made Tawbah, having never sought Allah (swt)'s forgiveness for neglecting their duty. Having lived a life of gluttony and sin. This is the state that Allah (swt) wants their hearts to be in when death comes to them. If such should happen then what do you think is waiting for them in the next life. What will they have to show for themselves when they are being judged by the greatest Judge?

وَإِذَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةً أَنْ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَجَاهِدُوا مَعَ رَسُولِهِ اسْتَأْذَنَكَ أُولُوا
 الطُّولِ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالُوا ذَرْنَا نَكُنْ مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

86. And when a Surah is revealed (exhorting them) to believe in Allah and to strive hard with the Messenger, those of wealth among them ask your permission (to remain behind) and say “Leave us to be with those who sit”.

In this Surah Allah (swt) is calling on us to join that group of sincere believers who dedicate themselves to His (swt)'s cause. This was the same group that marched out with the Prophet (saw) on the expedition to Tabuk. Despite the difficulty and the danger of the journey they did not make excuses. They were willing to go through any pain or suffer any loss if it meant attaining the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The other option for us is to be among the hypocrites and those weak of faith. The ones who are not willing to make the sacrifice and the effort. The ones who care more about keeping themselves safe and free from pain than they do about Allah (swt) or serving His (swt)'s Din. Now if we want to become closer to the former of these groups and away from the latter then what do we need to do? Has Allah (swt) given us any tool that we can use to come closer to the station of those whom He (swt) is pleased with? Indeed He (swt) has and it is to this that He (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah.

That tool is none other than this Quran. This is what Allah (swt) has given us so that we may journey to Him (swt) with it. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us how the hypocrites and those of weak faith respond to the Quran. Allah (swt) says **“And when a Surah is revealed (exhorting them) to believe in Allah and to strive hard with the Messenger, those of wealth among them ask your permission (to remain behind)”**. What Allah (swt) is saying here is that whenever He (swt) reveals a Surah of the Quran. A Surah exhorting the Muslims to believe with conviction and to strive with their wealth and their persons for His (swt)’s cause. To strive hard along with the Prophet (saw) on this path of dawah and jihad. These hypocrites respond by coming to the Prophet (saw) and asking him permission to remain behind. So for these hypocrites this Surah had the exact opposite effect than what it was supposed to. Instead of bringing them closer to Allah (swt). Instead of making them want to strive hard in His (swt)’s Path, it takes them further away. They actually have the audacity to come to the Prophet (saw) and say to him (saw) **“Leave us to be with those who sit”**. The ones who sit are the ones who are completely incapable and enfeeble. It is the elderly, the crippled, the mentally ill, and the infants. They want to sit at home with these. Look at how distant they are from Allah (swt)? Look at how cowardly their hearts have become? Since their hearts are so devoid of Iman they do not care about anything except keeping themselves safe from harm. They do not care if they even have to cower behind the elderly and the crippled in order to keep away from this path.

Now if this is the reaction of the hypocrites to the Quran then what do you think is the reaction of the sincere believers? Of course it would be the exact opposite. When they hear a Surah exhorting them to join this effort then they would respond by rushing to this path. They recognize that these are not any words but rather these are the words of the Lord and Master of the universe. So they know that these are the truest of words. There is more truth to these words than there are to the words spoken by any human being. Because of this they believe with utmost conviction in whatever their Lord tells them in this Quran. When He (swt) promises them the Garden, His (swt)’s Pleasure, and nearness to Him (swt) for walking on this path, they believe in His (swt)’s promise and they strive with their utmost in order to attain it. This is the reaction of the sincere believers to the Surah that is revealed onto them.

So we see that this is the difference between the two of these groups. Their reaction to the Quran. In this ayah Allah (swt) describes the reaction of the hypocrites and those weak of faith to the Quran. When Allah (swt) sends down a Surah exhorting them to join this effort. Exhorting them to display their belief by striving to their utmost, they turn away. They turn away from this exhortation. Not only do they turn away but they even have the audacity to come to the Prophet (saw) and ask him (saw) for permission to remain behind. To remain behind with the elderly and the invalids. This is their reaction to the Book of Allah (swt). It does not in any way bring them closer to Allah (swt), instead it takes them further away.

So if we want to gain the Iman and the strength and the determination to strive on this path then our salvation lies in the Quran. Many are the ayahs in the Quran that exhort us to strive in the service of Allah (swt). In fact every ayah of the Quran gives us what we need for this effort and that is nearness to Allah (swt). It is only those who are close to Allah (swt), those who are in the Divine Presence, who are capable of making this effort, and the Quran is what will allow us to get there. This Book is the gateway to our Lord. It is what will lead us to Him (swt). So we must always be striving to learn its meanings, and at the same time we must pray to Allah (swt) that He (swt) opens the doors of His (swt)'s Book for us. Because the Book of Allah (swt) will not bring us close to Him (swt) unless He (swt) wills it do, and if we do not make the effort to please Him (swt) then He (swt) may not will it to. In fact He (swt) may even make this Quran to take us further away from Him (swt) like He (swt) did for these hypocrites. When a Surah came down exhorting them to join this effort they became even more cowardly. This was because they had displeased Allah (swt) and so He (swt) closed their hearts from being able to receive the guidance of this Book. This is what we have to save ourselves from. We have to strive to please Allah (swt) so that Insha Allah He (swt) will make this Quran a source of guidance for us and not a source of misguidance. Whenever we hear an ayah of the Quran it will motivate us to worship and serve Him (swt) even more, to strive and struggle in this path even more. This is the purpose of the Quran. This is what these hypocrites could not comprehend.

Now that we realize that the Quran is the motivating force behind this dawah, we have to implement this fact practically in our efforts. Insha Allah we have to use the Quran to build those

who are close to us and bring them closer to Allah (swt). As we build others we must allow the Quran to do the same for us as well. There is a certain level that people need to be at before they can participate in this dawah. The Quran is what brings us to that level. As we mentioned every ayah in the Quran brings us closer to Allah (swt). Every ayah in the Quran motivates us to strive even harder for Him (swt). So for us to gain the motivation and the strength to make this effort we have to dedicate ourselves to learning and reflecting on the Quran. Not only should we ourselves be dedicated to the Quran but we should make those who are close to us dedicated to it as well. We should spread the Light of this blessed Book to as many Muslims as we know. Then Insha Allah they too will help us and support us on this mission. They too will be at the level of a dawah carrier. Someone who can interact with the Ummah and remind them of the importance of living under the Law of Allah (swt).

رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ



87. They were pleased to be with those who remain behind, and their hearts are sealed so that they do not understand.

This is yet another ayah where Allah (swt) speaks about the hypocrites. Every time we come to an ayah such as this we should always be asking ourselves as to why Allah (swt) has dedicated so many ayahs in His (swt)'s Book to this subject. There are two important reasons. The first is so that we would be aware of such people. We should never believe that the only enemies for this dawah are from the outside, rather its greatest enemies are from the inside. They say that they are Muslims but they do not have a problem with the fact that the Law of Allah (swt) is not being implemented and the Message of Allah (swt) is not being carried to the masses on a global level. They say that they are Muslim but they are not willing to join this effort. They say they are Muslims but they do not see the desperateness of our situation without the Islamic State. They do not join this dawah, and often times they even oppose it and seek to silence it. They say

that they are Muslim but they prevent Islam from becoming a reality in this world. Allah (swt) wants us to be aware of such people in our community. We should never think that the decision which they made is the right one. Even if all the Muslims around us choose not to join this effort we should never think that it is the right thing to do. Our source of guidance is the Quran and the Sunnah and not whatever the majority of the Muslims or the majority of the “scholars” may say or do. The other reason why Allah (swt) dedicates so many ayahs in the Quran to speaking about the hypocrites is so that we ourselves would make the effort to prevent ourselves from becoming like them. We should realize that the difference between a believer and a hypocrite is a very thin line. Anyone can say the Shahadah, anyone can pray, anyone can make pilgrimage, anyone can say that they are fasting, but it is only those who are in the Divine Presence, who are addicted to the Remembrance of Allah (swt) who will make the effort for His (swt)’s Din. These are the true and sincere believers. The ones for whom Islam is not just a few rituals here and there, but rather it is a complete way of life. A reality that they live at every moment of their lives. This is the station that we must always be trying to reach. If for some reason we are content with something less than this then we should realize who we have become. The ones who choose not to walk on this path. The ones who choose to remain behind.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**They were pleased to be with those who remain behind**”. This is the situation of the hypocrites. Not only do they not strive hard in the cause of Allah (swt) but they are even content not to do so. When the Muslim army marched forth into battle these hypocrites were glad that they were not with them. They were pleased to be with those who remain behind. The ones who remain behind were the mentally ill, the elderly, the young children, and the invalids. This is the company that they wanted to be in. Even though Allah (swt) had given them the capacity and the strength and the opportunity to fight and strive in His (swt)’s cause they still chose to walk away. They still chose to remain behind. This is why Allah (swt) is so displeased with them. Not just because they chose to remain behind from this path but because they remained behind and they were pleased with themselves because they did. Even though they knew Allah (swt), they turned away from Him (swt) and they were pleased that they did.

So we see from here that the first step in our walking this path of dawah and jihad is that we must build within ourselves a great desire to be on this path. The case of these hypocrites was not just that they chose not to walk on this path but it was that they had no desire to whatsoever. They were content to remain behind with the elderly and the children. They made themselves into invalids and they were happy with what they did. This is what we have to save ourselves from. If for whatever reason we are not able to walk on this path, if we are not able to make the effort, or even if we are not able to participate in this dawah as much as we would like to, we must never be content with ourselves. We should want to strive for Allah (swt), strive to establish His (swt)'s Din. We should never be pleased with what we have done but rather we should always be looking to do more. We must always feel that we have not done enough for this dawah, for the Ummah, for Allah (swt).

This contentment that the hypocrites had when they chose to remain behind was only because of their heedlessness to the Divine. They had forgotten Allah (swt). That is they were happy from having turned away from the call of His (swt)'s Messenger. To save ourselves from this we must always be remembering Allah (swt). We must always be remembering how He (swt) is Aware of even the minutest of our actions. How He (swt) will hold us to account and count in our scales even the smallest of good that we do. We should remember how Majestic and Glorious and Tremendous He (swt) IS and how He (swt) deserves that we dedicate ourselves to Him (swt) and strive to please Him (swt). We should remember everything that He (swt) has done for us, and how much gratitude we have to show Him (swt). Insha Allah this consciousness that we build within ourselves of our Lord is what will help us from becoming like these hypocrites.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us what is the true nature of these hypocrites. What is the reality of their situation. He (swt) says “**and their hearts are sealed so that they do not understand**”. There is a reason why striving in the Way of Allah (swt) has become aversive to them. There is a reason why they are content to remain behind with the invalids and children. There is a reason why they have forgotten Allah (swt) and become creatures who only care for themselves. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah it is because their hearts have been sealed up. The result of their hearts being sealed up is that they do not understand. They do not understand

the purpose of their creation. They do not understand the fact that at every moment they are under the Gaze of the All-Seeing and in the Knowledge of the All-Knowing. They may have had knowledge of this fact but they did not have understanding. The realization did not seep into their hearts. They did not understand Who their Lord IS and what He (swt) deserves from them. This is why they were content to stay at home. Content to do nothing for this dawah. Content to be inactive while their brothers and the Prophet (saw) himself were striving and struggling. They could not understand that they were being tested at every moment. They could not understand that they would soon return to their Lord and they will see themselves making this choice when He (swt) judges them. Their hearts were sealed and so this understanding never dawned upon them. They wandered in blindness, oblivious to the true reality of this world.

Now the question to ask ourselves here is why were their hearts sealed and who sealed them. Of course the answer to this is that Allah (swt) sealed their hearts and He (swt) did it because He (swt) was displeased with them. They displeased Him (swt) when they chose to turn away from this path even though they knew its importance. They displeased Him (swt) when they were content with themselves at not having done anything for this dawah. They knew the extreme importance of establishing the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth and carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. They knew the extreme importance of saving their brothers and sisters in the Ummah from oppression and suffering. They knew what they had to do and still they turned away. This was why Allah (swt) punished them by placing a seal over their hearts. He (swt) allowed them to go further in misguidance because they had chosen to turn away. Soon they could not even recognize that what they had done was wrong. Rather they were content with the choice that they had made. May Allah (swt) save us from this fate! May Allah (swt) never allow us to be pleased with ourselves no matter what we do for this dawah! May Allah (swt) allow us to do more and more for this effort!

لَكِنِ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ
 وَأَوْلِيَّتِكُمْ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

88. But the Messenger and the ones who believe with him strive with their wealth and their persons, and these it is who have the good things and these are the successful.

The Quran is a Book of Guidance. It shows us the path that we must avoid and it shows us the path that we must walk on. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) showed us the former of these paths and in this ayah He (swt) shows us the latter. The former was the path of the hypocrites. The ones who turned away from the life of dawah and jihad. The ones who remained behind idly when the Prophet (saw) and the believers marched out and who were content doing so. These are the ones whose hearts Allah (swt) has sealed. Even though they declared that they are Muslims, and even though they may have read the Quran, they do not understand the true nature of this universe. They do not understand why they exist and where they are going to end up. This is the path that we must always be striving to avoid. The path of those who are heedless to Allah (swt). The ones who allow the moments of their lives to pass by while they are not striving to please Him (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us the opposite of their path. He (swt) shows us the path that leads to Him (swt). The path that we must always strive to walk on.

This is the path of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. Look at how Allah (swt) describes their path in this ayah. What is it that they are doing? How are they spending their days? It is nothing less than striving with their wealth and their persons for Allah (swt). This is the path that they walked on for their entirety of their lives. This path is described in the ayah as the path of the Messenger. The path of the one who has been sent by the Creator. Allah (swt) created us for a purpose, He (swt) continues to sustain us for a purpose. But what is this purpose? Can we figure it out on our own without receiving any knowledge or guidance from Him (swt)? Of course we cannot and that is why Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw). He (saw) is the model which all of mankind could look to as a source of guidance. How he (saw) lived, how he (saw) spent his days, is how we should live. His (saw)'s path is the path that we must follow. Now for most of mankind,

even for most Muslims, Shaitan has kept this path hidden from them. They all do not know who the Prophet (saw) really was, or how he (saw) lived. But you do. Allah (swt) blessed you with this knowledge. Allah (swt) has shown you this path that has been hidden from most of mankind. How evil then would you be if you were to turn away from this path? This is the path of the Messenger of Allah (swt), the greatest of creation, how evil would it be to turn away this path?

We see from the ayah that this is also the path of those who believe with him (saw). So this is the path of the believers, and of those who are close to the Prophet (saw). The path of the Sahabah. Is this not the best company to have? Is this not the best group to be in? It is easy to say with the tongue that one believes, anyone can do that. But what it means to truly believe is to walk on this path. It is to dedicate oneself to this effort. This is what the Sahabah did. They gave this dawah everything that they had. They dedicated their lives to this cause. This is what gave them a station close to the Prophet (saw). Both in this life and in the Hereafter.

So we see from this ayah how Allah (swt) describes this path as striving in His (swt)'s way with wealth and self. Now we know that the Way of Allah (swt) is His (swt)'s Cause. The effort to establish His (swt)'s Law on the earth and to spread His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Practically speaking for us today it is the effort to establish the Islamic State. It is true that there is much that is wrong with the Ummah today. But we believe that the greatest of these problems is that we are living without the Law of Allah (swt) over us. How many are the rulings that Allah (swt) has mandated which are not being applied today because the Islamic State is no longer there? We are not only speaking about stoning and cutting but we are speaking about hundreds and hundreds of rulings that are not implemented today because the State is required to implement them. Even the ruling of dawah, the ruling of jihad, the ruling of Zakat, even the ruling of Salah requires the State in order to be correctly implemented. The Islamic State is also needed to liberate the Muslim lands which are occupied and to rescue all the Muslims who are being oppressed. So without a doubt this is the most pressing obligation for our Ummah today. Thus to strive in the Cause of Allah (swt) is to support this effort in whatever way that we can. What would be best is if we could actually begin or join a movement that is working towards this cause. If we cannot then at least we should support this effort with our tongue and with our pens. We should

tell other Muslims that we know about our responsibility to restore the State and live under the Divine Law. We can help to spread this idea to the rest of the Ummah. In our opinion this is what it means to strive in Allah (swt)'s Way. It is to join the effort or at least to support the effort to restore the Islamic State. As always, Allah (swt) Knows best!

Also notice in this ayah how Allah (swt) mentions striving with wealth. In fact He (swt) even mentions wealth before person. This shows us that another way in which we can support this effort is through our money. If one of us were to join a movement to restore the Islamic State or to start a movement then the first step in that would be gaining a deep knowledge of Islam and Arabic. How can we carry Islam to the Ummah if we ourselves are ignorant of it? Now if we ourselves are not capable of travelling and settling in the Middle East in order to dedicate ourselves to reaching this level of knowledge, then Insha Allah we should support others who are. We should find sincere youth in our community who are willing to do this. Who are willing to travel and settle in the Middle East with the intention of learning the Din. So that they can be part of or so that they can form a movement that will fulfill this purpose. The very least that we can do is to support such youth with our money. If we can do this sincerely for the sake of Allah (swt) then Insha Allah we will also get the reward of striving with our wealth in this cause.

What will we get if we can do this? If we can support this dawah in whatever way that we can. Allah (swt) tells us in the next part of the ayah "**these it is who have the good things**". Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that the "good things" here refers to what we will receive both in this life and in the Hereafter. In this world it refers to the peace and tranquility of being close to Allah (swt). What could be better than being near Allah (swt)? Being in the Divine Presence. Once you are close to your Lord then you will taste neither sorrow nor fear. All that you will know is Allah (swt). In the Hereafter this nearness will only become more salient. Then not only would you know peace but you will also know joy. Just to behold your Lord. Just to know that He (swt) is content with you. Such would bring you more joy than you have ever experienced. Of course the good things also includes Paradise and all the delights therein. In this life it also includes provisions and a good and pure life. A loving family. Good friends. Increase in

knowledge and understanding of the Din. All of these is Allah (swt) promising you if only you join or support this effort. But the best of all is Allah (swt) Himself.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us that such people are the successful. This is what it means to be successful. It is to dedicate yourself sincerely to this effort and to hope that Allah (swt) accepts your striving. What is it that all of us should truly be seeking other than Allah (swt)? Once we recognize His Majesty and Purity and Tremendousness, then just to be near Him (swt). To reach that station where we remember Him (swt), where we do every action for Him (swt), where we can hope that He (swt) Sees us and is pleased with that, what could be better than that? Can all the riches in the world compare to that? Can any status or position compare to that? This is only in this world. In the Hereafter to be saved from the Fire and to be placed in the Garden. To behold Allah (swt) and to know that He (swt) is pleased with us. What could be better than this? Is there any success that this world can offer which is better than this?

If you are still not convinced that true success for you lies in this dawah then remember that in the end it is only the standard set by Allah (swt) that matters. If He (swt) says that success lies in this path and the world tells you that success lies somewhere else then who are you going to believe? Are you going to believe the Creator or the creation? So forget what the world says. Forget what everyone else around you says. This is the path of the Prophet (saw) and the true believers. This is the life that Allah (swt) has chosen for you. He (swt) has created you and guided you to this Din in order that you may live it. Not only is this why you were created. Not only is this why you were guided to this Din. Not only would this give you all the good things we mentioned above. Not only is this where true success lies. But this is where Allah (swt) wants you to be. So even if Allah (swt) had not given you all these things, just by the fact that this path is the one that your Lord wants you to walk on, it is the one where He (swt) will be pleased with you if you were to walk on it, is that not reason enough to make this effort? If for nothing else at all then just for Allah (swt). So think about it and realize where your efforts and your striving must lie. Realize towards what goal you must be spending all of your efforts. May Allah (swt) guide all the sincere brothers and sisters in this Ummah to make the correct choice!

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ
 فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٨٩﴾

89. Allah has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow, to stay therein forever, that is the great achievement.

We said in the previous ayah that Allah (swt) would be pleased with you if you were to walk on this path, if you were to join this effort. In this ayah He (swt) tells you just how pleased He (swt) will be. He (swt) tells you what He (swt) has prepared for you because of your choosing this path. Because of your choosing Him (swt). Remind yourself however that this reward is being promised not for those who are dedicated to worship, not for those who are constantly remembering Allah (swt), not for those who strive to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). Although these are all virtuous actions and you will be rewarded for all of these there is something far greater than all of these. There is what the Prophet (saw) called the pinnacle or the apex of this Din. Of course that is dawah and jihad. It is the exerting of one to one's utmost for the Cause of Allah (swt). To do whatever one can to the best of one's capacity to establish Allah (swt)'s Law on the earth and to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. In other words to help restore the Islamic State. This is the effort that Allah (swt) is calling you to here.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**Allah has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow**”. Notice how Allah (swt) does not say that He (swt) has created these gardens for you but rather He (swt) says that He (swt) has prepared these gardens for you. In fact the Arabic word *adda* that Allah (swt) uses here gives a far deeper meaning than just to prepare. It gives meanings of counting, of precision, of determination. It gives the meaning that Allah (swt) has put every small detail into this place just to make you happy. So it is not just a beautiful garden with sweet drinks, delicious foods, beautiful spouses, comfortable cushions, and other delights. Of course it is this but it also much more. It is something that has been prepared to the utmost detail and finest of precision only to please you. Whatever small thing it is that gives you joy will be in this place. It has been prepared with the greatest detail only for you.

Then Allah (swt) says “**to stay therein forever**”. Allah (swt) reminds us once again that our stay in this place would be for all eternity. For us who only know the life of this world, this concept is difficult if not impossible to truly realize. In this world time is killing us. It is the fire in which we burn. We can never truly find peace in any moment because we know that we are going to lose it. Every moment that passes is one that is lost and will never come again. So often times we cannot do what we want to do because time will not allow it. This is not how it is in the Garden. In the Garden time does not exist. So we can do whatever we want for however long that we want. It is only peace and contentment for all eternity. Never to feel any discomfort, never to be touched by any fear, never to be burdened by any worry. Just to be forever and ever.

In regards to these Gardens and staying forever in them Allah (swt) says “**that is the great achievement**”. Allah (swt) is telling us that this is the achievement towards which we must be striving. This is the goal which we must seek to achieve. This fact may seem obvious. It may seem that Allah (swt) is being repetitive by mentioning it again and again. But how many of us forget this? Even those of us who are practicing Muslims. Even those of us who are involved in this dawah. How many of us forget this fact. We forget this and we look to achieve something in this world. This is where we are wrong. Our achievement, our goal, is not the Islamic State. It is not even to convince other Muslims of the need for the State or even to call them to Allah (swt). It is not anything in this world. There is no result or outcome that we are seeking at all in this world. Rather we are only in this world to work. To strive to the best of our ability with the utmost sincerity. That is the only purpose why we are here. If we can do this then we have already achieved our goal. We say this because Allah (swt) has not promised this Garden for those who establish the Islamic State, or for those who call a specific number of people to Allah (swt), or for those who pray a specific number of prayers or fast a specific number of days. No rather all that He (swt) wants from us is sincerity and our best effort. If we can do that then we have already achieved the purpose of our existence. We have already achieved the greatest of achievements that any soul can aspire to. So how wonderful is this? How Merciful and Loving is our Lord that He (swt) has made the greatest of achievements so easily attainable? All that we have to do is be true to Him (swt) and try.

وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ

كَذَّبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَسَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ

عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

90. And there came the ones who makes excuses from the Bedouins, asking permission for themselves (to remain behind), and they who lied to Allah and His Messenger sat (at home), soon the ones who did kufr from them will be afflicted with a painful punishment.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe the hypocrites. The ones who choose not to participate in this mission. The ones who walk away from this responsibility. Allah (swt) describes them for us in such detail so that we might save ourselves from becoming like them. Before we know the Straight Path on which we must walk, we must know the deviant paths which we must avoid. This is what Allah (swt) describes for us in this ayah. So consider deeply the description that He (swt) gives. You will see that there are three essential characteristics that Allah (swt) gives for these hypocrites. One is making excuses, the other is laziness and inaction, and finally deception and lying. See if you have any of these in you and try your best to clean yourself of it.

In the first part of this ayah Allah (swt) says “**And there came the ones who make excuses from the Bedouins, asking permission for themselves (to remain behind)**”. When the Prophet (saw) announced the Tabuk expedition every single able-bodied Muslim male from every part of the Islamic State was required to step forward. The State itself was being threatened. The intelligence reports suggested that Rome was gathering a huge army and preparing for invasion. So it was not only the Sahabah from Madinah who were required to fight, rather all Muslims from all over the State were required to march forward. Even the Bedouins who lived in the desert. Here Allah (swt) describes a certain group among the Bedouins. The ones who came with excuses. The ones who asked permission to remain behind. Look at even the way in which Allah (swt) describes them. He (swt) describes them as the ones who make excuses. Such is their nature, it is who they are. They are a people who love to make excuses.

Is this not how many of us are today? We know of this responsibility that we have. We know how important it is to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land. We know how important it is to take this Message to mankind. To save them from the Fire, to give them a chance to enter the Garden, to know their Creator and their purpose. We also know how important it is to save the Muslims from oppression. To alleviate their suffering, to ease their difficulty, to give them a good life. We also know that Allah (swt) would be displeased with us if we do not make this effort. We know that He (swt) might punish us with a grievous punishment and replace us with another people. We know all this, yet still we make excuses. We do not deny this responsibility but we make excuses as to why we cannot do it. We make specific excuses for us in particular. If we want excuses then Shaitan will give us a million excuses. Our family. Our work. Our studies. The current security situation. The economy and how hard it is to make a living. Our health. Our lack of knowledge. Asking why other Muslims are not doing it. These are just a few that we can think of, and we are sure that you can think of even more. But what we need to realize from this ayah is that Allah (swt) does not like excuses. He (swt) does not like those who make excuses. Then we have to ask ourselves how certain we are that Allah (swt) will accept our excuses.

So how do we know whether our excuses are valid or not? In the end only we ourselves can decide. But we have to remind ourselves once again that Allah (swt) only asks of us that we try our best. You are the one who knows more than anyone else what is your best. So you know more than anyone else whether your excuses are valid or not. Perhaps because you have a family to look after, you are not able to dedicate all of your time. If that is the case then dedicate some of your time. Dedicate as much time as you can from the free time that you have. Try to remove from your day those activities that are superfluous, those that do not bring you any benefit. Sleep less. Most of us do not need more than six hours of sleep a night. In this free time that you have try to learn more Arabic and learn more about the Din. At the same time carry to other Muslims this idea of the Islamic State. Show them what our Din truly is. Spend more time with the Quran. Learn its meanings and teach it to others. Insha Allah if we can do this, with the utmost sincerity to Allah (swt), then we would not be from the ones who make excuses.

Then Allah (swt) says “**and they who lied to Allah and His Messenger sat (at home)**”.

Here Allah (swt) continues to describe these hypocrites. He (swt) describes them as lying both to Him (swt) and to the Prophet (saw). Now how is it that they lie to Allah (swt) you may ask since they do not speak with Him (swt) directly? They lie to Allah (swt) by lying to the Prophet (saw) since he (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). They lied to the Prophet (saw) when they came to him (saw) and give him (saw) excuses as to why they could not come on the expedition. Imam Razi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that they were striving in their eloquence. In other words they were striving in their lying and their making excuses. They were striving in trying to get out of serving Allah (swt) and His (swt)’s Din. Thus not only did these hypocrites turn away from this path, but they were striving in their turning. They came to the Prophet (saw) with all kinds of excuses only in the hope that they could get out of marching forth in the Way of Allah (swt). See now how dark a heart can become when it turns away from Allah (swt). Not only would it do evil but it would strive in its evil. It would speak pure falsehood only in the hope of escaping it’s responsibility to its Creator. What could be a greater crime than lying to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw)? When you realize the Majesty and Tremendousness of your Lord then you will realize how evil it is to lie to Him (swt). To speak falsehood in and of itself is displeasing to Allah (swt), but now think how displeased He (swt) would be with a people who speak falsehood to His Messenger (saw) only in order to escape this responsibility. Now do you realize how much you must strive in order to save yourself from becoming like them?

Notice also how Allah (swt) once again describes these hypocrites as sitting. The Arabic word that Allah (swt) uses here gives meanings of idleness and inactivity. Of just sitting and waiting while time is passing. So from this we can take the lesson that laziness and lethargy are most displeasing to Allah (swt). He (swt) does not like to see people just sit and do nothing. Rather what He (swt) wants to see from you is that you strive with every moment of your life. With every moment of your life you strive to do an action that you believe will be pleasing to Him (swt). Now that the Islamic State has been destroyed we as an Ummah no longer have any free time. We do not have any time for leisure and enjoyment. We are in the same situation today that the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah were in. So we have to start working for what they worked for.

Once again if Shaitan comes and tells you that this life is not for you. That there are better paths for you to follow than this path. That you should focus on your career, your life, and your family. If he puts such thoughts in your heart then remind yourself of what Allah (swt) says in the last part of this ayah **“soon the ones who did kufr from them will be afflicted with a painful punishment”**. These Bedouins came to the Prophet (saw) with excuses. Some of them may truly have had genuine excuses, but most of them probably did not. The ones who did not were guilty of kufr. They were guilty of being ungrateful to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has given them. He (swt) created them, He (swt) gave them everything that they have, He (swt) sustained them for every moment of their existence, He (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to them and allowed them to hear His (swt)’s Divine Speech. For all this that He (swt) had done for them, could they not just march forward on this expedition? Could they not give some effort for this dawah? Could they not sacrifice some of their time and exert some amount of striving? For the Being that has done so much for them could they not work a little to establish His (swt)’s Law on the earth and carry His (swt)’s Message to mankind?

If they cannot even do this then are they not the worst of creatures. What else do they deserve for their laziness, their arrogance, their indifference, and their deception other than a painful punishment? A painful punishment. This is what Allah (swt) is promising for those who walk away from this path. This is what Allah (swt) is promising for those who make excuses. So we should always check ourselves. We must be honest with ourselves when we try to determine whether or not our excuses are valid. What we must always realize is that the world as it is now is not acceptable. We all have to do what we can to bring about a change. Now the best for every single one of us is different. Some of us are more burdened with responsibilities than others. So we just have to do our best. But what we cannot do is just sit back and think all is well. What we cannot do is just our lives only for ourselves. Only for our pleasure and our enjoyment. If we do this then in our minds we make up some excuse. If we do this then how different are we from these hypocrites? Allah (swt) has promised for those who turn away from this path a painful punishment. This is what we have to always remind ourselves of when Shaitan tries to take us away from this path.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا
يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾

91. There is not upon the weak, and the ill, and upon those who do not find anything to spend any blame if they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger, there is no way to find blame with those who have Ihsan, and Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

Allah (swt) told us in the previous ayah that He (swt) does not like excuses. He (swt) does not like those who walk away from this path of dawah and jihad. He (swt) does not like those refuse to do their part for His (swt)'s Din. He (swt) also threatened such people with a painful punishment. Now any believer at the time of the Prophet (saw) who heard only the previous ayah would have been terrified. They would always be thinking if they had done their part, and they would have been worried that they had not. Because they realized what were the terrible consequences of failing in this duty. Distance from Allah (swt) and a painful punishment. They would have almost been paralyzed with fear thinking that perhaps they had not lived up to this responsibility. That is why Allah (swt) revealed this ayah. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds them, and He (swt) reminds us as well, that He (swt) is the Forgiving and Pardoning. He (swt) reminds us that He (swt) will not burden anyone more than they can bear. He (swt) reminds us once again that all that He (swt) asks for from us is that we try our best.

In this ayah Allah (swt) gives us three categories of people who are excused from having to walk on this path. As we know walking on this path, making the effort to bring the Law of Allah to the earth and carrying His Message to the people, is a responsibility for every Muslim. These three categories of people are the only ones who are excused from this duty. But even for these people, Allah (swt) puts a condition first before they can be excused. He (swt) requires something of them, actually He (swt) requires this of all of us. This is the utmost sincerity to Him (swt).

The first category that Allah (swt) mentions are the weak. Those who are not able. The classical scholars tell us that this refers to the elderly, the young children, the blind, and the disabled. These are the only people who were excused from marching forth along with the Prophet (saw) and the believers on the Tabuk expedition. Everyone else had to go. Only these people who the journey and the battle would have been impossible for them were excused. For these people not only would it have been difficult but it would have been impossible, that is why in His (swt)'s Mercy and Love, Allah (swt) excused them. They were the ones who had genuine excuses unlike the hypocrites and those weak of faith whom Allah (swt) spoke about in the previous ayahs.

Notice also in this the level of closeness that the Sahabah had with Allah (swt) and how much they dreaded being in His (swt)'s displeasure. Even the elderly and the blind among them did not simply assume that since they were blind or elderly that meant that they were excused. They did not excuse themselves even though with their condition they could have been. Rather they assumed that they were not excused. They assumed that they had to march forth also. They needed Allah (swt) to reveal this ayah and tell them that they were excused. If Allah (swt) had not revealed this ayah then they would have marched forth despite their condition.

The next category that Allah (swt) mentions are the sick. These are those who have some illness which prevents them from making the journey and participating in the battle. This could be a physical illness of the body or a mental illness of the mind. Since Allah (swt) did not specify the kind of illness we can assume it is any kind of illness. Any disease or condition that prevents them from doing what this dawah needs of them. This could be a temporary illness that one hopes to be cured from, or it could a permanent and lifelong illness. Either of these would excuse one. On the account of their disease or their condition Allah (swt) excused such people.

This also serves to remind us once again how Allah (swt) sends down good and evil upon a people simultaneously. In other words if Allah (swt) touches you with some hardship or trial, at the same time He (swt) will give you some mercy or some dispensation. For example these people who were sick were probably suffering from their illness. But because of this same illness they were spared the suffering of the journey and the difficulty of the battle.

Allah then mentions **“those who do not find anything to spend”**. This refers to those who were extremely poor and who could not in any way find the means necessary for the journey or for the battle. All the soldiers who were marching forth with the Prophet (saw) needed to have some amount of wealth. They had to purchase weapons, supplies, and a mount. They also had to make sure that their families were taken care of while they were away. Many of the Muslims in Madinah were in a situation where they could not afford this. They had just barely enough to feed themselves and their families. They could not find anything to spend for this expedition. For all such people, Allah (swt) pardons them for not marching forward. He (swt) accepts their excuse.

However Allah (swt) also says **“if they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger”**. For all these people who were excused, Allah (swt) tells us here that they would only be excused if they were sincere to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). This means that they needed to have the sincere intention to serve Allah (swt). They needed to have the sincere intention to march forth on this path. They should have been sad and they should have regretted the fact that they were staying behind. It should not have brought them any relief or joy, rather it should only have brought them remorse. This shows us that before they submitted to Allah (swt) with their bodies and their wealth and their efforts, they should have submitted to Him (swt) with their hearts. They should have given themselves completely to Him (swt) and they should not have desired anything except to worship and serve Him (swt). Only if they fulfilled this condition would they be excused for not marching forth in this path.

From this we have to take a lesson for our lives as well. We have to remind ourselves once again that what is most important is our intention. We have to be sincere to Allah (swt). We have to work in this dawah only to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Not for being with our friends or for socializing or for a sense of belonging. First and foremost what matters is the sincerity to Allah (swt). Even for the ones who could not march forward in this path, Allah (swt) still required them to be from the sincere. No one can ever be excused from having this sincerity. This is why we have to always be checking ourselves. We need to read ayahs such as these so that they would be a constant reminder for us. In fact one of the best acts of servitude that we could do for Allah (swt) is to strive to return our intention for Him (swt) if it ever deviates.

Allah (swt) then says “**there is no way to find blame with those who have Ihsan**”. This part of the ayah further stresses the importance of sincerity to Allah (swt) in our intention. Not only is there no sin upon the one who has a sincere intention, despite whatever results might come from his striving, but there is also no way whatsoever that anyone can find any blame for him. Even if he is not able to walk this path, even if he is not able to speak with even one person about the Islamic State and of our responsibility to live under it, as long as he was absolutely sincere to Allah (swt), then he already has his reward. All that Allah (swt) wants from us is that we be among the people who have Ihsan. As we know this means to be conscious of Allah (swt), to live our lives in servitude of Him (swt) with the awareness of Him (swt) always in our hearts. We should not let a moment pass by except that we remember Allah (swt) in that moment and we strive to please Him (swt) in that moment. In the end this is what Allah (swt) wants from us. If we can do this then Allah (swt) tells us clearly here that there is no blame upon us, meaning there is no sin upon us. We will not become distant from Him (swt) and we will not make ourselves liable for punishment from Him (swt). What could be more important than this? What could be more important than keeping ourselves away from the Wrath of the Lord? The only way in which we could do this is if we build within ourselves this Ihsan. This consciousness of Allah (swt). Look at the beauty of the language in this ayah. Allah (swt) says that for the people who have Ihsan there is to be no blame whatsoever. There is no path or no way for anyone to find any blame on them. This is because they have dedicated themselves to Allah (swt) with what matters the most and that is their hearts. Everything else that they do only flows from this.

However we have to be honest with ourselves. We cannot say that we are sincere to Allah (swt) and then allow ourselves to be lazy. We cannot say that we have the intention and then not make the effort. We have to always check ourselves. We have to make sure that we are doing the best that we can do. If we ever find ourselves becoming lazy. If we ever see that we are falling back then we have to strive to bring ourselves back. Once we are certain that we are doing our best, even if it may not be much, even if it may not bring back the Islamic State tomorrow, then we can have a hope that Allah (swt) is not displeased with us. But we have to try our best. We have to do the most that we can do to help the Ummah reach this goal.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us once again that He (swt) is Forgiving Merciful. First this statement was intended for those at the time of the Prophet (saw). As we mentioned the Sahabah were at a state where no matter what they did for the Din, they always thought that they did not do enough. They realized the Majesty and the Glory and the Tremendousness of their Lord. As a consequence of this they realized how important it was for His Law to rule the earth and for His Message to reach the people. Because of this love and this reverence for Allah (swt) they always wanted to do more and more for His Din. No matter what they did it was never enough. This was why even the elderly and the crippled among them wanted to march forth in jihad beside the Prophet (saw). They did not give themselves any excuses from walking on this path. But of course these could not go. Their bodies were just not capable. That is why in this ayah Allah (swt) excused them. But despite this allowance that they had been given to remain behind, some of them may still have feared that they were even a little bit in the displeasure of their Lord. They still feared that perhaps, perchance, Allah (swt) was somewhat displeased with them because they did not march forth with the Prophet (saw). This is why Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding them that surely He (swt) is Forgiving Merciful. In the language of the ayah even the word “and” does not appear between these two Names of our Lord. This is to show us how closely connected the Mercy and the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) are to each other. When we sin, when we fall short in our worship of Him (swt), which is always, then still His Forgiveness descends upon us, and along with His Forgiveness comes His Mercy. Despite our sins, despite our shortcomings, He (swt) still continues to pour forth His (swt)’s bounties upon us. He (swt) provides us with sustenance, He (swt) keeps us safe from harm, He (swt) eases the pain of our bodies, He (swt) protects us from our enemies, and He (swt) gives us more time on this earth with which we may use to come even closer to Him (swt). This is the Lord that we have. So we should never lose hope and despair. Even if we are not able to do much. Even if we are not able to restore the Islamic State tomorrow. We should still have a hope that He (swt) will forgive us our shortcomings. But we have to try our best for Him (swt). So Sublime and Tremendous is He (swt) that He (swt) does not deserve anything less.

وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا
أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا
يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

92. Nor (is their blame) upon those who when they came to you so that you may carry them, you said “I cannot find that which on to carry you”, they turned away while their eyes filled with tears out of grief that they could not find anything to spend.

This ayah was revealed in response to a specific incident that happened at the time of the Prophet (saw). As we know the Prophet (saw) called on every Muslim man who was able to march forth with him (saw) on the expedition to Tabuk. The true believers came forward and the hypocrites made excuses and stayed behind. The elderly and the disabled wanted to come, but they were not able to because the journey would have been impossible for them. So Allah (swt) excused them. In His (swt)'s Mercy He (swt) does not burden any soul more than it can bear. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to another group of Muslims that He (swt) excused from Tabuk. These believers also wanted to march forth with Prophet (saw) but they too were not able to, so Allah (swt) excused them as well. However what is most important for us in this ayah is not that these believers were excused, but it is their response to their being excused. Their response to their being excused from walking this path.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**Nor (is their blame) upon those who when they came to you so that you may carry them, you said ‘I cannot find that which on to carry you’**”. This part of the ayah was revealed when a group of Muslims came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) for mounts on which they could ride to Tabuk. The Prophet (saw) could not grant their request because horses, camels, and mules were in short supply at that time. Most of the people in Madinah were poor farmers and they did not have such mounts which could carry them on this long journey. The Prophet (saw) himself could not provide them with such mounts because the resources of the Islamic State were extremely limited.

One lesson that we can take from this is that we as an Ummah must build up our material resources and financial resources just we build up our human resources. We should seek to gain a fair portion of the wealth in this world so that we can use it in the Way of Allah (swt). Today there are many youth who are sincere and willing to work for this dawah, but they do not have any money to look after themselves or their families. So if you are not able to work for this dawah directly by investing your time in carrying the idea of the Islamic State to the Muslims, then at least you should invest your money in these youth. You should seek to increase your wealth in this world so that it can be used in the dawah. Whether to publish literature or finance the dawah carriers. This dawah is in need of all that you can offer. So seek your portion of this world by looking for the best paying job or the most lucrative business. Endeavor in that and consider it as part of your servitude to Allah (swt). Most importantly do not use the money that you get from that for yourself but rather use it for Allah (swt). For supporting His (swt)'s Din. Even any surplus money that you have, try to use it to help this Din. Look at this ayah at how the Prophet (saw) could not even find horses for these sincere believers who came to him (saw). This shows us how he (saw) exhausted all of his wealth and all of his resources as well as all of the wealth and resources of the State for this cause.

Then Allah (swt) tells us what was the reaction of these believers when the Prophet (saw) told them that he (saw) did not have any mounts for them. He (swt) says **“they turned away while their eyes filled with tears out of grief that they could not find anything to spend”**. This was what actually happened. When these believers found out that they could not go on the expedition because there were no mounts to carry them they started crying. They cried so much that their eyes filled with tears. These were grown men and still they were crying like this. They were not crying because one of their children had passed away or because they had lost a fortune. Rather they only were crying because they could not march forth with the Prophet (saw) on this path. This was how much they loved Allah (swt). This was how much they yearned to serve His (swt)'s Din. They recognized the weight of the responsibility on their necks. They realized how important it was for the Law of Allah (swt) to rule the earth and for all mankind to properly receive His (swt)'s Message. They wanted to do their part. This was why they were

overcome with grief when they found out that they would not be able to participate. Moreover they were a people who lived for Allah (swt). They lived for Allah (swt) and they knew that nothing brought His (swt)'s Pleasure more than striving in this path. They knew that dawah and jihad were by far the most beloved of acts to Him (swt). This was why they were overcome with grief when they were denied the opportunity to walk on this path.

Also note how Allah (swt) does not say that they were sad because they could not march forth with the Prophet (saw), but rather He (swt) says that they were sad because they could not find anything to spend. First of all they were poor so they had no money or resources to give. But then on top of that because they were denied even going out on the expedition they could not even spend their time and their efforts for this dawah. There was nothing that they could do. There was nothing that they could give. This was why they were so sad.

How many Muslims today are like this? How many Muslims today have this concern for the dawah? Does it bother you at all that today the Islamic State does not exist? Does it bother you at all that this Message is not being carried correctly to the vast majority of mankind? Does it bother you at all that the Muslims are suffering and being oppressed? Does it bother you at all that the Law of Allah (swt) is not being implemented and that which is displeasing to Him (swt) exists on the earth and that which is pleasing to Him (swt) does not exist? Most of all does it bother you that you are not able to do anything about it? If you are not walking on this path at this moment, if you are not making this effort, then this should bother you. It should grieve you and make you sad. You should wish that you could do more for this dawah. You should wish to bring back the Islamic State. The Prophet (saw) has told us that for any evil, the very least is that we should hate it in our hearts. He (saw) said that such was the lowest level of Iman. A higher level of course is trying to change it with your tongue or your hand. So the lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must try to be like these sincere believers who walked away from the Prophet (saw) crying. We must never think that we have done enough for Allah (swt). Rather we should feel sad at our shortcomings. If we are not working full-time as part of an Islamic movement that is endeavoring to bring back the State then this should generate remorse within us. We should wish to reach that level, and we should aspire and prepare towards it.

﴿ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا
 مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

93. The only path (for blame) is on those who ask permission of you (to remain behind) while they were self-sufficient, they were content to be with those who remained behind, and Allah has sealed their hearts so that they do not know.

In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again who are the ones that are not excused from walking on this path. Who are the ones on whom blame is to be attached, the ones on whom sin is to be attached. In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) had told us about those who were excused from walking on this path. The ones on whom there would be no blame or sin if they remained behind. Here Allah (swt) tells us of those on whom the sin must be attached. Allah (swt) describes them for us so that we may know them well, so that we may save ourselves from ever becoming like them. Allah (swt) also reminds us in this ayah what He (swt) has done to them as a consequence of their turning away from Him (swt). Once you truly realize the severity and the magnitude of this punishment then you will realize how much you must strive to save yourself from becoming like them.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah **“The only path (for blame) is on those who ask permission of you (to remain behind) while they were self-sufficient”**. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) had told us that there was no path or way to find blame with those who remained behind when they had a legitimate excuse. Although all the sincere believers wanted to march forth with the Prophet (saw) on this path, not all of them were able to. They all truly did have legitimate excuses, such as being elderly or sick, or because they could not find the means to finance themselves for the expedition. So there was no way that anyone could find blame with these believers on account of their remaining behind. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us who are the only people on whom blame can be attached. Notice the Arabic word *inama* with which Allah (swt) begins this ayah. This word denotes complete exclusivity. With this word Allah (swt) is saying that it is only this group that can be blamed. Only this group and not one else.

Allah (swt) then describes this group for us so that we may know them well and also so that we may save ourselves from ever becoming like them. Allah (swt) describes them as the ones who ask permission to remain behind even though they are self-sufficient. By describing them as self-sufficient Allah (swt) means that they have what they need for the expedition. They have the wealth to purchase weapons, supplies, and mounts. They also have enough wealth to look after their families when they are gone. They also have the physical bodies which are capable of the journey and the battle. In other words they are not elderly or disabled. Note that Allah (swt) does not mean by this word that they are rich or wealthy. He (swt) only means that they have enough to sustain themselves for the journey. Even if they only have enough money to purchase their weapons and mounts, and just enough to look after their families for a few weeks, then this would qualify them as being self-sufficient. Yet despite this fact that they were able to march forth on the expedition, they came to the Prophet (saw) with excuses to remain behind. Allah (swt) tells us in this that it is only such people that blame can be attached. These are the people who are sinning by their choosing not to walk this path.

What then is the key difference between these two groups? The group that Allah (swt) pardoned and the one that He (swt) did not pardon. They both remained behind. They both did not walk this path. So what then was the difference between them? Is it simply that one of them had wealth and the other did not? No actually the difference is far greater than that. The difference goes back to their hearts, it goes back to their intentions. One of these groups had a sincere intention to go forth and the other did not. The sincere believers only stayed behind because their bodies were too frail or because they were disabled or because they could not find the means. The hypocrites however had all of these. They only stayed behind because they did not want to go in the first place. Their excuses were all lies. The sole reason why they did not go was because they did not want to go. They did not want to worship and serve their Creator. They did not want to serve His Din. Even though Allah (swt) had blessed their bodies with strength and ability. Even though He (swt) had given them enough wealth to purchase weapons, mounts, and to look after their families. Even though He (swt) had made them self-sufficient. They repaid His (swt)'s generosity by turning away from Him (swt).

The lesson that we can take from this is that if Allah (swt) has made us self-sufficient then we have to use this gift in order to serve Him (swt). If we do not then we would also be among those on whom blame is attached. Blame from Him (swt). Today since there is no Islamic State it is not a requirement for us to march out in jihad like these early Muslims had to do. All that is required of us is to continue our study of this Din, and at the same time to carry to other Muslims this idea of the Islamic State. We must make the Ummah realize the need for a State and they must desire it. This is all that is required for those of us who are not actually working within a movement. Now do we today have the means with which we can do this? Of course we do. Most of us who have the free time which we can dedicate to learning the Din. Most of us do not work seven days a week, eighteen hours a day. We have the time and this time is our means. Most of us also have a small amount of wealth in excess which we can use to learn the Din. After we have put food on the table and provided a roof to cover our hearts, we still have a small amount of money that we can use to study the Din. Most of us also live in lands where we are still allowed to speak what is on our minds. This privilege still has not be taken away. So Allah (swt) has given us the means by which we can do what we have to do. Once we have the means then we do not have any excuse. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah the blame, the sin, is upon those who have the means but who still remain behind.

Then Allah (swt) continues to describe the hypocrites by saying “**they were content to be with those who remained behind**”. This is why the blame is upon them. It is not because they did not march forward. There were others who did not march forward but they were pardoned. They were pardoned because they had a desire to go forth but they only remained behind because they were not able to. These hypocrites on the other hand were content to remain behind. They were happy that they did not go forth on this path with the Prophet (saw) and the sincere believers. This then is what we also have to save ourselves from. This contentment and satisfaction at our inactivity. What is even worse than our turning away from this path is our being pleased with ourselves because we did. We must never be pleased with ourselves. We should always wish that we could do more for Allah (swt). For His (swt)’s Din. As we see from the ayah, this contentment and self-satisfaction is what He (swt) is displeased with.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again what was the punishment that He (swt) gave to the hypocrites because they chose to remain behind. Because they were content in remaining behind. He (swt) says that He (swt) sealed their hearts. Now we know that Allah (swt) is the One Who turns hearts. Sometimes He (swt) turns hearts towards Him (swt) and sometimes He (swt) turns them away from Him (swt). He (swt) guides to Him (swt) those who seek Him (swt) and He (swt) allows to go astray those who turn away from Him (swt). But for these hypocrites, not only did Allah (swt) turn their hearts away from Him (swt), but He (swt) sealed their hearts. He (swt) turned their hearts away and then He (swt) sealed them. Once a thing has been sealed by Allah (swt) then is there any chance for it to ever be opened again? This was the fate of these hypocrites who chose to stay away from this path of dawah and jihad and who were content doing so. Their hearts were sealed. This means that they can never return again to a state of Iman. Do you realize how terrifying this is? It means that they will die on kufr. It means that they will die with this hypocrisy in their hearts. We know what awaits in the Hereafter for those who die on kufr. The lowest levels of the Fire for all eternity. May Allah (swt) save us and our families from it!

Notice also how Allah (swt) says that because of their hearts being sealed they do not know. In other words their lack of knowledge is a consequence of their hearts being sealed. So far have they gone astray, that despite the fact that they are Muslims, they have no knowledge of the true reality of this existence. They do not know that Allah (swt) is there and that He (swt) is watching them right at this moment. They do not know that this life is only a test to see how well they worship and serve their Creator. They do not know that the Day of Judgment is coming very soon and they do not know what will happen on that Day. They do not know that there is a Garden and a Fire. They do not know that even in this life there is the peace and tranquility of being in the Divine Presence, and the anxiety and the restlessness of being away from it. They do not know any of this, nor will they ever know it. This knowledge has been removed from their hearts and it will never enter it again. Even if they listen to the Quran again and again, they will never have this knowledge. Their hearts have been sealed. The doors are closed. This is the consequence of their walking away from this dawah.

يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ قُلْ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا
لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ قَدْ نَبَأْنَا اللَّهُ مِنْ آخْبَارِكُمْ وَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ
عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

94. They will present their excuses to you when you return to them. Say “Do not make excuses, we will never believe you, surely Allah has informed us of news concerning you, soon Allah and His Messenger will observe your actions, then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen and He will inform you of all that you do”.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to show us just how displeased He (swt) is with the hypocrites. The ones who choose not to walk on this path of dawah and jihad. The ones who are content being “moderate” Muslims. This ayah was revealed when the Prophet (saw) and the believers were returning home from the expedition to Tabuk. Allah (swt) shows us how these hypocrites reacted to the return of the Muslim army. Most likely they were not even expecting the army to return in the first place, but when they saw the army they tried to save their reputations. For these hypocrites as we mentioned previously, not only are they cowards but they are also arrogant and proud. They hate when they are blamed or censured in any way.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying **“They will present their excuses to you when you return to them”**. Before the Muslims actually returned to Madinah from the Tabuk expedition, Allah (swt) told them exactly what would happen upon their return. Allah (swt) prepared them beforehand by telling them exactly what to expect from these hypocrites. So the Muslims knew that the hypocrites would come to them with excuses. These hypocrites love to make excuses, it is part of their nature. They will come to the Prophet (saw) and the believers with excuses as to why they could not accompany them in the expedition. They will try to say whatever lie it is that they can think of. They only care about saving themselves.

In response to these hypocrites and their excuses, Allah (swt) commands the believers to say **“Do not make excuses, we will never believe you, surely Allah has informed us of news concerning you”**. Just look at the language in this response. Look how much sternness and harshness it contains. This alone is enough to show us just how displeased Allah (swt) is with these people. First Allah (swt) tells them flat out not to make excuses. Allah (swt) Knows that whatever they are going to say is a lie. Whatever they are going to say is a baseless excuse. So He (swt) does not even want to hear it, and He (swt) does not want the Prophet (saw) and the believers to hear it. Why should their precious time be wasted listening to such falsehood?

Notice how Allah (swt) even specifically commands the Prophet (saw) to say to these hypocrites that they will never be believed. The reason why they will not be believed is because Allah (swt) has already informed the Prophet (saw) concerning them. Allah (swt) has already informed the Prophet (saw) concerning what was in their hearts. He (swt) told the Prophet (saw) how they hated to submit to Him (swt). How they were a people who were slaves of their desires. How striving in this path for the sake of Allah (swt) was something that was despised for them. How what was in their hearts was the opposite of what they said with their tongues. Allah (swt) informed the Prophet (saw) about all of this. The Prophet (saw) then informed the believers who were with him (saw).

So we can see from this here just how displeased Allah (swt) was with these people who chose not to march forth on this path of dawah and jihad. Let us remind ourselves once again that they are Muslims. They have said the Shahadah, they pray the five daily prayers, they fast in Ramadan, and they make the pilgrimage. Their only crime was that when the call was sounded to march forth in this path, they did not find the courage and the determination to go. This was enough to bring down the Wrath of Allah (swt) upon them to such an extent. Allah (swt) was displeased with them to such an extent that He (swt) did not even want to hear their excuses. Even He (swt) revealed to the Prophet (saw) and the believers the true nature of these people and He (swt) commanded them to stay away from them. This was how displeased Allah (swt) was with them. How much then should we strive to save ourselves from becoming like them? How much should we strive to support this effort in whatever way that we can?

Allah (swt) then commands the Prophet (saw) to say to these hypocrites “**soon Allah and His Messenger will observe your actions**”. This part of the ayah is actually a mercy for them. It is true that they had done a great wrong by turning away from this path. It is true that they had done a great wrong by choosing to remain behind and not support this effort. It is true that they had done a great wrong by lying to the Prophet (saw) and coming up with baseless excuses. But in His Mercy Allah (swt) gives them one more chance. He (swt) tells them that He (swt) is going to continue to observe their actions. To see if they change their ways. To see if they return to this path. Allah (swt) is going to observe them and so is the Prophet (saw). They will have to prove themselves to their Lord and to His Messenger. This is one more chance that they are being given. This is the Mercy of our Lord even for such people.

If we are among those who have not done our fair share for this dawah then we have to realize that Allah (swt) is speaking to us here as well. He (swt) is telling us that all hope is not lost. As long as we are alive in this world, as long as we are still Muslims, as long as we still read the Quran, then there is hope. From this moment onwards Allah (swt) is going to observe our actions carefully to see if we change our ways. If we go from a station of inactivity where we are not supporting this effort at all to a station of activity where we are doing our part. We do not need to bring the Islamic State tomorrow, we just need to realize this goal and strive to the best of our ability towards attaining it. Even if our best is only a word that is spoken, a dollar that is spent, or a book that is read. At every moment Allah (swt) is observing it all.

Finally Allah (swt) says “**then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen and He will inform you of all that you do**”. This will be the end for all of us. We will all return to the One Who Knows the Unseen and the Seen. Notice how Allah (swt) mentions the Unseen before the Seen because for Him (swt) this is what matters more. More than the actions of our limbs, He (swt) looks at the intention in our hearts. Of course we must still try our best to do all of our responsibilities with our tongue and our limbs, but even more important than that we have to always check the intention in our hearts. Have we dedicated ourselves completely to Allah (swt)? Is all that we seek in everything that we do His (swt)’s Pleasure? We have a short time remaining in which Allah (swt) will observe our actions. Then we are returning to Him (swt).

Once we return to Allah (swt) then He (swt) will inform us of all we used to do. In other words on that Day when we are standing before our Lord, the topic of the conversation will be our actions in this world. So look to your actions in this world. Look to how you are spending the moments of your life. Try and picture that scale on the Day of Judgment. Do you see it filled with good deeds or evil deeds? Are you certain that you have enough actions that you have done sincerely for Allah (swt)? Now that you realize the comprehensive nature of our Din. Now that you realize the onus that is upon you to help in this effort. Do you think that you have done enough?

سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِيُتَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ
 إِنَّهُمْ رِجْسٌ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

95. They will swear by Allah for you when you return to them in order that you may turn away from them, so turn away from them, surely they are unclean, and their final abode is Hell, a recompense for what they used to earn.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to relate to the Prophet (saw) and the believers the response of the hypocrites to their returning from Tabuk. Despite its difficulty, the Tabuk expedition was successful and now the Muslims were returning home to Madinah. Even as they were returning they knew that there were those in their community who had committed this sin. This sin of remaining behind when the call to jihad was sounded. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells them what should be their response to such people. In this there is a lesson for us as well. Our Lord is teaching us how to behave with those who turn away from Him (swt). Those who turn away from this responsibility of dawah and jihad. We should pay extremely close attention to what Allah (swt) is telling us here. Because unfortunately today in our community there are many such people. Allah (swt) is telling us here how we can save ourselves from becoming like these people. Save ourselves from being in His (swt)'s Wrath. Save ourselves from the Fire of Hell for all eternity. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to learn the lesson!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying **“They will swear by Allah for you when you return to them in order that you may turn away from them”**. Here Allah (swt) describes the hypocrites as coming to the believers and swearing by His (swt)’s Name. They have no regard for the Divine Name of their Lord. They do not give this Name the reverence and the respect that it deserves. Rather they use it to serve their own selfish motives, in order to add some level of credibility to their falsehood. Allah (swt) tells us here that the reason why these hypocrites are swearing is so that the Prophet (saw) and the believers would turn away from them. Turn away from the sin that they did. The hypocrites knew the sin that they committed. They knew how they stayed behind when the call for jihad was sounded. They knew what they did. They also knew that the Prophet (saw) and the believers saw what they did. Now they want the Prophet (saw) and the believers to turn away from their sin. They do not want to be punished for it. They do not want even to be censured for it. They are a people who are filled with such arrogance and pride that they do not want to be criticized in any way. So they came to the Prophet (saw) with excuses as to why they had stayed behind. Of course these excuses were all lies. But even though they were lying and they knew that they were lying they still put the Name of Allah (swt) in front of what they said. Do you now realize how evil a people they are? Not only do they walk away from this path of dawah and jihad, not only do they make excuses because they cannot accept any kind of criticism, not only are they overflowing with arrogance and pride, but they would even mention the Name of the Real and the True, the Majestic and the Glorious, in these oaths of falsehood.

One observation that we can make from this is to see how whenever Allah (swt) mentions the hypocrites, He (swt) tells us how they swear by Him (swt). Never in the Quran does Allah (swt) speak of the believers or the righteous as swearing by His Name. This is because the ones who have knowledge know the Greatness of Allah (swt)’s Name. They know that it is not a simple matter to swear by it. Only the hypocrites and those weak of faith swear vainly by this Name. Today as well there are many Muslims who swear frequently by the Name of the Real and the True. Sometimes only to make some money they would swear by this Name or even lie by this Name. They make these swears without even thinking about the One Whom they are swearing by. May Allah (swt) save us from this! From ever using His Name in vain oaths!

Notice also in the ayah how Allah (swt) says that the hypocrites make these oaths “for you”. The pronoun “you” here refers to the Prophet (saw) and the believers. So these hypocrites did not make these oaths for Allah (swt) or for themselves, rather they only made it for the Prophet (saw) and for the believers. It was only to make the Prophet (saw) and the believers happy. It was only to prevent them from criticizing them. To make the believers turn away from the sin that they had committed. Once again we see that they have no sincerity whatsoever in what they do. Everything that they do is only to please others. None of their acts are dedicated wholly and sincerely to Allah (swt). They have become distant from the Real and the True. All that they see is the people around them. All that they care about is the people around them. Their hearts are always worried about what others will think of them but never about what their Lord will think of them. This is the essential characteristic of the hypocrite, if you find any of this in you then strive to clean yourself of it.

These hypocrites wanted the Prophet (saw) and the believers to turn away from what they had done. That is why Allah (swt) says in the next part of the ayah “**so turn away from them**”. Allah (swt) gives them what they wanted. He (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) and the believers to turn away from what they had done. This means that they would not be punished in any way. They would not even be censured in any way. Their excuses would be accepted and it would be as if they had not committed any sin at all. But of course they had indeed committed a great sin, so why then does Allah (swt) command the Prophet (saw) and the believers to turn away from what they had done? It is because this world is not a place of punishment. The true place of punishment is in the Hereafter. This is what Allah (swt) wanted for these hypocrites who had turned away from Him (swt) and from striving in His (swt)’s Cause. He (swt) wanted the punishment of the Hereafter for them. Because if they were punished in this life then this might make them change their ways. This might make them realize the Truth and try and come back to the Straight Path. Allah (swt) did not want this for them. He (swt) has sealed their fate. So they should be allowed to enjoy themselves in this life without any censure or blame in order that they may not realize the enormity of the evil that they had done. Then at the moment of their deaths, they will realize the true reality that they had made themselves blind to.

If we compare this ayah with the previous ayah we see that there are indeed two groups among the hypocrites. Those whose excuses were not accepted and those whose excuses were accepted. The previous ayah spoke about the former of these groups and this ayah speaks of the latter. As we know there is a lesser hypocrisy and a greater hypocrisy. The lesser hypocrisy is when one does believe but their faith is weak, and the greater is where one does not even believe. The previous ayah spoke of the former of these groups and this ayah speaks of the latter. The latter group is the one which includes the likes of Abdullah bin Ubayy. Those who hated Islam and worked towards its destruction. These are the ones whom Allah (swt) will never accept their repentance. Because with these hypocrites, it was not simply that they were weak and overcome with their desires, but their problem is that they had no genuine desire to submit to Allah (swt). On the contrary they hated this Message that Allah (swt) had sent and they worked to destroy it. These are the hypocrites whom Allah (swt) allowed them to just be in this world. No punishment or censure would they receive. Their recompense is waiting for them in the next world. As for the other group of hypocrites whom Allah (swt) spoke about in the previous ayah. He (swt) wanted them to realize their mistake. Since they had some traces of Iman in their heart, He (swt) wanted them to make an effort to change their ways. To return to this path of dawah and jihad. This was why He (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) and the believers not to accept their excuses, and He (swt) said that He (swt) was going to observe their actions. To see if they would return to Him (swt) or if they would persist in their hypocrisy.

Allah (swt) then says about those who suffer from a greater form of hypocrisy that “**surely they are unclean**”. The Arabic *rijs* that Allah (swt) uses here does not only mean “unclean”, but it also means “impure” and “contaminated”. Something that is stained with the filth of this world. This was the reality of these hypocrites, they were as filthy as filthy can be. It was not so much a physical impurity that they had where their bodies were not clean, rather it was a spiritual impurity. Their hearts were filled with everything except Allah (swt). They spent their time, all their hours and their days, thinking about everything except Him (swt). Our hearts were created for Allah (swt). He (swt) created our hearts so that He (swt) may be remembered and glorified by them. But these hypocrites had emptied their hearts of Allah (swt), and they had filled them with

everything else besides Him (swt). Even though were in the company of the believers, even though they had the Prophet (saw) with them, even though they heard the Speech of Allah (swt). None of this had any affect on them. Allah (swt) had called them towards Him (swt) again and again, and they have chosen to turn away from Him (swt) again and again. They have chosen to occupy themselves with everything except Him (swt). This is why they are an unclean people. Their hearts are contaminated with everything other than their Lord. May Allah (swt) save us from ever having such hearts!

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying **“and their final abode is Hell, a recompense for what they used to earn”**. This is the reason why Allah (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to turn away from these hypocrites had done. This is the reason why Allah (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to accept their excuses. Allah (swt) wants them to enjoy themselves in this world more and more. So that they would become more and more heedless. So that they would accumulate more and more sins. Once their lives were over then Hell was waiting for them. This Hell was only a consequence for what they used to earn. They earned sin by not marching with the Prophet (saw) and the believers on the expedition to Tabuk. They earned sin by choosing not to support this dawah. For all those moments in their life that they lived for themselves instead of living for Allah (swt). Instead of spending their time remembering Him (swt) and striving to aid His (swt)'s Cause, they spend their time in heedlessness of Him (swt) working only for themselves and their desires. Because of this choice that they made this Hell is what they earned. When you realize the Tremendousness and the Sublimity and the absolute Perfection of your Lord then you will realize how terrible a sin it is to turn away from Him (swt). So great is this crime that the only fitting punishment for it is eternal damnation. May Allah (swt) save us and our families from this fate! May He (swt) enable us to do what we can to support this effort!

يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِن تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ
 الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾

96. They swear for you in order that you may be pleased with them, so if you are pleased with them then Allah is not pleased with the transgressing people.

This is truly a terrifying ayah. In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us how He (swt) is not only displeased with the hypocrites who refuse to walk on this path, but He (swt) is even displeased with those who are pleased with them. Now do you see how important it is for all Muslims to dedicate themselves to this life of dawah and jihad? This path is so important for Allah (swt) that not only does He (swt) not like those who turn away from it, but He (swt) does not even like those who are content with those who turn away from it. So if you as a Muslim do your responsibility in this dawah, but you are content or pleased with other Muslims who do not, even this is not pleasing to Allah (swt). This is how angry He (swt) is with those who turn away from this path.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**They swear for you in order you may be pleased with them**”. The hypocrites focus only on the life of this world. They exert their efforts only for the life of this world. Here Allah (swt) shows us one aspect of this when He (swt) tells us how they try to please the believers. It is very important for the hypocrites that their brothers and their family be pleased with them. They do not want to accept any kind of censure or blame. So they will swear to the believers that they are indeed with them. That they do indeed believe in this Message, that they do indeed love Allah (swt) and desire to serve Him (swt), that they do indeed love the Prophet (saw) and desire to follow him (saw). They will speak whatever it is that will please the believers. But of course it is all lies, none of what they say is reflected in their actions. If they truly love Allah (swt) and desire to serve Him (swt) then how can they just be silent when the Law of Allah (swt) is not being implemented? If they truly love the Prophet (saw) and desire to follow him (saw) then why do they not complete the mission that he (saw) gave his life for? The reason for this is because these are a people who only care for this world, nothing else. The reality of their hearts is the opposite of what they swear to with their tongues

Then Allah (swt) says **“so if you are pleased with them then Allah is not pleased with the transgressing people”**. This part of the ayah is what is truly terrifying. Now the hypocrites, the ones who choose to walk away from this path, are striving and swearing in order for us be pleased with them. In order for us not to blame them for their walking away from this path. Now what Allah (swt) is telling us here is that if we are convinced by their arguments. If we think that it is acceptable for a Muslim not to walk on this path even after they know of its responsibility, then we would be a transgressing people. We would be a transgressing people only because we are pleased with them. Even if we ourselves may do dawah, even if we ourselves may strive hard in this effort. Just by our being pleased with those who turn away, we would be sinning.

Of course the lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must never be pleased with anyone who walks away from this path. As we mentioned there are many Muslims who are simply ignorant of this duty. They think that Islam is only prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage. For such it may be acceptable if they do not join this effort. Their ignorance may be an excuse for them. Then there are other Muslims who have such a difficult condition in life that working in this dawah is simply not feasible for them. These are the ones who are extremely poor, or extremely ill, or those who have to work day and night only to make enough to feed their families. For such Muslims, Allah (swt) may excuse them because of their situation in life, He (swt) Knows of their condition even better than they do. But for those Muslims who do have the time, who do have the ability, who do know of this responsibility, Allah (swt) is not at all pleased with them, and He (swt) is not pleased with any believer who is pleased with them.

However it is also important for us to realize that we cannot use this ayah to hate any of our Muslim brothers or sisters who are not working in this dawah. The Prophet (saw) has told us that we need to make seventy excuses for our brother, so if ever we see someone who is not walking on this path, then we must try our best to make excuses for them. Perhaps they have a large family to support. Perhaps they have parents who are elderly and extremely ill. Perhaps they are working in this path and we just do not know it. These are the kind of excuses that we must be making for them. We must never make excuses for ourselves but we must make excuses for our brothers and sisters. This is what Allah (swt) likes.

So the lesson that we take from this ayah is not to hate our brothers, but it is to realize how displeasing it is to Allah (swt) for us to walk away from this path. Even if someone we know has walked away from this path, we should not hate them as a person but we should hate what they have done. We have to strive to maintain that balance of where we hate sin and at the same time try to maintain the unity of our community and the love between all Muslims. So for our part we should try our best to encourage all of our brothers and sisters to participate more in the dawah, to be more serious about the Din, and to come closer to Allah (swt). At the same time if we find that they do not, if we find that they continue to live only for this world, then we can be displeased with that choice of theirs but at the same time we must not hate them. We must still remember that they are our brothers and sisters, and we must try to maintain the love that we have for them. Not for their sake but for the sake of Allah (swt).

The ruling that Allah (swt) gives in this ayah is even more difficult to implement today than it was at the time of the Prophet (saw). In Madinah at the time of the Prophet (saw), the hypocrites and the ones who chose not to participate in this dawah were the minority and the sincere believers who did work in this path were the majority. Today this is reversed. Today the sad reality is that the vast majority of Muslims are not involved in the dawah. It would not be an exaggeration to say that 99% of the Muslims today are not involved in the dawah. So what should the few of us who have dedicated our lives to the Din do with these people? Should we hate them because they are not working for their Lord? Or should we forgive them and be pleased with them? On the one hand Allah (swt) has commanded us to be forgiving with our brothers and to make excuses for them, and in this ayah He (swt) commands us not to be pleased with those who turn away from this path. So we believe the correct course of action is to hate the sin and not the sinner. In other words, for individual Muslims who we know for sure are not working in the dawah, we do not hate them as a person, but we do hate the choice that they made in turning away from this path. We hate what they did and not who they are. Instead of this leading to animosity between us and them we should rather love them even more, and try even harder to convince them to join us in our efforts. Allah (swt) Knows best!

الْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا وَأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا
 أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾

97. The Bedouins of the desert are the worst in kufr and hypocrisy, and more likely not to know the limits of what Allah revealed to his Messenger, and Allah is Knowing, Wise.

So far in this Surah we have seen that there are two groups of people. Those who dedicate themselves to Allah (swt) and those who turn away from Him (swt). Those who spend their lives serving the Cause of Allah (swt) and those who spend their lives for other than Him (swt). Those who wish to see Allah (swt) rule over this earth and those who are content with allowing man to rule. These are the two paths ahead of us. The path of dawah and jihad, and the path of other than that. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to one of the main differences between these two paths.

Allah (swt) begins by saying “**The Bedouins of the desert are the worst in kufr and hypocrisy**”. At the time of the Prophet (saw), there were two kinds of people. The city-dwellers and the Bedouins of the desert. The Bedouins were a nomadic people. They would travel the desert lands with their herds of cattle and sheep. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about such people that they are the worst in hypocrisy and kufr. In other words they are the most distant from Him (swt). They are the ones who are most in love with the life of this world. They are the ones who spend most of their time thinking of other than Him (swt). Why does Allah (swt) say this? What is it about the Bedouins that had made them so distant from their Lord? It was only their lack of knowledge. They did not have any knowledge of Allah (swt). Most of them did not take the time to gain knowledge of this Din, to gain knowledge of Allah (swt). They never sat with the Prophet (saw) to learn the Quran with him (saw) like the Sahabah (ra) did. That was why most of them chose the path of hypocrisy and ingratitude instead of the path of dawah and jihad. They only saw the life of this world in the choices that they made. So we see that the essential difference between these two paths is Knowledge of the Divine. Allah (swt) even tells us in other ayahs of the Quran that the only ones who fear Him (swt) are those with knowledge.

Allah (swt) then tells us of these hypocrites how they are “**more likely not to know the limits of what Allah revealed to his Messenger**”. The word “limits” here refers to the Shariah or the Sacred Law. These are the limits which Allah (swt) revealed for mankind. They show man how to live. They let him know what are the limits that he needs to abide by. The reality of the Sacred Law is that is nothing but limits. Man is free to live in this world as he pleases just as long as he restricts his behavior according to these limits. Restricting his behavior according to these limits means that he has to perform all of the actions that Allah (swt) has commanded him to and he has to stay away from everything that Allah (swt) has forbidden him from. So these limits control and guide the behavior of man. They allow him to gain tranquility and peace in this life, and salvation and bliss in the Hereafter. This is true both for individuals and for the society as a whole. Allah (swt) revealed this Sacred Law so that all mankind can live according to it.

Now here Allah (swt) tells us that these desert Arabs are ignorant of these limits. They are ignorant of the Sacred Law. This ignorance is why they are the worst in hypocrisy and kufr. They do not know their Lord and they do not know what pleases Him (swt). They will come to the Prophet (saw) and the believers and say that they believe when in reality they do not. When they are called out to march forth on this path, they will choose to remain behind. All of this is because of a lack of knowledge. They do not know of the world that lies beyond this one. They do not know of Allah (swt). They do not know of this Message that He (swt) revealed and the guidance that is contained within. This ignorance is the reason for their hypocrisy.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) is the Knowing and the Wise. This means that He (swt) Knows best about His (swt)’s creation. When Allah (swt) tells us that the Bedouin Arabs are the worst in hypocrisy and ingratitude then we have to believe Him (swt) because He (swt) Knows best about them. He (swt) even Knows them better than they themselves do. Allah (swt) is also Wise in warning us about them. There is a reason why He (swt) tells us about them. They have an essential characteristic to them that we must strive to avoid. This of course being their lack of knowledge. So we must always remember whom this warning is coming from. It is coming from the Knowing, the Wise. Our Lord and Master. It behooves us then to pay heed to this warning. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace!

Another reason why Allah (swt) mentions these two Names of His (swt) before concluding the ayah is to remind us to emulate these characteristics of His (swt). The problem with the Bedouins was that they only knew the life of this world. They had neither knowledge nor wisdom. In many ways they were just like the cattle and the sheep that they herded, all that they cared about was finding their next meal. In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us that such behavior, such a personality is not pleasing to Him (swt). Instead of being like these people who did know anything and who had no wisdom, Allah (swt) wants us to be like Him (swt), to have knowledge and be wise. There are some Names of our Lord that we can never emulate such as the All Merciful or the Tremendous or the Eternally Alive. But there are also some Names that we can try to inculcate within ourselves. Among these are the Knowing and the Wise. Of course we can never reach even the tiniest fraction of the Knowledge or the Wisdom of Allah (swt), but He (swt) has given us the capacity to gain knowledge and to have wisdom. So we must use these gifts that He (swt) has given us. Use these gifts to come closer to Him (swt) and further from those distant from Him (swt).

Thus the lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must strive not to become like these Bedouins. The way that we can do that is by increasing our knowledge of the Din. Increasing our knowledge of Allah (swt). As we mentioned there is this world, and there is what lies beyond this world. We will not find Allah (swt) in this world, we have to look beyond. How else can we seek the world beyond except with knowledge? So we should study more and more ayahs of the Quran, learn more and more hadith of the Prophet (saw), find out about the lives of the companions and the righteous scholars. This is how we can draw closer to our Lord. This is how we can become further away from the likes of these Bedouins. But how many of us today realize this? Even those among us who are practicing? Even those among us who are involved in the dawah? How many of us realize the importance of gaining knowledge of the Din? The scholars of the past would dedicate their entire lives only for gaining knowledge. They would live on dry bread dipped in river water, they would prevent themselves from using the restroom, they would fall asleep on their books, only for gaining knowledge of this Din. This is the level of dedication that they had for gaining knowledge. Do we have even a fraction of this? Can we then

be surprised at the situation that our Ummah is in? The Prophet (saw) said that among the things that are never quenched is the thirst for knowledge. So we have to develop within us this thirst. We have to be more thirsty for knowledge of this Din than we are for water on the summer days of Ramadan. Masha Allah with the advent and the growth of the internet there are now so many channels with which we gain knowledge of the Din. There is also knowledge in books and tapes. Travel also is easier in our days so we can journey and meet with the scholars and the people of knowledge. So we should utilize this opportunity that we have been given. Allah (swt) Knows that we will not have it forever. With the grace of Allah (swt) it is the only way that we can save ourselves from becoming like these Bedouins who only knew the life of this world, who as a consequence of which were the worst in their hypocrisy and ingratitude.

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُّ بِكُمُ الدَّوَائِرَ
عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾

98. And from the Bedouins are those who take what they spend (for Allah) as a heavy burden, and they wait for an overwhelming calamity to befall you, on them is the overwhelming calamity of evil, and Allah is the Hearing, the Knowing.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to tell us about the Bedouin Arabs. Now it is important for us to note that although this ayah is speaking first and foremost about the Bedouins, its meaning is not restricted to them. Rather it is applicable for all people and all times as long as the people have that essential characteristic which Allah (swt) described the Bedouins as having. That is the lack of knowledge. The lack of knowledge of Allah (swt). The lack of knowledge of the Din. The lack of knowledge of the true reality of the universe. Any who do not have this knowledge will have these characteristics to some extent. Some more than others, depending on how far they are from the Divine. So in essence what Allah (swt) describes in this ayah is the essential trait of the ignorant. Those who are distant from Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**And from the Bedouins are those who take what they spend (for Allah) as a heavy burden**”. Here Allah (swt) tells us what was the response of these Bedouins when they were told to spend and sacrifice for Him (swt). They saw it has a heavy burden. They say it as a fine that was forcibly being taken away from them. Now of course this refers in particular to the obligations that they had to fulfill as citizens of the Islamic State, namely Jihad and Zakat. Every Muslim was obligated to participate in Jihad to defend the borders of the Islamic State and to give a portion of their wealth in Zakat to help the poor. However these Bedouins were averse to this responsibility. They did not want to give their money away and they did not want to strive and fight for their Lord. They saw it as a heavy burden that was being forcibly extracted from them. The Arabic word *gharama* that Allah (swt) uses here gives the meaning of torment and anguish. This is what these Bedouins felt in their hearts when they were told to spend their wealth and strive with their persons for their Creator.

What is it that elicited such a response from them? Why were they so reluctant to spend what they had for their Lord? Of course it was their lack of knowledge. Their lack of knowledge of the great reward that Allah (swt) had in store for those who spend for Him (swt). Their lack of knowledge of the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and what a sublime and tremendous thing it is. Their lack of knowledge of being close to the Divine and how there is nothing sweeter than it is in this whole world. They simply did not know. They only knew the life of this world. That was why they were so reluctant to give up this world. They were unaware that there is something much better than this world. Something far more pure, and sublime, and beautiful. There is Allah (swt). They did not know this. That was why to spend and sacrifice for Him (swt), to live for Him (swt), was so painful for them. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

Yet despite the fact that spending and striving for Allah (swt) was so painful for these Bedouins, the Islamic State still forced them to do it. They were forced by the State to pay their Zakat and march forth in Jihad. Unless they gave an excuse, this was a duty that was imposed on them. This then forced many of them to do it even though they did not like to do it. Yet in the long run they were better off because of this. They were a people who were reluctant to do this duty that Allah (swt) had made obligatory for them. However the authority of the Islamic State

compelled them to do it even though it was difficult for them. Because of this they may have been saved in the Hereafter. They may have been saved from being punished for neglecting this duty. The Prophet (saw) has told us in one hadith that Allah (swt) wonders at those who enter the Garden in chains. This means that the Authority of Allah (swt) being imposed on some people through the State is actually a mercy for them. The law compels them to do what will be better for them in the long run. It saves them from the Fire. The reality of people is that not everyone will reach perfection. Not everyone will be in the Divine Presence. Not everyone will reach the level of Abu Bakr (ra) and Umar (ra). So for these people who by their nature are not very good Muslims, they need the Islamic State to force them to do what is good for them. Were it not for the State, they would neglect this duty and then be liable for punishment in the Hereafter. So we see how the Law of Allah (swt) is a mercy for many people, even when they think that it might be a punishment. On the Day of Judgment they will thank Allah (swt) again and again.

However today the Ummah does not have this saving grace. Today the Ummah does not have anyone to enforce the Law of Allah (swt) upon them. So they could sin all that they want and they could never realize the evil that they are doing. They could be earning mountains and mountains of sin without ever realizing it. They would only realize on the Day of Judgment. But of course then it would be too late. What then would be the fate of such among your brothers and sisters? Of course it is nothing less than the Fire. So Muslims today are spoiled because the parent that disciplines them is no longer there. Most of the time when they neglect the commands of their Lord there is no one who even says a word to them. No one who even tells them that what they are doing is wrong. That what they are doing could be their destruction in the Hereafter. So they continue to sin. More and more sin. How many examples of this can we see today? How many Muslims today neglect the five daily prayers? How many Muslims today do not pay Zakat? How many Muslims today do not do dawah? How many Muslims today commit the major sins like dealing in usury and free mixing with members of the opposite sex? How many Muslim men lie and cheat? How many Muslim women show their body to the whole world? Where is the Authority of Allah (swt) that will come and save them from themselves? Allah (swt) is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful, but can we be certain that all of our brothers and sisters will be forgiven?

Is He (swt) not also the most Strict in Punishment? Has He (swt) not promised the Fire for those who disobey His (swt)'s Law? So we see that yet another reason why we must work for the restoration of the Islamic State is so that we can save this Ummah from herself. So that we could make our brothers and sisters to realize the wrong that they are doing. The problem is not just that the Authority which enforces the Law of Allah (swt) is missing, but even the educational system which teaches Muslims about this Din is missing. How many of our sisters today are taught when they are young that their entire body is an *awra* which must be covered? How many of our brothers are taught the importance of Salah in the masjid? How many times is it reinforced in their hearts of the terrible consequence that they would have to face in the Hereafter if they neglect these duties? How difficult is it even to perform these duties in a secular society? These are but a few of the problems that we as an Ummah have to face now that we are living without Islam. May Allah (swt) save us! May Allah (swt) help us to restore His (swt)'s Din for this Ummah!

Returning to the ayah, Allah (swt) then says of these Bedouins “**and they wait for an overwhelming calamity to befall you**”. These desert Arabs were reluctant to spend and strive for Allah (swt). When the Islamic State forced them to pay Zakat they thought an unfair tax was being levied on them. When the State forced them to march forth in Jihad they thought that they were being compelled to fight against their will. But they could see that the other Muslims were doing this as well. They could see other Muslims paying Zakat, and marching forth in Jihad. What then did they think about these other Muslims? The sincere believers who willingly gave their money for Allah (swt), and who willingly strove and sacrificed for their Lord. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah they thought them to be fools. They thought them to be fools for giving away their money and for marching forth into battle. They thought that it was only a matter of time before an overwhelming calamity strikes them. A calamity on account of their giving away their wealth and marching forth into battle. They were just waiting for such a calamity to befall the believers because they thought that this was the only fate that awaited those who gave away their wealth and strove in battle for Allah (swt). Even the word which Allah (swt) uses to describe this calamity gives the meaning of something that envelops and surrounds. A disaster so terrible that it affects every aspect of a person's life. This is what the Bedouins were expecting to befall the believers

because they gave their wealth and their persons to Allah (swt). Once again this shows us how heedless they were to the Divine. How blind they were to the Real and the True.

In response to such thinking on their part, Allah (swt) says “**on them is the overwhelming calamity of evil**”. They were expecting the calamity to befall the believers but in truth it is they who should have been waiting for the calamity if they neglected this duty. What is the true calamity? Is it the loss of wealth? Is it the loss of life? Or is it being in the displeasure of Allah (swt)? Being distant from Him (swt)? We always need to remind ourselves that Allah (swt) is the Real and the True and this world is the illusion. The true calamity. The overwhelming calamity of unspeakable evil is to be under His (swt)’s Wrath. To be among those whom He (swt) is displeased with. This is what we pray to Allah (swt) to save us from at least twenty times a day. These Bedouins failed to realize this. They saw only the life of this world. Because of their lack of knowledge they did not know anything else but this world. So in truth on them was the calamity.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) is the Hearing the Knowing. If we notice in the Quran, Allah (swt) mentions His (swt)’s Name of Hearing much more frequently than He (swt) mentions His (swt)’s Name of Seeing. He (swt) mentions His (swt)’s Hearing and then He (swt) links it with His (swt)’s Knowledge. Why is this so when for us sight gives us much more knowledge of the world around us than hearing does? Why then does Allah (swt) emphasize more His (swt)’s Hearing? Why is His (swt)’s Hearing always linked to His (swt)’s Knowledge? To realize this we have to remind ourselves once again what is the purpose of our existence in this world. What is the purpose of Allah (swt) sending us the Quran? It is only for this test. This test to see how well we worship and serve Him (swt). To see how well we realize all that He (swt) has given us and strive to show gratitude to Him (swt) for it. Before we serve Allah (swt) with our actions, we serve Him (swt) with our thoughts and ideas. We serve Him (swt) with our hearts before we serve Him (swt) with our limbs.

Now the problem with these Bedouins was not just that they did not have knowledge but their problem was that they did not want to know. They did not want to gain the knowledge with which they may submit to their Lord. They thought to themselves that if they gained this knowledge then this knowledge might make them to submit. This knowledge might make them

humble before their Lord. That is why in their hearts they made the conscious decision not to gain this knowledge. They made the conscious decision to be content with the knowledge that they had. So they chose themselves over their Lord. They chose to live for their desires instead of living for Allah (swt). Thus they failed the test. Those among who made this choice failed the test. Despite this choice that they made, Allah (swt) still may have forgiven them if they marched forth in Jihad and if they paid their Zakat after being compelled to by the Islamic State. This is up to Allah (swt) and He (swt) is the Best of Judges. However what we should realize from this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) hears this choice that all of us make within ourselves. Allah (swt) hears how well we submit to Him (swt) with our hearts. Because He (swt) hears the innermost of our thoughts, He (swt) Knows us. He (swt) Knows us even more than we do. Allah (swt) Knew those Bedouins as well and He (swt) would punish whomsoever among them He (swt) pleases and He (swt) will forgive whomsoever among them He (swt) pleases. This is because He (swt) is the Hearing and the Knowing.

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا
يُنْفِقُ قُرْبَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَصَلَوَاتِ الرَّسُولِ أَلَا إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَهُمْ سَيُدْخِلُهُم
اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٩٩﴾

99. And from the Bedouins are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they take what they spend to be a means of nearness to Allah and prayers of the Messenger, surely it will be means of nearness for them, soon Allah will enter them into His Mercy, surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us how not all the Bedouins were evil. He (swt) shows us how there were good people among them. There were people among them who truly believed in Him (swt) and who truly believed in the Last Day. Even though they lived a nomadic life. Even though they did not have much access to knowledge. Even though the majority of their tribesmen did not care for much else other than the life of this world. There were among these Bedouins

those who were sincere. There were those among them who saw past the life of this world, and saw the Hand of Allah (swt) all around them. They realized that the one Truth to this universe was Allah (swt). Everything that happened was because of Him (swt). Once they realized Him (swt), once they saw Him (swt), they did not desire anything else other than Him (swt).

The first description that Allah (swt) gives us of these Bedouins whom He (swt) is pleased with is that they believe in Him (swt) and the Last Day. What is more important than this? What is more important than to believe in Allah (swt) and in the Day when you will meet Him (swt)? This belief is the bedrock and the foundation of all that we do. Of every action that we take. This point is especially important to keep in mind when we seek to build people to strive in the Way of Allah. The extent to which a person will strive in this path is equal to the extent of his or her conviction in their Lord and in their conviction in the meeting with their Lord. When you are certain of the Presence of your Lord and you are certain of your meeting with Him (swt) one Day soon, then what will hold you back from giving this dawah all that you have?

The Bedouins whom Allah (swt) speaks of in this ayah had this certainty in Him (swt) and in the meeting with Him (swt). What was the result of this certainty? Allah (swt) tells us in the next part of the ayah **“and they take what they spend to be a means of nearness to Allah”**. Recall how the Bedouins whom Allah (swt) told us about in the previous ayah considered what they spent for Him (swt) to be a heavy tax that was being forcibly extracted from them. That was because they were hypocrites whose faith was weak. Here Allah (swt) tells us the reaction of those who have Iman in Him (swt) to their spending and their striving. They saw it as a means of drawing closer to Him (swt). The sincere among the Bedouins loved Allah (swt) and all that they desired was to be near to Him (swt). To be able to remember Him (swt) for every moment of their life. To be aware of His (swt)’s Presence close to them. He (swt) was all that they desired and they knew that the path to Him (swt) was the path of the Prophet (saw). The path of dawah and jihad. The path of striving with their wealth and their persons to establish the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth and to carry His (swt)’s Message to mankind. So they spent their time, and their efforts, and their money in this path. They did not desire anything of this world from their spending. All that they sought was nearness to their Lord.

They wanted Allah (swt) to see their striving and for Him (swt) to be pleased with them. In addition they also wanted the Prophet (saw) to see their striving and their sacrifices. What they desired from the Prophet (saw) was his (saw)'s prayer for them. They wanted the Prophet (saw) to pray to Allah (swt) for them. To pray to Allah (swt) to forgive them their sins, and to accept them into His (swt)'s Mercy. They knew that the Prophet (saw) was the Beloved of Allah (swt), and so they knew that of all prayers his (saw)'s prayer would be the most likely to be answered. That is why they also sought through their striving and their sacrifices the blessed prayer of the Prophet (saw). They did not seek him (saw) for himself (saw) but rather they sought him (saw) as a means of drawing closer to Allah (swt). They knew that the best doorway to Allah (swt) was the Prophet (saw). They knew that Allah (swt) was pleased with whomever he (saw) was pleased with. This is how Beloved he (saw) was to Allah (swt). Whatever pleased him (saw) pleases Allah (swt) and whatever displeased him (saw) displeases Allah (swt).

Is this not something that we should desire as well? Should we also not desire the prayer of the Prophet (saw)? But why would the Prophet (saw) ever pray for us if we neglect this duty of dawah and jihad. This was the mission for which he (saw) lived. This was the mission for which he (saw) shed his (saw)'s blood. This was the path on which so many of his (saw)'s beloved companions and family members gave their lives. When we became part of his (saw)'s Ummah we promised him (saw) that we would carry on this mission for him (saw). How do you think that he (saw) would like it if we gave up on this mission? If we stopped spending our time on this path but rather spent our time chasing after this world? How do you think that he (saw) would like it? Do you think that he (saw) would still pray for you on the Last Day? What do you think that your fate will be on that Day if you are from his (saw)'s Ummah but you do not have his (saw)'s prayer? Those Bedouins at that time may not have known much but they knew the value of the prayer of the Prophet (saw). They knew that the best thing that they could get in the life of this world were those few words for them from his (saw)'s blessed mouth.

Allah (swt) then says of their striving and their sacrifice “**surely it will be means of nearness for them**”. Imagine how delighted those Bedouins must have been to hear an ayah such as this. Allah (swt) confirms and emphasizes with utmost certainty that their striving will be

accepted. Because they were sincere to Allah (swt), He (swt) accepted them. He (swt) allowed them to be near to Him (swt) both in this life and the next. Notice in the ayah how for this great reward Allah (swt) does not describe them as doing anything except believing in Him (swt) and in the Last Day, and then striving and spending so that their efforts would be a means of nearness for them. This was all that they did. They did not establish the Islamic State. They did not defeat a powerful Roman army. They did not raise millions and millions in funds. All that they did was that they were sincere to Allah (swt) and they tried their utmost to please Him (swt). This should remind us once again of what it is that Allah (swt) expects from us. He (swt) does not expect from us anything more than that we are sincere to Him (swt) and that we try our best. As we see from this ayah it is not the results of our actions in this world that will bring us closer to Him (swt), rather it is the Iman that we have in our hearts and the sincerity to Him (swt) that springs forth from that Iman. This was all that the Bedouins had but it was enough for Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying **“soon Allah will enter them into His Mercy”**. These Bedouins spent what they had so that their spending could be a means of nearness to Allah (swt). But what does it mean to be near Allah (swt)? What does it mean to be in the Divine Presence? This is what Allah (swt) explains to us here. It means to enter into His (swt)'s Mercy. The language of the ayah gives the meaning that the Mercy of Allah (swt) is almost like a house or a garden that you could enter. So then are we to assume that the meaning of this ayah is restricted only to the Hereafter? Is it only when they enter Paradise that they would enter into Allah (swt)'s Mercy? No, as we mentioned before there is a Garden in this life that the believers can enter before they enter the Garden in the Hereafter. The Garden in this life is the Divine Presence itself. It is to be conscious of Allah (swt) at every moment of life, and to be certain that He (swt) is near you. When you realize His (swt)'s Sublimity and Tremendousness and Majesty then what could be sweeter than this? What could be a more salient manifestation of mercy than this? Is this not what all creation yearns for? Just to return to its Creator. This is what Allah (swt) promises to all those who sincerely dedicate themselves to Him (swt). He (swt) promises us the greatest of gifts and that is Himself (swt).

Do you think that you are not able to reach this station? Do you think that you have committed too many sins? Do you think that your heart is too attached to the life of this world? If this is what you think then look again at how Allah (swt) ends this ayah. He (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) is the Forgiving and the Merciful. With utmost emphasis and certainty He (swt) tells us this. Once you realize these Names of His (swt) then how could you ever think that you are too distant from Him (swt)? How could even the worst sinner think that they cannot make the journey to Him (swt)? Know that the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) is so Vast and so Enveloping that it can cover any sins that you may have committed. Even the most numerous of sins, even the most unspeakable of sins. The Mercy of Allah (swt) is so great that once you taste it, you will never know sorrow or fear again. You will only know Allah (swt). In everything you will know only Him (swt). This is what Allah (swt) promises you if you only you are sincere to Him (swt).

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how there are different kinds of people which exist in every group. There is no one group that is completely evil and there is no one group that is completely good. These Bedouins should have been the most distant of people from Allah (swt) because they had no access to knowledge whatsoever. Yet as we see from this ayah there were those among them who were sincere. There were those among them who desired to please Allah (swt) and to serve Him (swt). This should remind you not to judge a person because of the group or race that they come from. You should not dismiss anyone because of such criteria. Rather you should each person individually. Allah (swt) placed good and evil in all groups and races. So for example you will find that there are blacks who are very close to Allah (swt), and you will find blacks who are very distant from Him (swt). Similarly you will find whites who are very close to Allah (swt) and whites who are very distant from Him (swt). From every race and from every region there are good people and bad people. So this should never be a criteria for us in judging people. Unfortunately today there are some of us who do this. For example you will find Muslims from the subcontinent saying that all Arab Muslims are corrupt, and you will find Arab Muslims who say the same about Muslims from the subcontinent. This is disease that we must strive to remove from the Ummah Insha Allah (swt).

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ
 رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

100. And the first of the forerunners from the Muhajiroon and the Ansar, and those who followed them in Ihsan, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, He has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow to stay therein forever, that is the great attainment.

So far Allah (swt) has told us about several different kinds of people. He (swt) has told us about the Bedouins who have no knowledge and who only know the life of this world. The ones who make excuses from striving in this path and who look upon anything that they spend as a heavy tax levied upon them. Then He (swt) told us about the sincere among the Bedouins. The ones who only desire nearness to Him (swt) through their striving and their spending. He (swt) had also told us previously about the true hypocrites who desired to destroy this Din. The ones who were plotting and planning day and night to destroy this Message that He (swt) has sent as a mercy and a guidance for all mankind. The ones who were plotting alongside the disbelievers to destroy the Islamic State and to ensure that it would never return. Then He (swt) had told us about those Muslims who were close to hypocrisy because of their weakness in faith. The ones who were not willing to make the sacrifices that this Din demanded of them. The ones who although they were Muslims, still preferred chasing after the life of this world instead of a life of dedication to Allah (swt). A life of dawah and jihad. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about yet another group. This is the group that is the nearest to Him (swt). This is the group that we must always strive to be like. This group about whom we speak are none other than the Sahabah, may Allah (swt) be pleased with all of them. The companions of the Prophet (saw). Of all companions that any prophet or messenger ever had, they were the closest to Allah (swt) because he (saw) was the closest. Now you know the goal that you must reach.

Allah (swt) begins His (swt)'s description of the Sahabah in this ayah by saying **“the first of the forerunners from the Muhajiroon and the Ansar”**. We have translated the word *Sabiqoon* in this ayah as “forerunners” but in reality it gives a far deeper meaning than that. Imagine a race. A competition with all mankind running in it. Racing towards a goal. Everyone is at a different level. A different place in the race. In this race the *Sabiqoon* are the foremost. They are at the very front of the line. Surpassing everyone else. This is the level that the Sahabah (raa) were at. Notice how Allah (swt) does not only describe them as the *Sabiqoon* but He (swt) describes them as the first of the *Sabiqoon*. So even among the *Sabiqoon*, even among those who are ahead in this race, the Sahabah are at the very front.

Now what is the goal of this race that the Sahabah were the foremost of? What is it that all of mankind is racing towards? Of course it is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). What other goal could there be that is worth striving for other than this? This is the goal that we were all created to reach. Allah (swt) created us, He (swt) sustains us for every moment of our existence, He (swt) gives us with everything that we have. Now for what other reason did He (swt) do all this other than for us to journey to Him (swt). To know Him (swt) and to come closer to Him (swt) with everything that we do. This is why He (swt) created the universe. This is why He (swt) sent the messengers. This is why He (swt) revealed the Quran. For us to strive to reach Him (swt) with everything that we do. So all of mankind is racing towards Allah (swt). Some are more cognizant of this fact than others. Some are ahead of others. The ones who are evil, who are arrogant, who choose themselves over their Lord, these are at the very end of the line. But the Sahabah are the foremost. They are at the very front. They are the closest to Allah (swt) outside of the prophets and the messengers. We know that this ayah is specifically speaking about the Sahabah because Allah (swt) mentions the Muhajiroon and the Ansar. These are the two groups that the Sahabah fell into. The Muhajiroon were given their name because they emigrated from Makkah to Madinah, from the land of kufr to the Islamic State. The Ansar were given their name because they helped and supported the Prophet (saw) and the dawah. They permitted the Islamic State to be established in their city and their city to be the base from which this dawah would spread. So there can be no doubt that this ayah is specifically speaking about the Sahabah.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize the high station of the Sahabah. Look at the way in which Allah (swt) describes them here. He (swt) says that they are the foremost of all mankind in nearness to Him (swt). He (swt) even specifically says that He (swt) is pleased with them. Allah (swt) did not specify any particular companion when He (swt) said that He (swt) was pleased with them, rather He (swt) left it as general to show us clearly that He (swt) was pleased with them all. That is why it is very important for us to always believe that all of the Sahabah were righteous and they were in fact the very best of all mankind. The Prophet (saw) has even specifically told us that the best of generations is his (saw)'s generation. Now it is true that some of the Companions may have made mistakes, they may have sinned. They were not infallible like the prophets and messengers were. But they were still the best of mankind. None of them were corrupted or deviant or evil as some would claim. This ayah, as well as dozens of other ayahs and hundreds of other hadith are testament to this fact.

Allah (swt) then speaks in the ayah of **“those who followed them in Ihsan”**. So there is another group that Allah (swt) mentions in the ayah alongside the Sahabah. He (swt) describes this group as following the Sahabah with Ihsan. Now the key for us to understand who this group is lies in understanding the words “following” and the word “Ihsan”. When we say that this group follows the Sahabah it does not necessarily mean that they lived at the same time as the Sahabah or even at the time period right after. Rather it means that they follow the way of the Sahabah. The path of the Sahabah. In other words they do with their lives what the Sahabah did with theirs. So what was the life of the Sahabah? How did they spend their days? What was their primary occupation? Was it simply chasing after this world and only thinking of Allah (swt) on the Day of Jummah or during Ramadan like most Muslims are doing today? Was this how they spent their time? Or did they spend their time in dawah and jihad? Helping the Prophet (saw) spread this Message to all mankind. Fighting and striving so that the sovereignty of Allah (swt) extends to more and more lands. This was their life. So anyone who wishes to follow them, anyone who wishes to reach their station, must follow them on this path. They must dedicate their time and their efforts to this cause. They must realize that this life is only a test. That every moment counts. That in the end all that matters is how many moments of your life you dedicated for Allah (swt).

Also notice here how Allah (swt) describes this group as following the Sahabah with Ihsan. As we know Ihsan means to worship and serve Allah (swt) as though you see Him (swt). In other words, it means to be in the Divine Presence, it means that you are conscious of Allah (swt) for every moment of your life. So to reach the station of the Sahabah not only must we follow them but we must follow them with Ihsan. Just as we strive to learn this Din and to teach other Muslims about it, we must at the same time strive to bring Allah (swt) to our minds while we do this. We must strive to remember that we are doing all of this for Him (swt). We must walk this path of dawah and jihad, but we must walk it while always remembering Allah (swt) and reminding ourselves that we are only doing it for Him (swt).

Insha Allah when we reach this station then we will never get tired and we will never be disappointed if we meet with failure. One thing that is for certain now is that this dawah is going to take time. It took the Prophet (saw) thirteen years, and it is going to take us much longer. Not only are we nowhere near the level that he (saw) and the Sahabah were at, but we also are working with an Ummah that already has many false ideas and concepts in their minds. Before we can teach them what Islam truly is, we first have to remove such false ideas from their thinking. So without a doubt this dawah is going to take time. This is why we always need to be motivated. We always need to remind ourselves that we have to keep going. Even if it takes several years, even if it seems that the victory is not getting any closer, we have to keep going, We should not listen to those who say that our method is not going to work because we are following what we believe to be the method of the Prophet (saw). We are not going to compromise with the enemy and accept their systems nor are we going to resort to violence and material struggle before the State is established. Neither of these was part of the method of the Prophet (saw). We are going to keep going on this path that Allah (swt) has shown us no matter how long it takes. But in this ayah we see what it is that will give us the strength to keep on going. What it is that will keep us motivated no matter how long it takes. It is to have Ihsan. To always remember Allah (swt). To remember that we are only doing this for Him (swt). To remember that all that we seek is nearness to Him (swt) and His (swt)'s Pleasure. We are studying Arabic for this. We are learning the Din for this. We are teaching other Muslims for this. If we have this then it is enough for us.

Allah (swt) says in the next part of the ayah “**Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him**”. This was the station of the Sahabah. This could be our station as well if we follow them on their path. We may have mentioned this point before, but we need to emphasize it again and again. What could be better than the Pleasure of Allah (swt)? Is there any goal or any attainment that is worth striving for other than this? Most of the time we do not think of Allah (swt). Most of the time we have something else on our minds other than Him (swt). But if we were to think about Him (swt). If we were to remember how Majestic and Tremendous and Sublime a Being that He (swt) IS, then we would realize how there is nothing else that we should ever seek other than Him (swt). No other goal that we should seek to attain other than for Him (swt) to be pleased with us. When you love and respect someone else then does not their opinion of you matter? Are you not pleased when they are pleased with you and are you not displeased when they are displeased with you? Once you realize Allah (swt), once you know your Lord, then how much should His (swt)’s estimation of you matter? How much should you yearn just for Him (swt) to be pleased with you? Realize now that this goal is attainable. You do not need to establish the Islamic State. You do not need to convince anyone of the need for the State. You do not need to become the next great scholar for our Ummah. You only need to try. You only need to have sincerity for Allah (swt) and make your best effort in this path. Notice in the ayah that Allah (swt) is not promising His (swt)’s Pleasure for those who do what the Sahabah did but He (swt) is promising it for those who only try. Those who merely follow them on their path. So if all that you can do is sincerely try, then Insha Allah this is enough for Him (swt). Insha Allah you have already attained His (swt)’s Pleasure just because you tried. How is this beyond attainment for any of us? All that we have to do is conquer our pride and conquer our laziness and make our best effort.

Allah (swt) also tells us in the ayah that just as He (swt) is pleased with the Sahabah and those who follow them with Ihsan, they in turn are also pleased with Him (swt). They are pleased to have Him (swt) as their Lord and Master. They are pleased with the Din that He (swt) has chosen for them. They are pleased with the way of life that He (swt) has guided them to follow. They do not complain at any of His (swt)’s commandments but rather they accept them with full submission. Even laws like Jihad and the *hadd* punishments. They do not find any fault with these

commandments. They accept these laws because they know that they come from their Lord and Master. They accept all of His (swt)'s Laws without exception.

Similarly they are also pleased with the station in life that He (swt) has given them. Whether they are rich or poor, whether they are sick or healthy, whether they are of high status or low class, whether they have many friends and are remembered or they are alone and ignored by the people, they are content. They are content with every moment in life that Allah (swt) has given them. They are not sad with any calamity that befalls them in life but they accept it with complete acceptance. They do not fear the future because they know that there will only befall them what He (swt) has written for them. They realize that all that they do is try and it is He (swt) Who creates their actions and it is He (swt) Who determines the outcomes of their affairs. Even their success and their failure, their good fortune and misfortune, is determined only by Him (swt). So they are always content because they knew that it is all from Him (swt).

This was the station that the Sahabah were at. They were always pleased and content with whatever Allah (swt) gave them. One narration tells us of a time when Abu Bakr (ra) was beaten by the enemies of this Message to such an extent that he (ra) could not even walk. Only the intervention of his family prevented the enemies of Allah (swt) from beating him (ra) to this death. However when the Prophet (saw) came to see him (ra) later on, as he (ra) lay on the bed, he (ra) did not complain at all. Even though he (ra) was beaten only because he was involved in this dawah. Only because he (ra) supported the Prophet (saw). Still he (ra) did not complain at all. Rather he (ra) told the Prophet (saw) that there was only a small scar on his face. This was his estimation of all the injuries that he (ra) had to suffer. If you read the life stories of the companions you would find many such examples. People who lived only for Allah (swt). People who sought the contentment of Allah (swt) with every moment of their lives. People who were content with whatever Allah (swt) willed to befall them.

Allah (swt) is the Most Kind, the Most Merciful, the Most Loving, and the Most Generous. He (swt) has provided with man so much even when man did not do anything for Him (swt). If Allah (swt) has given this much to man even when man has not done anything for Him (swt) then what do you think that He (swt) will give those who dedicate themselves to Him (swt) like the

Sahabah did? How much will Allah (swt) reward them? He (swt) tells us in the next part of the ayah when He (swt) tells us how **“He has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow to stay therein forever”**. What more can we say about such a reward? However we try we can never describe it fully. We can never do it justice. We can only yearn to be there to see ourselves.

Finally Allah (swt) reminds us that this **“is the great attainment”**. This is not only referring to the gardens, but it is referring to everything that Allah (swt) has told us about in the ayah. From following the way of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah, to maintaining the consciousness of Allah (swt) at all times, to Him (swt) being pleased with you and with you being pleased with you Him (swt). To striving in the path of dawah and jihad. To being a believer and to maintaining that Iman throughout your life. All of this is part of the great attainment. So realize from here where your priorities must be. Realize from here the goal that you must be seeking to attain. How can you seek this world through your actions when Allah (swt) has never referred to this world as the great attainment? If this world was worth your striving then Allah (swt) would have told you to strive for it. How can you seek the world through your actions when you know that there is Allah (swt) and there is the Garden? The Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah realized this fact. That is why they sacrificed their life in this world in order to achieve this attainment. That is why they were able to do what they did. How can you follow in their path without doing the same? How can you hope to attain this greatest of attainments unless you work in this cause? Unless you somehow support this effort. You do not need to work miracles. You yourself do not need to bring back the Islamic State tomorrow. Just try your best, that is all that Allah (swt) asks of you. Just do what you can, that is all that Allah (swt) asks of you. Once you take the first step then He (swt) will complete for you your efforts.

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ
 مَرَدُوا عَلَى النَّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ
 ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

101. And from the Bedouins around you there are hypocrites, and from the people of the city, they are stubborn in their hypocrisy, you do not know them but We know them, We will punish them twice, then they will be turned back to a great punishment.

After telling us about those whom He (swt) is most pleased with, in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about those whom He (swt) is most displeased with. So just as the former path is the path that we must always be trying to walk on, this is the path that we must always be trying to avoid. This is the path of those who are distant from Allah (swt), the ones who choose themselves instead of Him (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us just how evil such people are, how they are obstinate and persistent in their rejection of Him (swt). He (swt) also shows us how they surround us on every corner and every side, and finally He (swt) shows us the great punishment that He (swt) has in store for them because of their rejection of Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**And from the Bedouins around you there are hypocrites, and from the people of the city**”. Here Allah (swt) is addressing the Prophet (saw) and the sincere believers in Madinah. He (swt) is speaking to them about the hypocrites. He (swt) tells them that such hypocrites are all around them. He (swt) says that both from among the Bedouins and from among the people of Madinah there are hypocrites. The language of the ayah gives the meaning that the Prophet (saw) and the believers are surrounded by these hypocrites. It also gives the meaning that these hypocrites are very close to them. They are like a swarm of evil that surrounds them on all sides. This was how many hypocrites there were in the Ummah when the Prophet (saw) walked amongst us. Think how many there must be now that he (saw) is no longer with us and now that the Islamic State is destroyed and we are living in a world of kufr. Think how many there must be today.

This is the point that Allah (swt) brought to the attention of the early Muslims at that time and it is the same point that He (swt) brings to our attention today as well. These hypocrites are all around us. Allah (swt) describes the hypocrites in this ayah as being from the Bedouins and from the people of Madinah. This means that in every community of Muslims at that time these hypocrites were there. Similarly in our time, we have to expect them to be present in every one of our communities. Not just in every community, but also in every profession. Among the scholars, among the students, among the professionals, among the dawah carriers, among the laymen, among the young, among the old, among the brothers, among the sisters. They are all around us and they are so close to us. They say with their tongues that they believe. They say that they love and fear Allah (swt), they say that they want to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet (saw). But these words do not go past their throats. They are just empty statements that they make.

Now the point here is not for us to start believing that all of our brothers and sisters are hypocrites. On the contrary we should always give our Muslim brothers and sisters the benefit of the doubt and we should always think the best of them. Rather the benefit for us in this ayah is to realize that there are hypocrites in our midst. There are people who say that they believe when they do not or when their faith is extremely weak. Even if we may not know which person in particular is a hypocrite, we have to be aware that they are there. So we should not trust anyone implicitly, nor should we follow any scholar blindly. This is especially true when a so-called "scholar" or when one of our brothers tells us that we should not be working for the restoration of the Islamic State. When we hear from the tongue of a Muslim that we should not involve ourselves in this dawah, that we should be content with the world as it is now, then we should think twice about accepting what they say. We do not necessarily need to believe that such a person is a hypocrite, perhaps they are sincere but ignorant, Allah (swt) Knows best about their hearts. But our sake we have to be careful of the ideas that we adopt from them. Since we know that there are such people in our community we should think twice about accepting what they say especially when their ideas contradict what Allah (swt) has established clearly in the Quran and Sunnah. Allah (swt) Knows best and we ask Him (swt) to guide us!

Allah (swt) also says about the hypocrites that **“they are stubborn in their hypocrisy”**. Here Allah (swt) is speaking about the true hypocrites. The ones who know the Truth but who still choose to turn away from it. In essence there are three kinds of people in the Ummah. Those sincere believers who know of this responsibility and who are working in this path. Those who are ignorant of this responsibility and ignorant of the true nature of this Din. And finally those who know but who turn away. They know that they have a responsibility to work for this Din but they still choose the life of this world instead. They know the Majesty of their Lord, they know the beauty of this Din, but still they turn away from Him (swt) and working for His (swt)’s Din. These are the people whom Allah (swt) speaks of here. They existed at the time of the Prophet (saw) and they exist today as well. Allah (swt) describes them in this ayah as being stubborn in their hypocrisy. This means that they are stubborn in their turning away from what they know to be the Truth. They will still say that they are Muslims. They will still pretend to act like believers. They may even come to the Salah, and participate in Islamic activities with the believers. But they will not extend to this dawah any support. No matter how many times they are reminded. No matter how many times they are exhorted. It will have no effect on them whatsoever.

This was especially true for the hypocrites at time of the Prophet (saw). They were in the company of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. They prayed behind the Prophet (saw) and they heard the Speech of Allah (swt). The Speech of Allah (swt) exhorting them to march on this path. To return to their Lord and to dedicate themselves to Him (swt). They also heard the blessed words of the Prophet (saw) exhorting them to this path. Yet none of this had any effect on them whatsoever. They continued to be stubborn and obstinate in their rejection. They continued to remain behind when the armies of Muslims marched out of Madinah. They continued to close their pockets when they were called on to spend. They continued to encourage their brethren not to support this dawah either. As we know many of them, like Abdullah bin Ubayy, were even working to destroy this Message. They were plotting with the enemies of this Din in the hope of destroying it. They would encourage the Jewish tribes around Madinah to break their treaties and attack the Islamic State. They would spy on the Muslims and report the movements of the Muslim armies to the enemies of this Message.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says “**you do not know them but We know them**”. Realize that this was revealed first and foremost to the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) is telling him (saw) here that He (swt) Knows these hypocrites but he (saw) does not. Thus many of these hypocrites were so clever in their deception and their lies that they were even able to hide their true identity from the Prophet (saw). Their deception was so good that even the Prophet (saw) thought them to be sincere believers. They would come to him (saw) and speak to him (saw) about the importance of dawah and jihad, words which were the most pleasing for him (saw) to hear. They would speak about the importance of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to the people, and of establishing the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth, and of protecting the Muslims. They may even have promised to march forth on the expedition to Tabuk and they may even have exhorted other Muslims to march forth as well. Of course all of it was only a show for the Prophet (saw) and the believers. When the time came to translate words into actions. When the army was leaving Madinah, they slowly slithered away. This was the level of their deception.

Now think to yourself that if the hypocrites at that time were even able to deceive the Prophet (saw), then how much of the Ummah must they have deceived today? He (saw) knew the difference between Truth and falsehood. He (saw) was very intelligent and very wise and very discerning of what was spoken to him (saw). In other words he (saw) was not one who could easily be deceived. Can we see this about the majority of the Ummah today? How much knowledge of the Din does the Ummah have today? So how easily could we be deceived? Thus the statement of Allah (swt) in this part of the ayah holds even truer for us than it did for the Prophet (saw). There are many hypocrites in our midst that we do not know about. We have to realize this fact. We have to realize how easily we can be deceived. So we should make our best efforts to protect ourselves. We should not be fooled by long beards and long garments. We should not be fooled by speakers who start crying during their talks. All of these reveal only the surface of a person. They are not a reflection of what is in the hearts. The only standard by which we can judge our scholars is how close are their words to the Quran and Sunnah. How frequently do they support their ideas from the text. Insha Allah this is the only way that we can save ourselves from being deceived. As we can see the nature of the hypocrites is to deceive.

Another lesson that we can take from this fact that the hypocrites are all around us is that we must be careful that we do not become like them. Since they surround us from all sides, their thinking and their behavior can affect us. Without a doubt we will interact with them. When they speak to us, a part of us may be inclined towards what they say. If we allow this to happen then we would be allowing them to lead us astray. Away from Allah (swt). So we must be careful. When they speak to us they will speak about this world. Even though they say that they are Muslims the only topic of conversation for them is this world. They will rarely if ever speak about Allah (swt). About how Magnificent and Glorious He (swt) IS. About His (swt)'s Din. About the problem of our Ummah. They will rarely if we ever speak about this. Rather they will speak about the world. They will divert our attention away from our Lord and towards this world. How to make more money. How to buy the latest property. What is the state of the economy. What is this politician doing or that actor doing. This is the speech of the heedless. The speech of those who have forgotten Allah (swt). Through such words they will encourage us to heedlessness as well. Encourage us to commit sins and to ignore our responsibilities in the Din. They will even try and take us away from this path of dawah and jihad. They will tell us that we do not need to work for the restoration of the Islamic State. That it is an unattainable and unrealistic goal. They will tell us that we should be thankful to be living in a secular society where we at least able to make our prayers and perform our fasts. Have you not heard such speech from many who call themselves Muslims? As we mentioned previously, our job is not to label people as hypocrites if we hear such speech from them. Allah (swt) is the Only One to judge them. As He (swt) says in this ayah, it is only He (swt) Who Knows them and we do not. But for our part we do need to be careful of them. We should not lend an ear to such words. We should not even consider what they are saying because we can see that it contradicts what Allah (swt) has said in the Quran. The Truth is what is in this Book and not what is on the lips of people. Allah (swt) has promised to protect this Book but He (swt) has made no such promise for the hearts of the Muslims. So we have to be steadfast on this path. We have to protect ourselves from the influence of those around us. It may seem like a daunting task but we have to always remember that if we are sincere to Allah (swt) then He (swt) will help us. He (swt) will be there for us. May it be so! He (swt) is our only hope!

As we mentioned these hypocrites are the ones whom Allah (swt) is the most displeased with. Not only do they turn away from this Message that He (swt) has sent to them even after they are certain that it is the Truth. Not only do they continue to turn away even after they are reminded again and again. Not only do they try to deceive the Prophet (saw) and the sincere believers. But they say with their tongues that they are true and sincere believers. They say with their tongues that they only want to serve this Din. They say with their tongues that they love and fear Allah (swt). But it is all lies. This is why Allah (swt) is most displeased with them. It is because they turn away from Him (swt) in their hearts even though they claim with their tongues that they have submitted to Him (swt). What does Allah (swt) have in store for such people who have earned His (swt)'s Wrath to such an extent? He (swt) tells us in the final part of this ayah **"We will punish them twice, then they will be turned back to a great punishment"**. Notice here how they will receive two punishments before they receive the great punishment. We know that the great punishment refers to their punishment in the Fire, but what does Allah (swt) mean by the two punishments before that? Some scholars have suggested that these two punishments refer to their torment in the grave, and the pain that they will feel when the angels are extracting their souls from their bodies. This is the opinion of some of our scholars. Allah (swt) Knows best, but we believe that this double punishment actually refers to their hypocrisy itself. Their hypocrisy itself is their punishment.

Allah (swt) will punish them twice in this world through their hypocrisy. One way in which He (swt) will punish them is that He (swt) will allow them to go further astray. He (swt) will allow the disease in their hearts to increase. Previously Allah (swt) told us how they were stubborn in their hypocrisy. This stubbornness is actually part of their punishment. Allah (swt) has placed a seal over their hearts so that they can never return to Him (swt). The other part of their punishment is the pain that they feel because they are so distant from their Lord. A heart that knows Allah (swt) and is close to Him (swt) knows nothing but serenity and bliss. It relishes at being in the Divine Presence, close to its Lord and Master. Its Reason for being. The heart that does not know Allah (swt) does not know this bliss, but it still may find some happiness and joy in its life. In its ignorance it may find some reason for being, some purpose for its existence, in

whatever it is that it chooses to occupy itself with. But what about a heart who knows Allah (swt) but still chooses to turn away from Him (swt). Would there be any peace or serenity for such a heart? This is a heart that knows what it has done. It has turned away from the Real and the True. Deep down inside it knows the consequences of what it has done. It knows the peace and tranquility that it has denied itself in this world. It knows the bliss and joy that it has denied itself in the Hereafter. It knows the terrible punishment that it is waiting for it in the Hereafter. It knows that it has failed the test for which it was created. It knows the Tremendousness and the Power of the Being that it has angered. It knows all this. Deep down inside it knows all this. Because of this knowledge such a heart will only know misery and wretchedness. Even if the hypocrite may smile and laugh on the outside, inside his heart is in misery. And the further astray Allah (swt) allows him to go the more his misery increases. This is the double punishment that Allah (swt) gives for the hypocrite in the life of this world. And the most frightening part is that this is only the beginning. This is not even the real punishment. The real punishment is what awaits him in the Hereafter. Now do you see why it is so important that we make every effort possible to save ourselves from ever becoming like such people? May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace because we cannot do it without Him (swt)!

Once they have tasted the two punishments in this world Allah (swt) tells us how they will then return to the great punishment in the Hereafter. These hypocrites were walking along a certain path. They thought that they had outsmarted the Prophet (saw) and the believers. They actually believed that they could destroy the Islamic State. At the very least they thought that they had escaped the responsibility of marching forth on this path. They thought that they had made the right decision in choosing to oppose this Message. So they continued along this path. This path of heedlessness to the Divine. This path of following their lusts and desires. Then all of a sudden their death would befall them. When that happens they will turn around completely. When that happens they will truly realize the consequences of what they had done. But would there be any time to save themselves then? Would they be returning to mercy and forgiveness? No, on the contrary they would be returning to a great punishment. When Allah (swt) Himself describes a punishment as “great” then what kind of a torment must it be?

وَعَاخِرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَعَاخِرَ سَيِّئًا
 عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾

102. And others have admitted their sins, they had mixed a righteous deed with another that was evil, perhaps Allah will turn to them, surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

After telling us about those whom He (swt) is most pleased with, and about those whom He (swt) is most displeased with, in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about a people who are in the middle of these two extremes. In many ways it is this group that most of us are similar to. We are not open hypocrites like Abdullah bin Ubayy who are plotting to destroy this Din, nor are we the close friends of Allah (swt) like Abu Bakr (ra) and Umar (ra) who dedicated their entire lives to serving Allah (swt)'s Din. We are somewhere in between these two extremes. We have something in us from each of these personalities. Now this does not mean that we should be pleased with ourselves if we are at this level. Allah (swt) did not create us to be “moderate” Muslims, to be mediocre in our worship and servitude of Him (swt), rather He (swt) created us to dedicate ourselves to Him (swt). He (swt) created us so that we can journey to the level of Abu Bakr (ra) and Umar (ra). To the level of the Prophet (saw). You might think that it is not possible. You might think that the journey is too far. But look how Allah (swt) ends this ayah. Look at the last statement that He (swt) makes. Then realize that it is indeed possible. Such is your Lord.

Allah (swt) begins His (swt)'s description of these people by saying “**And others have admitted their sins**”. First we should realize from this part of the ayah that these are others. They are not the hypocrites nor are they the sincere and true believers. They are other than these two groups. Allah (swt) describes them here as the ones who have admitted their sins. Actually the word which Allah (swt) uses gives the meaning that they have risen above their sins. They know that they have committed sins but they have risen above their sins. Their sins brought them down, their sins decreased their station with Allah (swt), but by admitting their sins, by acknowledging the fact that they have done wrong, they have risen above them.

One lesson that we can take from this is to see how pleased Allah (swt) is with us when we acknowledge our sins. When we admit our faults and try and journey back to Him (swt). We are all going to sin. That is part of our nature. The Prophet (saw) told us that every son of Adam will sin. But then he (saw) also said that the best of them are the ones who repent. So we should always be reminding ourselves that just for us to acknowledge our sin, just for us to admit the fact that we have sinned, and then to try and improve ourselves, this in and of itself is an action that is most pleasing to Allah (swt). This is by no means easy. First and foremost we have to bring ourselves to admit the fact that we have sinned. This means that we have to humble ourselves. This means that we have to destroy all the excuses that we made in our hearts when we committed that sin. We have to admit that we did wrong. We have to admit that we failed. This is difficult for most of us, except for those of us who have truly humbled ourselves before our Lord and Master, but if we are able to do it. If we are able to defeat our ego and do what is pleasing to Allah (swt), then as we see from this part of the ayah He (swt) will be most pleased with us. It is the only way in which we can rise above the sin that we have committed.

Then Allah (swt) tells us about such people **“they had mixed a righteous deed with another that was evil”**. So these are people who do righteous deeds but they commit some sins as well. Now the question to ask ourselves here is that are the righteous deeds or the sins of these people more? Do they lean more towards piety or more towards disobedience? We believe that it is the former of these and not the latter. The reason why we say this is because of what Allah (swt) says in the next part of the ayah. In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) may indeed turn to such people in mercy and forgiveness. Why would Allah (swt) turn towards them if their evil is more than their good? If they do not have more good than evil, then at the very least they should have a sincere desire to return to Allah (swt). In their hearts they must recognize the evil that they have done. Even if they are not able to stop that evil, even if they feel that they are too weak, they must at least have a sense of regret and remorse. Also notice in the ayah how Allah (swt) says that they have evil mixed into righteousness, and He (swt) does not say that they have mixed righteousness into evil. Thus even the language of the ayah gives an indication that the good deeds of such people outweigh their evil deeds.

The lesson that we can take from this is to realize that not all hope is lost if we have some evil deeds mixed into our good deeds. None of us are angels. None of us are prophets. In our book of deeds we cannot expect to find only good deeds. There will be some evil deeds in there as well, this is to be expected. So we should not lose hope. We should realize that we have a Lord that is Most Loving and Most Forgiving. He (swt) speaks of sinners like us in His (swt)'s Book and He (swt) praises them. He (swt) praises them for admitting their sins, He (swt) praises them for realizing the wrong in them and for conquering their pride. So at the very least if we can admit the wrong that we have done, and seek forgiveness from our Lord, then we should always have a hope that we are not in His (swt)'s Wrath. Even if these disgusting sins continue to linger, even if they are still there in our book of deeds mixed with our righteous deeds, as long as we make the effort to admit our fault and change ourselves then we should have hope.

Concerning these people Allah (swt) says **“perhaps Allah will turn to them”**. Notice the beauty of the language in this part of the ayah. Allah (swt) does not say that He (swt) will definitely turn to such people, rather He (swt) says that He (swt) might. Now of course Allah (swt) knows exactly what He (swt) is going to do. There is no doubt for Him (swt) whatsoever. Why then does He (swt) say that He (swt) might turn towards such people? It is because these people commit sins. It is because they still have not reached the state of perfection. So Allah (swt) does not want them to be content with the way that they are. He (swt) wants them to strive to improve themselves. If Allah (swt) would have said that He (swt) will definitely turn to them in mercy then they would not have made any effort to improve themselves. They would have been content with themselves because they are certain that Allah (swt) is content with them. Allah (swt), in His Mercy and Love for them, did not want them to do this. He (swt) did not want them to destroy themselves in their own pride and self-contentment. He (swt) wants them to recognize their faults. He (swt) wants them to strive to improve themselves. To rise above their sins. To be a better Muslim today than they were yesterday, and to be even better tomorrow. That is why Allah (swt) says that He (swt) may turn to them. Also we must remember that what Allah (swt) means here is that He (swt) will turn to them in forgiveness and mercy. It is not a literal “turning”. This is yet another example of why we cannot always take the literal meaning of ayahs and hadith.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that surely and most definitely He (swt) is Forgiving and Merciful. Many of us do not want to strive in this path because we think that we can never reach a state where Allah (swt) would be pleased with us. We think that whatever it is that we do it will never be enough for Him (swt). We look at the lives of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. We look at the lives of all the righteous scholars and warriors who strove hard in this path in the generations after them. We ask ourselves how we can ever be like them. We ask ourselves how we can ever compare to them. We who are sinners. We who still have traces of pride and arrogance in our hearts. Traces of envy and miserliness. We who still have trouble lowering our gaze or holding our tongue or keeping our focus in our Salah. How can we ever reach their level? Why would Allah (swt) ever look to us when He (swt) has servants such as them? Would any father want children who are so disobedient when he already has children who are so righteous? Many of us have this thinking. We think that we can never be good enough for Allah (swt). But the problem with this thinking is that we have forgotten who our Lord is. We have forgotten that He (swt) is not like any human being. Rather He (swt) is the Forgiving and the Merciful. His (swt)'s very nature is that He (swt) forgives and He (swt) has mercy. It is part of His (swt)'s Essence. Part of Who He (swt) IS.

When Allah (swt) says that He (swt) is the Forgiving, it gives the meaning that He (swt) is the One Who covers the sins. This Name gives the meaning of covering and concealing. So when Shaitan comes to you and makes you think about all the sins that you have done, when he tells you that you are not worthy to walk on this path, then think about this Name of your Lord. Think about Him (swt) covering all your sins. Are your sins greater or is the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) greater? As the Prophet (saw) told us, even if our sins were to reach the clouds in the sky, Allah (swt) would bring for us forgiveness that is even greater than that. Not only do you have to believe that Allah (swt) would forgive you for all the wrong that you have done but you also have to believe that He (swt) will have mercy upon you. He (swt) will give what you need to strive hard in this path. He (swt) will give you the patience and the steadfastness. He (swt) will make firm your feet. He (swt) will give you the knowledge and the wisdom. He (swt) will make even a sinner like you into a dawah carrier if only you believe in Him (swt).

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ
سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾

103. Take charity from their wealth to purify them and to make them grow, and pray for them, surely your prayer is a tranquility for them,.

We spoke in the previous ayah about those people who were in between good and evil. The ones who believed in this Message, the ones who had a desire to support this Message, but the ones who sometimes their laziness and their love for this world overpowered them from working for this Message. The narrations tell us that the previous ayah and this one were actually revealed concerning some of the Prophet (saw)'s companions. These were some Sahabah who had chosen not to march forth with the Prophet (saw) in the expedition to Tabuk. Now of course they were not hypocrites. They truly did believe in Allah (swt) and in this Message. They loved the Prophet (saw) and they desired to help him (saw) on his (saw)'s mission. But when they thought about how difficult the journey to Tabuk would be, when they thought about how they would have to travel in the scorching desert for days and days, when they thought about the powerful enemy which they would have to fight, their lower selves overpowered them and they stayed behind. They stayed behind knowing that it was wrong for them to stay behind. Afterwards they realized the wrong that they had done. So when the Muslim army came back from Tabuk they ran to the Prophet (saw) and begged him (saw) to forgive them. To ask Allah (swt) to forgive them. These two ayahs were revealed about this group of Sahabah.

Allah (swt) begins ayah by saying to the Prophet (saw) **“Take charity from their wealth to purify them and to make them grow”**. This was the recompense that Allah (swt) had legislated for them to be forgiven. A certain amount of their wealth needed to be taken and given in charity. They had stayed away from the expedition because of this world, and now they had to lose a portion of this world. They had to demonstrate to Allah (swt) that they cared for Him (swt) more than they did for this world. The way that this was done was that a portion of their wealth was taken away from them. It was given for the poor and the needy.

As a result of their giving this charity, not only does Allah (swt) forgive them but He (swt) also tells us how this charity will purify them and how it will make them grow. There are many ways in which this charity was a purification for them. First it cleaned away their sin. Their sin of remaining behind from the expedition was removed from their Book of deeds because of this charity that they had given. How wonderful is this? Because of this charity that they gave they were brought one step closer to the Garden and taken one step away from the Fire. The stain of this sin was completely removed from their Book. How wonderful is this? How Forgiving and Merciful and Generous is Allah (swt)?

The next way in which this charity was a purification for them was that it brought them closer to their Lord. The heart was created only for Allah (swt). It was created only for Him (swt). But man has filled his heart with other than Allah (swt). Demons such as arrogance and pride. Lusts and desires. Laziness and complacency. This was the reason why these Sahabah stayed behind. Even though they were Sahabah. Even though they were of the best generation. Because they had something in their hearts other than Allah (swt), they stayed behind. Now if they were to give this charity, then Allah (swt) is telling them here that it would purify their hearts of these demons. It would help them to dedicate their hearts only for Him (swt).

This charity would also help them to grow. The Arabic word *Zakat* really means to grow. There are several ways in which this charity would help them to grow. First it would increase them in nearness to Allah (swt). We are all on a journey towards Allah (swt). Some times we come closer to Him (swt) and other times we grow distant from Him (swt). Allah (swt) is promising these among the Sahabah here that if they would give this charity then He (swt) would increase them in nearness to Him (swt). He (swt) would cause them to grow in their nearness to Him (swt). Of all the things that a human being could increase in what could be better than this? What do you need with riches and transient pleasures when you can be near to Allah (swt)? To move further away from being in His (swt)'s Wrath and to become closer to His (swt)'s Pleasure. What could be better than this? These companions would be giving up some of their wealth but they would be increasing in something far greater. They would be increasing in their station with Allah (swt) and there is no better increase than this.

Even their wealth would not be decreasing but rather it would be increasing because of this charity. We know that the Prophet (saw) promised us that wealth would never decrease because of charity. This means that Allah (swt) would replace whatever we give away. We also know that Allah (swt) has promised us that He (swt) would bless charity. So the wealth on which charity is paid has the blessings of Allah (swt). This means that of a surety that wealth will grow. Thus for these companions, not only would they increase in their station with Allah (swt) but even their wealth would increase as well.

From this we should realize once again how Merciful and Forgiving Allah (swt) IS. These Sahabah had chosen to stay behind even after the call to jihad was sounded. They knew their responsibility. They knew how important it was to march forth with the Prophet (saw) and the other Muslims. They knew that Allah (swt) was Seeing them when they chose to remain behind. They knew that He (swt) was even Seeing into their heart at that moment when they chose themselves over Him (swt). But still they chose to remain behind. Why did Allah (swt) need to forgive them? What were they to Him (swt)? Allah (swt) could have done with them exactly what He (swt) did with the hypocrites. He (swt) could have allowed them to become more distant. Since they had chosen to turn away, He (swt) could have allowed them to go in that path. This would have been easy for Him (swt) if He (swt) wanted to and there would have been no one to question Him (swt). But He (swt) did not. Because they still had a few drops of Iman in their heart, He (swt) turned to them in Mercy and Forgiveness. Not only did He (swt) not punish them in this world, but He (swt) also gave them a way in which their sin could be pardoned in the Hereafter. Now if only they would give this small amount in charity then there would be no consequences for their sin whatsoever. They would be completely forgiven. Even the other Muslims could not say anything against them. If Allah (swt) has forgiven a people then who can say anything against them? Do they know better than He (swt)? So from the fact that Allah (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to take this charity from them for their sin to be forgiven we can see how Merciful and Loving our Lord is. Allah (swt) loves the believers. He (swt) wants to forgive them. Just look at how many ways He (swt) has given us for our sins to be forgiven. From wudu to walking to the masjid to fasting to Hajj. All these remove sins. How then can you turn away from Him (swt)?

Not only does Allah (swt) forgive these Sahabah completely for what they had done, but He (swt) does even more than that. In the next part of the ayah He (swt) says to the Prophet (saw) **“and pray for them, surely your prayer is a tranquility for them”**. Here Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to pray for these Sahabah. He (swt) even gives the reason, it is because the prayer of the Prophet (saw) is a source of tranquility for them. It was not enough that Allah (swt) had sent down Quran ayahs where He (swt) specifically told them that they would be forgiven, but He (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to pray for them specifically because his (saw)’s prayer would be a source of peace for them. Allah (swt) Knows that they love the Prophet (saw), He (swt) Knows how much his (saw)’s dua would mean for them. That is why just to make them pleased, just for their hearts to be at ease, Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to pray for them. Even though the prayer was not needed, Allah (swt) had already forgiven them by their paying this charity. But only to make them pleased and only for their hearts to be at ease, Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to pray for them. Now do you see how loving and forgiving your Lord is?

Also notice that the fact that Allah (swt) had to forgive them in so many ways also shows us how distraught and troubled these Sahabah were because of the sin that they committed. One narration tells us that they tied themselves to the pillars of the masjid and refused to be set free until Allah (swt) had forgiven them. Only when these ayahs were revealed did they then release themselves. So this shows how troubled they were because of the evil that they had done. How many of us today have this sensitivity to the sins that we have committed? Are we worried and troubled by our sins? Are we constantly asking Allah (swt) to forgive us for our sins? Or do we just brush them off and think nothing of them. We think that we are guaranteed Allah (swt)’s forgiveness or we think that we are so special that we should be allowed to indulge ourselves every now and then. This is the attitude that we have towards our sins. We view our sins as a fly on our nose while the Sahabah viewed their sins as a mountain that was about to fall on them. Yes it is true that Allah (swt) is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful, but can we use that as an excuse to turn away from Him (swt)? Have not forgotten that He (swt) is also the Strict in Punishment and that He (swt) is the One Who can do whatsoever that He (swt) pleases. So we too must be troubled by our sins. We must always be asking Allah (swt) to forgive them.

Another lesson that we can take from here is it to notice how special the prayer of the Prophet (saw) is. Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to pray for these Sahabah because He (swt) Knows that this prayer will be accepted. Allah (swt) is the One Who hears prayers and answers them if He (swt) so pleases. Now whose prayers would have more of a chance of being responded to than the prayer of the Prophet (saw), the beloved of Allah (swt)? So this also is what we must always be seeking. We must yearn for and desire the prayer of the Prophet (saw) for us. We should desire that he (saw) asks Allah (swt) to forgive us and to have mercy on us. This is especially so on the Day of Judgment when every one of our deeds will be added and calculated to the most excruciating of details. We know that we have all committed so many sins. One can write volumes upon volumes on only the sins that one of us has done. So on that Day when it will be decided whether we will spend eternity in the Fire or eternity in the Garden, what should we desire more than the for the Prophet (saw) to pray for us and to ask Allah (swt) to forgive us. But why would the Prophet (saw) pray for us if we turned away from his (saw)'s path? He (saw) spent his entire life trying to establish the Islamic State and trying to spread its dominion over the entire earth. So that all of mankind can receive the Message from Allah (swt) and live under the shade of His (swt)'s Law. When he (saw) passed away he (saw) expected his Ummah to carry on this mission. Now what do you think that he (saw) would think of us if we turn away from this responsibility? Would he (saw) be pleased with us? Would he (saw) pray for us? How certain are you that he (saw) would still pray for you if you walk away from this path? Are you willing to take that chance by gambling away the precious moments that you have in this life?

Finally in this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us that He (swt) is the Hearing and the Knowing. Once again we see an emphasis on hearing rather than sight. This is to remind us that our Lord hears what we whisper to ourselves. He (swt) Knows the words that we speak to ourselves in our hearts. So what matters the most from us is sincerity, utmost sincerity. If have this then even if we are never able to establish the Islamic State or even be part of a movement, Allah (swt) would still forgive us if He (swt) so pleases. But this has to be a genuine sincerity. If you are only making excuses for yourself then Allah (swt) Hears that and He (swt) Knows you. If sincerity is truly there then it must be translated into action. You must do for this dawah the best that you can do.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾

104. Do they not know that surely Allah is He Who accepts Tawbah from His slaves, and takes their charity, and that He is the Oft-Turning, the Most Merciful.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe Himself (swt) to us. He (swt) reminds us Who He (swt) IS. He (swt) reminds us why He (swt) deserves that we dedicate ourselves completely to Him (swt). Why we should give our lives for Him (swt). Why we should prefer serving Him (swt) to anything else in this world. The scholars have noted how Allah (swt) has described Himself in two ways in the Quran. He (swt) has described Himself with Names of Majesty and Glory, and this they refer to as *jalal*. He (swt) has also described Himself with Names of Beauty and Sublimity which the scholars call *jamal*. The names of *jalal* makes us want to fear and revere Him (swt), while the Names of *jamal* makes us want to love Him (swt). Both this fear and reverence, as well as this love, should motivate us in our worship and servitude of Him (swt). Now while Allah (swt) is Great and Tremendous indeed because of His (swt)'s Names of *jalal*, He (swt) is even more Great and Tremendous because of His (swt)'s Names of *jamal*. This is because He (swt) has the Names of *jalal* on account of Who He (swt) IS, on account of Him (swt) being the Creator and Sustainer of all and the Lord and Master of all. But He (swt) has His (swt)'s Names of *jamal* on account of Who He (swt) chooses to be. He (swt) did not need to be so Forgiving, so Merciful and so Loving but He (swt) chose to be. He (swt) chose to accept our repentance and have mercy upon us even when there was absolutely no reason for Him (swt) to. He (swt) did only out of love for us. So this is an ever greater manifestation of His (swt)'s Perfection and Sublimity than is His (swt) being the All-Mighty and the All-Knowing. So just as we should strive to worship Him (swt) because we fear and revere Him (swt), we should worship Him (swt) even more because we love Him (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) describes Himself to us with His Names of *jamal*. So realize from this ayah how Beautiful and Sublime your Lord IS. Then realize how much of a right that He (swt) has over you for you to serve Him (swt).

This ayah is a question that Allah (swt) asks the Prophet (saw). He (swt) begins by asking **“Do they not know that surely Allah is He Who accepts Tawbah from His slaves”**. Here He (swt) wants to reassure the Sahabah who remained behind that He (swt) will accept their Tawbah. These Sahabah knew what a terrible sin they had committed in remaining behind. The Prophet (saw) had called them again and again, yet still they chose to remain behind. So some of them may have doubted if Allah (swt) would pardon them or not. Here He (swt) assures them that indeed He (swt) will pardon them. He (swt) calms their fears and eases their hearts.

Look even at the beautiful way in which Allah (swt) words this ayah. He (swt) asks almost in wonder and amazement as to how these people could doubt the fact that He (swt) will accept their Tawbah. He (swt) will accept their Tawbah, there is no doubt about that. To doubt that is almost like doubting Him (swt). It is the same as doubting His (swt)'s Power or His (swt)'s Knowledge. So just as you cannot say that Allah (swt) does not know everything or that He (swt) cannot do everything, you also cannot say that He (swt) will never forgive you and have mercy upon you. If you do then you would be trying to put a limit on something that is very vast. Allah (swt) Himself finds this behavior almost surprising. That is the connotation given in the wording of the ayah. That is how unbelievable it is for anyone to doubt that Allah (swt) would forgive them.

So Allah (swt) reminds the early Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) who stayed behind from the Tabuk expedition, but who were still sincere to Him (swt) that indeed He (swt) would forgive them if they sincerely make Tawbah to Him (swt). There can be no doubt about this fact. If they were to turn to Allah (swt) then surely He (swt) would turn to them. However it has to be a true and sincere Tawbah on their part. Recall that when you make Tawbah or repentance to Allah (swt), it is a bit more involved than simply seeking His (swt)'s forgiveness. In addition to asking for forgiveness, you should sincerely regret the evil that you have done. You should wish that you could go back in time and stop yourself from doing that horrible act. In addition to that you must also make a sincere resolve not to return to that evil once again. You have to promise Allah (swt) that you will not return to that sin again. And of course you must stop doing that sin in the first place. Your Tawbah will not be accepted if you are still in a state of disobedience while you are making it. These are the conditions of Tawbah and so these are what those Sahabah

needed to fulfill in order for their repentance to be accepted. However if they were able to do all this then they could be sure that their Lord would accept them. That He (swt) would turn to them in mercy and forgiveness. The same can apply for those of us who are not involved in the dawah. Now we should realize our responsibility. Now our eyes should be opened. We cannot sleep anymore. We cannot let the days and the hours pass us by without us doing our part to support this Din. Now the admonishment has come to us. Now is the time to change our life. Now is the time for us to return to this path that Allah (swt) created us to walk on.

Allah (swt) then says “**and takes their charity**”. Just as Allah (swt) wants us to know that He (swt) is the One Who accepts our Tawbah, He (swt) also wants us to know that He (swt) is the One Who takes our charity. Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to take charity from the Muslims who had remained behind in order for their sin to be removed. Here Allah (swt) wants them to realize that it is He (swt) Who is taking their money. It is not really the poor who are taking their money but rather it is Allah (swt). This also is meant to reassure them and to ease their hearts. The fact that Allah (swt) has accepted their charity is a clear indication that He (swt) has forgiven their sin.

From this we can take a lesson as well. Whenever we spend anything in the way of our Lord we should never think that we are doing it for the people. Rather we should always remind ourselves that whatever we are doing is for Him (swt) only. So when you give some money to the poor or to some students of knowledge then you have to realize that it is not these people who are taking your money, but rather it is only Allah (swt). In your giving charity your intention was never these people but it was only Him (swt). When we always bear this fact in mind Insha Allah it will bring us closer to Allah (swt). It will remind us of Him (swt). It will remind us that He (swt) is the purpose of our existence. It will also save us from seeking anything in return from the people. Recall from Surah Baqarah where Allah (swt) warned us not to destroy our charity by asking favors in return for it from the people whom we gave it to. When we always remind ourselves that it is only Allah (swt) Whom we are spending for, that He (swt) is the One Who is taking our money and not the people, then Insha Allah this will save us from seeking anything in return from the people. Insha Allah it will also help to preserve the love and the brotherhood between us and

other Muslims. Insha Allah we will be truly selfless and not expect anything from them because of what we do for them. Thus we should always keep in mind that it is Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Whom we do our works for. Even when it may seem on the outside that we are helping others, we ourselves should always remind ourselves that we are not giving them but rather we are giving Him (swt). Of course He (swt) has no need for our charity or our efforts. He (swt) is the Self-Sufficient, but His (swt) taking from us is symbolic of Him (swt) accepting from us. May we always find all of our sacrifices to be accepted by Him (swt) and may they remove our sins!

Finally in this ayah Allah (swt) asks us why we cannot realize **“that He is the Oft-Turning, the Most Merciful”**. When Allah (swt) says that He (swt) is the Oft-Turning, He (swt) means that He (swt) is the Oft-Turning in Forgiveness and Mercy. All of mankind is always in one of two states with Allah (swt). They are either among those whom He (swt) is pleased with, or they are among those whom He (swt) is displeased with. Whenever you do more righteous actions, whenever you keep away from sin, then you are among those whom He (swt) is pleased with. But when you commit a sin or when you neglect one of your obligations then you become among those whom He (swt) is displeased with. But once you are in this state where you are under His (swt)’s Wrath, you have to realize that you can easily return once again to the state where you are under His (swt)’s Pleasure. All that you have to do is make a sincere Tawbah to Him (swt) for the sin that you have committed. If you do then He (swt) will quickly change from being displeased with you to being pleased with you. Such is His (swt)’s Nature. This is what He (swt) wants us to realize in this part of the ayah. That He (swt) easily and quickly accepts the repentance of His (swt)’s servants. He (swt) accepts their repentance and then He (swt) turns to them in Mercy. He (swt) shows them more mercy than a mother would show to her infant child by continuing to provide for them and by continuing to guide them to Him (swt). This is our Lord. Why then can we not realize this? How can we continue to live a life of heedlessness? A life where we only live to serve ourselves and our desires instead of a life where we serve Him (swt).

We also see here why Allah (swt)’s Names of *jamal* are even more of a reason for us to worship Him (swt) than His (swt)’s Names of *jalal*. What we have to realize is that Allah (swt) chose to be Oft-Turning and Most Merciful. He (swt) did not need to be. He (swt) could have

punished us easily at the very first sin that we commit. Who are we to Him (swt)? We are easily replaceable, if we choose not to please Him (swt) then He (swt) can bring another people just like us and that would be very easy for Him (swt). But He (swt) chose not to be this way, rather He (swt) chose to be One Who forgives again and again. No matter how many times we turn away from Him (swt), He (swt) is willing to turn back to us. No matter how many times we are arrogant before Him (swt), He (swt) showers down His (swt)'s Mercy upon us. This is how He (swt) chose to be. Now do you realize how Tremendous and Sublime your Lord IS?

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ
 عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

105. And say “Work, for soon Allah will see your works, and His Messenger, and the believers, and soon you will return to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, then He will inform you of all that you used to do”.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) had told us about those who had regretted not joining the Prophet (saw) on the expedition to Tabuk. Once the army returned, these believers rushed to the Prophet (saw) and admitted their sin. They begged him (saw) to ask Allah (swt) to forgive them. So Allah (swt) promised them His (swt)'s Forgiveness and He (swt) reminded them that He (swt) is the Most Forgiving and the Oft-Turning. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to a different group of people. This group also remained behind. But unlike the group that Allah (swt) had told us about in the previous ayah, this group did not seek Forgiveness of Him (swt). This group did not make Tawbah. They did not admit the wrong that they had done. They continued to wander in their evil and misguidance. What will Allah (swt) do with this group? How will He (swt) deal with them? This is what He (swt) tells us in this ayah. Once you know your responsibility to participate in this path of dawah and jihad. If you still choose to turn away, if you still choose not to do your part, then realize in this ayah your Lord is speaking to you as well.

Notice once again how Allah (swt) does not speak to these people directly rather He (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to address them. This shows just how displeased He (swt) was with them. Even these words were not words that were spoken to them out loud. Rather Allah (swt) wanted the Prophet (saw) to say these words to them in his (saw)'s heart. When such people came to the Prophet (saw), they came in their hypocrisy and their deception, acting like they were the best of Muslims even though they had neglected this obligation of dawah and jihad. At that moment when they came to him (saw) Allah (swt) wanted the Prophet (saw) to speak these words to them in his (saw)'s heart. The same was true for all the sincere believers. They also should speak these words when these hypocrites came to them.

Allah (swt) commands us to say in our hearts to these hypocrites **“Work, for soon Allah will see your works, and His Messenger, and the believers”**. These hypocrites were doing certain actions. They were spending their time doing certain works. Here Allah (swt) commands them to continue doing such actions. They had chosen to turn away from this path. They had chosen to spend their days in heedlessness. Choosing themselves over their Creator. Not doing anything for this dawah. Chasing only after the life of this world while still claiming to be Muslims. If this is the path that they had chosen then Allah (swt) tells them to continue on this path. They should continue in their heedlessness. The reason why they should continue on their path is because very soon Allah (swt), the Prophet (saw) and the believers will see their actions. Now we know that the hypocrites were not exposed in the life of this world, so this could not be referring to this life. So when is it that the actions of these hypocrites will be exposed for all to see. When will even the believers see all the actions that they had done. Of course this is referring to the Day of Judgment. On that great Day when these hypocrites are made to stand before Allah (swt). On that Day He (swt) will expose them to the whole Muslim Ummah for the hypocrites that they are. Everyone will see how they slowly snuck away from the Muslim army as it left Madinah. Everyone will see how they were enjoying themselves with their wives and their slave girls in their gardens while the Prophet (saw) and the sincere believers were suffering in the sweltering heat of the desert. They claimed that they were Muslims. They claimed that they were part of the greatest Ummah. They claimed that they followed the Prophet (saw). But on that great Day they will

exposed for the liars that they were. Everyone will see how they spent their days. How it was in no way a reflection of their words. All the believers will see this. What is even worse for them is that Allah (swt) Himself and the Prophet (saw) will see this as well. Do you think that they will still have the prayer and the intercession of the Prophet (saw)? Do you think that Allah (swt) will still forgive them? They who had no sincerity for Allah (swt), His Messenger (saw), and His Din. They who did not even want to do their part. They who did not even make Tawbah for the wrong that they did. Allah (swt) tells them in this ayah to continue doing what they are doing. They were only making their bed in the Fire. The language of the ayah gives the meaning that this is going to happen very soon. Very soon they are going to taste the consequences of what they had done.

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize that if we choose to turn away from this dawah, then we should expect the same to happen to us. We should expect Allah (swt) to expose us for all the believers to see. Just imagine, your turn comes on the Day of Judgment. You are made to stand before Allah (swt). Everyone is looking at you. The Prophet (saw), the previous prophets and messengers, the Sahabah, the righteous scholars of the past, your family, your friends, the entire Muslim Ummah, they are all looking at you. In front of all these people Allah (swt) will expose you for the hypocrite that you are. He (swt) will show all of them how you spent your days. All the hours that you spent watching television, playing games, chatting idly with your friends, sleeping, eating, just wasting your time without doing anything for the Din. Not even using the time that you have to make dhikr of Allah (swt) or to make dua for this Ummah. Just wasting time. Everyone will see that this is who you were. This is how you spent your days. Just imagine the embarrassment and the shame that you will feel. Especially in front of your beloved (saw). Is this what you want him (saw) to see from you on the Day that you meet him (saw)? Know that this is the reality that awaits you if you choose you turn away from this path. So try your best to save yourself from it. Do what you can to support this dawah. If all that you can do is speak to other Muslims about the Islamic State. If all that you can do is learn Arabic and learn the Din. If all that you can do is pray to Allah (swt) and make the dua to give this Ummah victory then do this. Do the best that you can do. Always remember that Allah (swt) Sees the actions that you do, and more importantly He (swt) Knows the sincerity in your heart.

Then Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) and the believers to say to these hypocrites **“and soon you will return to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, then He will inform you of all that you used to do”**. Look at how Allah (swt) describes Himself (swt) in this ayah. He (swt) says that He (swt) is the Knower of the unseen and the seen. This means that there is nothing whatsoever that is hidden from Him (swt). These hypocrites thought that no one saw them when they slowly snuck away from the army. They thought that no one saw the hypocrisy that they hid in their hearts. They thought that no one heard the lies that they spoke. How wrong were they! The All-Knowing knew all about them and on that Day He (swt) will inform them of all that they had done. Imagine what it must be like for them to hear Allah (swt) Himself tell them of the evil that they have done. They themselves know what they have done. They know how they neglected the dawah and enjoyed themselves in this world. But imagine what it must be like for them to hear Allah (swt) Himself telling them. Imagine the fear, the shame, the distress that will grip their hearts at that moment. In the life of this world they were heedless of Allah (swt). They were ignorant to the Majesty and Glory that is He (swt)! But on that Day the veil will be removed. They will realize Allah (swt) in all His (swt)'s Greatness. Then they will realize what fools they were in turning away from Him (swt). But is there time now for them to come back to Him (swt)? Is there time now to make amends? Of course not. Not only is it too late but it is Allah (swt) Himself Who is informing them of the wrong that they did. This in and of itself will be a great torment for them. To finally realize the wrong that they did in turning away from Allah (swt). But to realize too late. To have Allah (swt) Himself informing them directly of just how much they had displeased Him (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from this fate!

Also notice how Allah (swt) uses the word *all* when He (swt) says how He (swt) will inform them of “all that they had done”. This should remind us once again how there is not one single action that we do which will be left out of the reckoning. Rather we have to always remember that Allah (swt) judge us for each and every one of our actions. Nothing whatsoever will be left out. So we should always be looking to our deeds. We should be looking to each and every single one of our deeds. Without a doubt this dawah demands a lot from us. We have to provide for our families, we have to do our responsibilities in this world, and then on top of that we have to work

for the Din as well. We have to strive to learn Arabic, to learn Islam, and at the same time to carry this idea to others. Where then does this leave us any free time? Where then does this leave us any time to just sit idly by? This is when we have to remind ourselves of the fact that Allah (swt) is Aware of all of our deeds. Not even the smallest of deeds that we do escapes His (swt)'s Knowledge. So realize now with certainty that on the Day of Judgment Allah (swt) is going to inform you of all that you did in this life. He (swt) is going to inform you of how you were reading this book at this moment. So try your best. Do not belittle even the smallest of acts that you can do. Realize that one day soon your Lord is going to inform you of all of it.

وَأَخْرُونَ مُرْجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَإِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

106. And others are made to wait for the Command of Allah, whether He will punish them or He will forgive them, and He is Knowing, Wise.

In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us that there was yet another group that appeared in the Muslim community after the Tabuk expedition. This group is the fourth. We learned about three already. First there were the sincere believers who accompanied the Prophet (saw) in the expedition. Then there were the hypocrites who remained behind. The ones who hated the Din and hated the Prophet (saw). The ones who had no intention whatsoever to even go with the Prophet (saw). Then there were those believers of weak faith who remained behind, but who admitted their fault and sought forgiveness from Allah (swt). This was the group that Allah (swt) pardoned and He (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to take charity from them and to pray for them. Then there was a fourth group. This group also remained behind. But they did not come to the Prophet (saw) to admit their fault and to ask him (saw) to seek forgiveness from Allah (swt). They were too ashamed to face the Prophet (saw) after what they had done. So they held back, they did not come to the Prophet (saw) and admit what they had done. However unlike the hypocrites this group still had some Iman in their hearts. They truly did believe in Allah (swt), they

truly did love the Prophet (saw), they truly did want to work in this dawah. But on the Day of Tabuk their desires and their laziness got the better of them. Through these Shaitan convinced them to remain in the comfort of their homes rather than march forth with the Prophet (saw) and the believers in the heat of the desert. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what was the fate of this group. This group of Sahabah who did believe, but who remained behind. Who remained behind and who did not even seek forgiveness for their remaining behind. Allah (swt) is the Most Forgiving, and the Most Merciful, but realize from here that He (swt) does not take lightly those who turn away from this obligation of dawah and jihad. Realize that this could be your fate as well if you turn away from this obligation.

Allah (swt) says about this group **“And others are made to wait for the Command of Allah, whether He will punish them or He will forgive them”**. Allah (swt) says about this fourth group that their case has been deferred for a time. When this ayah was revealed, He (swt) had not yet disclosed whether He (swt) would punish them or forgive them. He (swt) may do either. In fact the language of the ayah stresses the fact that He (swt) may do either. He (swt) may forgive them or He (swt) may punish them. This is because they are a people who were exactly in the middle. On the one hand they did not march forth with the Prophet (saw) and the believers even though they were very much able to. They had the means and they had all that they needed for the journey. Furthermore after the Prophet (saw) returned they did not rush to him (saw) and beg him (saw) for forgiveness like the other group that had remained behind had done. On the other hand they were not true hypocrites. They did believe in this Message, they did love Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw), they did want to support this Din and this dawah. But they did not find within themselves the strength to march forth on this expedition and then they also did not find within themselves the strength to ask the Prophet (saw) for forgiveness when he (saw) returned. Even though they deeply regretted what they had done, they could not face the Prophet (saw) with their sin. So they were exactly in the middle between being in a state where they were pleasing to Allah (swt) and where they were not pleasing to Him (swt). That is why He (swt) does not disclose His (swt)’s Judgment on them at that moment. He (swt) wants to give them more time to see how they behave. Based on their actions in this time, either He (swt) will punish them

or He (swt) will reward them. That is why He (swt) refers to them here as waiting for His (swt)'s Command. The Command of Allah (swt) for them is His (swt)'s Judgment on them.

Now some people may raise the question that if Allah (swt) is All-Knowing then why did He (swt) not pass judgment on these Sahabah right away. Why did He (swt) defer their judgment for a time? The answer to this question is that it not for Himself (swt) that He (swt) delayed revealing the judgment but rather it was for them. Allah (swt) already knows what their fate will be. We believe that the Knowledge of Allah (swt) is Perfect. It encompasses everything and it neither increases nor decreases. So it was not for Himself (swt) that He (swt) delayed the judgment but rather it was for these Sahabah. If He (swt) would have revealed their fate at this juncture then their Book would have been closed. But in giving the time, He (swt) was giving them a chance. They did know the fate that awaited them. So as far as they were concerned they had time in which to act. Time in which to work to redeem themselves.

This question actually stems from an old debate that has existed for a while now in our Ummah. Its source is the apparent conflict between the free-will of man and the Knowledge and Decree of Allah (swt). Notice how we said that the conflict is only apparent. To the one who looks only at the surface it may seem as if there is a conflict, but if one were to study the text and the reality deeply one would see that there is no conflict. It is true that Allah (swt) Knows all things. He (swt) Knew everything that would happen even before He (swt) created the universe. At the same time however it also true that we as human beings have free-will. This is because we do not know what is in the Knowledge of Allah (swt). We do not know what He (swt) Knows so how can we act on what we do not know. This is why the link between our actions and the Knowledge of Allah (swt) has to be cut. In other words we cannot base our actions on the Divine Knowledge. We believe that Allah (swt) Knows all things and at the same time we believe that we have to act. That our actions determine our fate in the Hereafter. Now of course none of us can go to the Garden except with the Mercy of Allah (swt). None of us can do even a single good deed unless Allah (swt) gives us the enabling grace. So we should never rely on our own selves and we should never become arrogant. Rather we should rely on Him (swt) and realize our utter slave hood of Him (swt). But we also have to remember that He (swt) has given us the choice.

The proof for this can be found in several ayahs of the Quran as well as in the actions of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. How many are the ayahs in the Quran where Allah (swt) has said that He (swt) has guided man to the two paths? How many are the ayahs in the Quran where Allah (swt) has said that man will only have what he strives for? How many are the ayahs in the Quran where Allah (swt) has called the Fire a “fitting recompense for what the people have earned”? All of these ayahs show that the actions of the human being have weight, they effect his judgment in the Hereafter. Even this ayah itself is an evidence to show that the human being does have free-will. Allah (swt) defers the judgment on these Sahabah because He (swt) wants to give them time to see how they will act. This shows that their actions do carry weight. They will be judged based on the actions that they do in the time that they have.

The proof can also be seen in the actions of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. Did the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah ever have the attitude that they did not strive hard in this Din since Allah (swt) already Knows all their actions? Were they ever lazy or complacent in their worship and servitude of Allah (swt) because of this? Or did they spend every moment of their lives trying to please Him (swt) while still knowing that all their actions were in His (swt)'s Knowledge? Of course this is what they did. They realized with full conviction that Allah (swt) Knew all things and had decreed all things and still they strove to please Him (swt). They did not deny the Knowledge of Allah (swt) nor did they ever become complacent in their worship and servitude because of it. They knew that Allah (swt) was Perfect and still they strove to the best of their ability to please Him (swt). Allah (swt) has commanded us to take them as an example, He (swt) has commanded us to follow in their ways. So what then should be our understanding on this issue? How other way can we understand it except how the Messenger and his generation understood it? They are the ones onto whom this revelation first came down, so obviously their understanding of it would be most sound.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see that the Sahabah were not perfect. They were not angels. They were not infallible. They made mistakes. They sinned. Even though they were the best generation. Even though they had the best understanding of this Din. Even though Allah (swt) is pleased with them and even though He (swt) praised them in His

Book. They still feel into error. This is part of what it means to be human, and as we know the Sahabah were all human. So it is wrong for us to believe that they were incapable of sin. Even the major sins. They were human just like us and they too can fall just like us. In the end the final decision is only with Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) is the Knowing and the Wise. He (swt) Knows best the condition of these Sahabah who had remained behind. He (swt) Knows if they were deserving of punishment or forgiveness. He (swt) Knows what was in the deepest corners of their heart. Whether it be love for Him (swt), His Messenger and His Din or whether it be arrogance and pride. He (swt) Knows them better than they knew themselves. He (swt) also Knows what they did in the time that they were given. Did they make the effort to change themselves? Did they sincerely and utterly regret what they had done? Did they try to make amends by doing good? If they did not come to the Prophet (saw) and beg him (saw) for forgiveness did they at least ask forgiveness from Allah (swt) in their hearts? Allah (swt) Knows all of this. He (swt) is also Wise. In His (swt)'s Wisdom He (swt) Knows what is the right judgment for their crime. Even the time in which they were told to wait was also a punishment for them. They had to eagerly anticipate what Allah (swt) was going to say concerning them. Not knowing whether they would be forgiven or punished. Even this punishment, Allah (swt) Knows exactly how long to make it last. Whether to end it sooner or to prolong it for a while. All this comes from His (swt)'s Limitless Knowledge and Perfect Wisdom. Such is our Lord. The Perfect One. Just the fact that He (swt) is so Perfect and Sublime a Being should be enough of a reason to dedicate ourselves to Him (swt).

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا
لِمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفُنَّ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَ وَاللَّهُ
يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

107. And those who take a masjid to cause harm, and for kufr, and to promote division among the believers, and as an outpost for the one who has made war with Allah and His Messenger from before, and they will surely swear “We only intended the best”, but Allah bears witness that surely they are liars.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe for us the hypocrites within our community. A question that we can ask ourselves is why is it that Allah (swt) has dedicated so many ayahs of the Quran to speaking only about the hypocrites. If we look at the context in which this Surah was revealed, the Islamic State had already been established. The dawah to mankind had already been launched. The various nations of the world were being invited to this Message. If they did not agree to return the sovereignty in their lands to Allah (swt) then jihad would be fought against them. At the time of the Prophet (saw), among the states with which the Islamic State had already entered into jihad with were the mighty Roman and Persian empires. Empire that stretched across continents. Empires that subdued and conquered all other nations and peoples. These were the forces against which the Prophet (saw) and the small band of Sahabah who were with him (saw) had to fight against. Now you would think that if Allah (swt) was going to speak about the enemies of this Message, He (swt) would speak about these. Instead He (swt) speaks about the hypocrites. He (swt) spends so many ayahs in this Surah speaking only about the hypocrites. Why does He (swt) do this? Why does He (swt) tell us over and over again in His blessed Book about these people? Muslims have been reading these ayahs now for centuries. Countless Muslims have committed these ayahs to memory and they are guarded in their hearts. Why then is it so important for us as a community to know about these people? It is because they truly are the greatest of enemies for us. Of all the obstacles that stand between us and the Pleasure of Allah (swt) they are the greatest and the most dangerous. That is why we have to know them.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about a certain group of hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw). This group of hypocrites were the worst in their hypocrisy and their hostility against this Message. They are the ones who hated this Message that Allah (swt) had sent for the guidance of mankind and as a mercy for all creation. They did not want to live under the Law of Allah (swt). They wanted to give themselves the right to rule and live in a land where their desires dictated what was permissible and what was not permissible. They wanted to allow women to walk in the streets while showing their body. They wanted to allow usury and taxes where they could exploit the people. They wanted to allow adultery, homosexuality, and all other kinds of perversions. They knew that the Islamic State came to destroy all of these. They knew that the State came to create a society that was dedicated only to the worship of Allah (swt). The main purpose of the government would be to call the people to Allah (swt). This what they hated. This is what they sought to destroy. So they were planning and plotting day and night on how they could reach this objective. How they could destroy the Islamic State and replace it with a secular government. A government of evil. A government where the source of law were the passions, and the lusts, and the greed of man. They called themselves Muslims but they did not submit.

Here Allah (swt) tells us one of the ways in which they rebelled against His (swt) Law. Allah (swt) tells us how they built a masjid. The narrations tell us that this masjid was built on the outskirts of Madinah. These hypocrites would congregate in this masjid. But instead of gathering to worship Allah (swt) and to glorify Him (swt) there, they were gathering to plan how they could oppose Him (swt). How they could destroy the State that represented His (swt)'s Law on the earth. How they could silence the dawah that carried His (swt)'s Message to the people. This is why Allah (swt) says that the purpose of their masjid was **"to cause harm"**. What could be a greater harm than seeking to destroy the Islamic State? How could you possibly harm mankind more than if you denied them the justice of living under the Law of Allah (swt)? How could you cause them more pain than denying them the chance to know their Creator? This is the great harm that these hypocrites sought to do. Not only to the Muslim community, but to all mankind. In fact to all creation because as we know Allah (swt) sent this Message as a Mercy to all the worlds. How evil of a people would cause such harm only for their own desires and their pride?

Not only do they seek to do harm in this masjid but they also use it to spread their ideas of kufr. The word *kufr* in this ayah refers both to their rejection of this Message after they knew that it was the Truth, and also to their ungratefulness to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) had given them. They used this masjid to promote their ideas of kufr. To spread it amongst themselves and to whomever they could convince. Just think how evil these people were. They gathered together in this masjid and they encouraged each other to sin, encouraged each other to be ungrateful to Allah (swt). They talked about how they could foil the plans of the Prophet (saw) in the dawah. They talked about how they could inform the enemies of this Message the secrets of the Muslim army without the Prophet (saw) finding out about it. They told each other that the Message which the Prophet (saw) brought was not the Truth when they very well knew that it was. They told themselves that this life of dawah and jihad was too difficult. They told each other that they should just sit at home while the Prophet (saw) and the true believers with him (saw) march forth on this expedition. They talked about how they could spread these ideas among the Ummah and encourage others to join their camp. This was the evil that they discussed amongst themselves. This was the kufr that came from this masjid.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that yet another purpose of this masjid was to “**to promote division among the believers**”. Not only was this masjid a source of harm for all the creation, not only did there emanate from this masjid kufr, but it was also a place in which the hypocrites would gather and discuss how they could create rifts in the Muslim community. They knew that the best way in which they could destroy the Islamic State was to cause divisions among the believers, and to cause the believers to fight each other. So they discussed in this masjid how they could achieve this objective. They talked about how they could sow feelings of nationalism and tribalism amongst their brethren. Many of their clansmen were sincere believers, they were among the Ansar. So these hypocrites talked to each other about how they could promote ideas of tribalism in their families. Make their family members who are believers remember the old rivalries that existed amongst the tribes of Yathrib. Make them realize that the Muhajiroon were foreigners who had come to their land and who were stealing their resources. Their goal in all these was to break the Muslim Ummah which Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) had united into

one nation. One nation from various tribes and nations. They wanted to break this unity and divide the Ummah once again. Divide the Ummah once again into various tribes and nations. Each one only looking out for themselves. Some of them even fighting others. The Ummah was one nation, united in brotherhood and love, and these hypocrites wanted to return them to various tribes fighting each other. This was another evil objective that they sought in their masjid.

Allah (swt) then says “**and an outpost for the one who has made war with Allah and His Messenger from before**”. This was the next purpose for this masjid of evil. It was to serve as an outpost for those who make war with Allah (swt) and His (swt)’s Message. Recall that we mentioned in a previous ayah how these hypocrites were in contact with the Romans and with the Arab tribes that were loyal to the Romans. They would send intelligence reports of the movements of the Muslim army to the Romans. They would tell the Romans whenever the Muslims had achieved a victory and whenever they had suffered a defeat. They would tell the Romans when the Muslims were most vulnerable to attack. They most likely were the ones who even convinced the Romans to invade the Islamic State in the first place. That was why the expedition to Tabuk was needed to try and repel this invasion. Not only did these hypocrites provide the enemies of Islam with intelligence information, and not only did they encourage them to invade the Islamic State, but they even promised them an outpost from which their offensive could be launched. A base for their troops. That is why Allah (swt) tells us here that another purpose for this masjid was that it would be a base for this invading Roman army. An outpost for the Romans in Muslim land. A base from which they could attack Madinah, the capital of the Islamic State. This was what these hypocrites planned for their masjid. How different are these hypocrites from many of the fools who rule the Muslim lands today? The ones who permit the soldiers of kufr to use Muslim lands as a base from which they could launch attacks against the Muslims. From which they could kill Muslims. These are the fools who are ruling our lands. Since they support those who make war with Allah (swt) and His Messenger are they themselves not making war with Allah (swt) and His Messenger? They do this and they have the audacity to call themselves Muslims. How evil then are they? How evil are those so-called “scholars” who would support them and give legitimacy to them? Are they themselves anything but hypocrites?

The hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) built their masjid as a base for the Romans and they were anticipating their arrival. But of course the Roman army never came. When the Roman emperor found out that the Prophet (saw) himself had marched out of Madinah and come to the borders of the Islamic State only to meet his army, he turned his army back. Just the sight of the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims put such fear in his heart. When the Muslim army was returning home from Tabuk, Gibreel (as) came to the Prophet (saw) and told him (saw) what these hypocrites had done. How they had built this masjid of evil. He (as) gave the Prophet (saw) this ayah where Allah (swt) listed in detail all the sinister purposes that they hoped to achieve with this masjid. The main purpose of this masjid was that it is sought to destroy the Islamic State. The entity that represented the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth. That was why the Prophet (saw) then ordered this masjid to be destroyed. As soon as he (saw) returned from Tabuk, he (saw) ordered that this masjid be destroyed. Even though the Prophet (saw) did not want to single out the hypocrites in the community. Even though he (saw) had specifically refused to harm them because he (saw) did not want the people to say that he (saw) killed his companions. Still he (saw) perceived this masjid to be such a threat that he (saw) ordered it to be destroyed. This show how important the Prophet (saw) considered protecting the Islamic State and defending Muslim lives. He (saw) would even destroy masjid.

Remember that these hypocrites had built a masjid. A place that was supposed to be dedicated to the worship of Allah (swt). But they used this masjid for evil. They used this masjid to oppose the dawah. Sayyid Qutb tells us in this tafsir of this ayah how the hypocrites in our time are doing the same. They have several masjid and "Islamic" organizations. They claim that with such they are trying to support this Din. They claim that with such they are trying to help the Ummah. They claim that they only seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). But if we study the reality of these entities we would see that they are in fact opposing the dawah. Through these they are trying to convince the Muslims that we do not need to work for the restoration of the Islamic State. How many "Islamic" organizations are there today that promote secularism? That discourage Muslims from working in the dawah to bring back the State. That encourage Muslims to be content living in a secular society. That keep the focus and the attention of the Muslims on

something other than this effort to establish the Din of Allah (swt). Today there are several organizations and masajid that serve this purpose. They are in reality no different from the masjid of evil that the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) built. They both pretend to be good but in reality they are evil. They seek to silence the dawah to Allah (swt). To prevent His (swt)'s Law from returning to the earth. How careful then do we have to be of them?

Even though these hypocrites have such evil intentions we have to always remind ourselves that they will never admit their evil. In fact they will say they very opposite of what they intend. That is why Allah (swt) tells us in the next part of the ayah **“they will surely swear “We only intended the best”**”. Here Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) that if he (saw) were to ask these hypocrites as to what were their intentions in building this masjid then they would reply by saying that they intended only the best. Meaning they intended only to please Allah (swt). Because what could be a better intention for one's actions than to please Allah (swt) with it. But it would be a lie. Instead of pleasing Allah (swt), they actually sought to oppose Him (swt) and prevent His (swt)'s Law from being established on the earth. So instead of earning His (swt)'s Pleasure they were earning His (swt)'s Wrath. Similarly the hypocrites in our time would say similar lies when they are asked about their masajid and their organizations. But it would all be lies. They are all discouraging Muslims from working to reestablish the Islamic State, thus they are working to prevent Allah (swt)'s Law from returning. How could this be pleasing to Him (swt)?

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying **“but Allah bears witness that surely they are liars”**. There is emphasis and certainty here in the Arabic that cannot easily be conveyed in English. Allah (swt) Himself bears witness with the utmost certainty and surety that these hypocrites are surely liars. This is what our Lord wants us to know about them. This is what He (swt) wants us to always remember about them. They are a people who have no sincerity whatsoever in the words that they speak. They would say that they believe in this Message. They would say that they are our brothers. They would say that they want to help the Ummah. They would say that they want to serve the Din. But it is all nothing but lies. Allah (swt) Himself bears witness to the fact that they are liars. How then can we be so naïve? How then can we not make the effort to protect ourselves from them and their deception?

Now that the hypocrites are rampant in our community, we have to take extra care. Whenever we hear from the tongue of a scholar any words discouraging us to make the effort to restore the Islamic State then we have to think twice before accepting what they say. Even if that scholar may be the most knowledgeable and pious of scholars that we know. Even if he make the most eloquent and convincing of arguments. We still have to be careful of what he says. He himself may even be sincere, he himself may think that he is doing what is best for this Din and this Ummah. But somewhere, somehow, he has been deceived. He has been given the wrong ideas. The idea that the Islamic State is a myth, the idea that the Shariah is modifiable and changeable based on time and place, the idea that it is not an obligation upon all Muslims to live under the Law of Allah (swt). These are ideas that are being promoted in the Ummah today. The West wants to remove the one remaining threat that it has to secure its domination over the world. In order to achieve this objective, in order to promote these ideas, it will use Muslims. Hypocrites within our community. They will not be alone but rather they will have organizations. They will have the support and the funding of the governments. The governments who want to maintain the status quo. Just like the masjid that these hypocrites built their objective will be to cause harm, to spread kufr, and to promote disunity amongst the Muslims. So be wary, my dear brother and my dear sister, of all scholars and groups who speak against working for the restoration of Islam. Recite to yourself again and again the ending of this ayah where your Lord tells you about these hypocrites. He (swt) Himself bears witness that they are liars. How then can you ever believe them? How then can you give credence to what they say? How can you allow them to prevent you from doing your part for this effort?

لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَّمَسْجِدٌ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ
تَقُمْ فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ



108. Do not ever stand therein, surely a masjid founded on Taqwa from the very first day has more of a right for you to stand in it, in it are men who love to purify themselves, and Allah loves those who are pure.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) what he (saw) should do with this masjid that the hypocrites had built. He (swt) also tells him (saw) what are the masajid that are worthy of him (saw) to be in. Finally Allah (swt) tells him (saw) who are the people that He (swt) loves. Like every ayah in the Quran we have to use this ayah to become closer to our Lord. When Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) what should be done with the masajid of the hypocrites, then we have to believe that this command applies to us as well. When Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) what are the masajid that are pleasing to Him (swt) and who are the people that are beloved to Him (swt) then we have to try and frequent those masajid and we have to try and be like those people. This effort that we make, this is how we come closer to Allah (swt). This is how we seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. There is no other purpose for our lives other than this.

Regarding the masjid of the hypocrites, Allah (swt) says to the Prophet (saw) **“Do not ever stand therein”**. This does not simply mean that he (saw) should not stand for prayer in this masjid, rather it means that he (saw) should not even set foot inside. That is how displeasing this structure was to Allah (swt). It was so hated to Him (swt) that He (swt) did not want His (swt)'s beloved (saw) to spend even one moment inside of it. Notice the emphasis in the language of the ayah. The Prophet (saw) is being told to not ever stand in that masjid. So this command applies for all time. It also applies for all Muslims. No believer should ever stand in that place. This command to not even stand in that masjid is also an implicit command for it to be destroyed.

The lesson that we can take from this is that we must avoid those places that are displeasing to Allah (swt). We should not even stand therein. We are affected by the environment around us. More than we ever realize. The images that we see. The sounds that we hear. It has an effect on our hearts. So as much as possible we should strive to spend the least amount of time in places that are displeasing to Allah (swt). In places where He (swt) is not remembered. In places where sins are committed and the people speak and do what is displeasing to Him (swt). Even in gatherings and environments where the people only focus on the life of this world. These are the places that we must try to avoid. Without a doubt this is difficult. Especially considering the world that we live in today. But we must make the effort. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace! May He (swt) allow us to spend the most moments of our lives only in places that are pleasing to Him (swt)!

Allah (swt) then says to the Prophet (saw) **“surely a masjid founded on Taqwa from the very first day has more of a right for you to stand in it”**. This is the kind of masjid that the Prophet (saw) should seek to be in. One that has been founded, since the day that it was built, on the Taqwa of Allah (swt). This means that the purpose of the masjid is the Taqwa of Allah (swt). This was the reason why it was built. To call on the people to fear Allah (swt) and to remind them to keep their duty to Him (swt). Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) here that this is the masjid that is worthy of him (saw) to stand therein. This is the environment that he (saw) should seek to be in. Similarly this also is the environment that every believer should seek to be in. One that is founded and established on the Taqwa of Allah (swt).

So look to the places where you spend the moments of your life. Is Allah (swt) remembered in those places? Are the people in those places exhorting each other to fear their Lord and to do what is pleasing to Him (swt)? When you look for a place in which to spend your time this is the kind of place that you should search for. But how rare are such places in the world today? In this world of heedlessness. In this world built on secularism. How rare are such places? Even the masajid today are not like the masajid that were present when the Islamic State was still there. The masajid today are empty. Only when it is time for prayer do a few people come. At other times our masajid are devoid of the remembrance of Allah (swt). Devoid of life.

Those people who bring the argument today that we should be content living in a secular world and that we should not seek to restore the Islamic State should consider this ayah. Those who say that as long as a Muslim can pray, fast, and make pilgrimage then his Din is complete. But look at what Allah (swt) is saying here. He (swt) is telling us to avoid the places where there is sin and heedlessness and to look for the places that are established on the Taqwa of Allah (swt). In fact even the word masjid in this ayah should not be restricted only to the building that we know. Rather as the Prophet (saw) has told us that the entire earth is a masjid for us. But where in the earth can a Muslim today find a place that is established on the Taqwa of Allah (swt)? Is it not the case today that everywhere in this world that one can go one will only find heedlessness and sin? Very few are the spots on this earth where Allah (swt) is remembered. Very few are the spots on this earth where the people exhort each other to have Taqwa. This was not the case when the Islamic State was present. The State created a society that was conducive to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). It created a society that made the people remember their Lord rather than forget Him (swt). When the time came for prayer you would hear the Adhan all over the cities. Businesses would be closed. Even when the prayers are complete, the masajid would be filled with circles of dhikr and knowledge. People would be learning the Din and remembering their Lord together. On the streets you would not find women dressed half naked. You would not find all kinds of advertisements and promotions. Images and sounds of the heedless. Rather you would find the streets filled with the remembrance of Allah (swt). You would hear the sound of Quran and the sound of people giving salams to each other and sending blessings upon the Prophet (saw). This is the world that the Islamic State can create for all people. Instead of making you forget about Allah (swt), the world around you will make you remember Him (swt). Even the economy would be one that is conducive to the remembrance of Allah (swt). The people would know that the State would always take care of them so they will not live in fear of poverty and need. Because of this knowledge, this reassurance, they would not spend all their time working. They would only spend as much as was needed to feed their families, and they would spend the rest of their day worshipping Allah (swt). Imagine a world where you only had to work four or five hours a day and you could spend the rest of your time

praying and seeking knowledge. This is not a dream. This is a reality that existed not too long ago. This is the environment that is worthy of the believer. One that has been established and founded on the Taqwa of Allah (swt). Where can we find such a world today? Where can we find such a country or nation today, even in Muslim lands? How can we say that we love Allah (swt) and then not do what we can to bring about such a world? May Allah (swt) give us the grace!

Allah (swt) then describes these masajid built on Taqwa when He (swt) says “**in it are men who love to purify themselves**”. The essential characteristic of the people within these masajid is that they love to purify themselves. Now what does it mean to purify oneself? Does it mean simply to remove impurities and dirt from the body and clothes? Imam Ghazali tells us that the greatest purification is to purify one’s heart of everything but Allah (swt). This means that the only thing that one should seek, the only thing that one should desire, is Allah (swt). He (swt) should be all that you care about. At every waking moment all that you should desire is Him (swt). Pleasing Him (swt) by only doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). So to be like these people whom Allah (swt) describes here, not only should you always be striving to remember Allah (swt) and to please Him (swt), but this should be something that you should love to do. You should love to purify yourself of everything but your Lord. You should love that struggle to constantly and continuously remove from your heart everything that is not Him (swt). So when Shaitan puts a thought in your heart that is not connected to the remembrance of Allah (swt), you should remove that thought and you should love this effort that you are making to remove that thought. You should clean your heart of everything that is not Him (swt) and you should love this effort that you make. These are the people whom Allah (swt) loves. The ones who strive and struggle to journey to Him (swt).

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by telling us that these are the people whom He (swt) loves. When you realize Allah (swt), how magnificent and tremendous that He (swt) IS, and when you also realize all that He (swt) has done for you, then how could you desire anything else other than His (swt)’s Love. But realize from here that the Love of the Divine does not only come from you loving Him (swt). You have to do more than this. He (swt) demands from you more than this. How can you truly love Him (swt) and still have in your heart other than Him (swt)? Whether it be your

work or your money or your family or your desires. How can you keep these things in your heart and allow them to occupy your mind? If you truly love Allah (swt) how can you not even make the effort to purify yourself? To purify your heart of all these forms and images that occupy it. In this ayah Allah (swt) says that He (swt) loves those who make the effort to purify themselves. So even if you do not reach that station where you are dedicated completely to your Lord. Even if you only make the sincere effort to the best of your ability, then Insha Allah, you have the hope of gaining His (swt)'s Love. Once you have His (swt)'s Love what then do you need after that?

أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ
 بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
 الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

109. Is he who lays the foundation of his building on Taqwa of Allah and His Pleasure better or he who lays the foundation of his building on the edge of a cracking precipice about to collapse, so it collapses with him to the Fire of Hell, and Allah does not guide a wrongdoing people.

In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us two different paths. Two different kinds of people. So for us to know how to draw closer to Allah (swt). To know how we can reach that state where we are in the Divine Presence. Where we are remembering our Lord for every moment of our lives, and in every moment of our lives we are doing what is pleasing to Him (swt). For us to reach that level we have to consider deeply the two paths that our Lord has shown us here. We must reflect on these two paths and we must strive with every moment of our lives to walk on the one of these two paths that is pleasing to Allah (swt) and to avoid the path that is not pleasing to Him (swt). Because for us to work in this dawah, for us to participate in this effort, demands nothing less from us. It demands that we give ourselves to our Lord. It demands that we sacrifice what we like to do with our time for what He (swt) likes. We have to give ourselves completely to Him (swt). This is the difference between these two paths, between these two lives.

In this ayah Allah (swt) makes a comparison between two kinds of people and He (swt) asks us which of these is better. In this comparison He (swt) makes an analogy. An analogy of building a structure. One of these people builds his structure on the Taqwa of Allah (swt) and seeking His (swt)'s Pleasure and the other person builds his structure on the edge of precipice that is about to collapse. So picture in your mind now two buildings. One is built upon Taqwa and seeking Allah (swt)'s Pleasure and the other is built upon a precipice that is about to collapse. The latter of these is easier to visualize than the former. We can imagine a building in our mind that is on a precipice that is about to collapse. Imagine building a house on the edge of a cliff. The edge of the cliff is very weak. It is not a strong foundation for a house. So when a house is built upon such a foundation it will fall. That is exactly what Allah (swt) says next when He (swt) says **“so it collapses with him to the Fire of Hell”**. Any house, any life, that is not build on the Taqwa of Allah (swt) and seeking His (swt)'s Pleasure will break, and when it does it will fall into the Fire of Hell along with whoever is inside of it.

This is a similitude that we can conjure up in our minds. But how can we picture the house that is built upon Taqwa and seeking Allah (swt)'s Pleasure. Taqwa and Allah (swt)'s Pleasure are not tangible realities that we can see with our eyes, so how can we picture the house that is built upon these. Actually we can picture this in our minds when we think about what is its opposite. If the opposite of this is the house that is on a precipice that is about to collapse, then this is a house on a strong foundation that will not break. Taqwa of Allah (swt) and seeking His (swt)'s Pleasure is the strong foundation that will not break. It is the kind of foundation that you would want to build your house upon.

Now the next question to ask is what does Allah (swt) mean by these structures? What are these houses an analogy for? Shawkani tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that they refer to one's Din and one's actions. In reality these are both the same because one's Din is one's actions. So we can either base our actions on Taqwa of Allah (swt) and seeking His (swt)'s Pleasure or we can base our actions on other than that? If we choose the latter of these options then it is like we are building a house on the edge of a cliff. What is going to happen is that the house is going to fall into the Fire of Hell and it is going to take us with it.

So the lesson is that we must base our actions upon the Taqwa of Allah (swt) and seeking His (swt)'s Pleasure. Before you do any action, before you move your hands, before you make your feet to walk, before you allow your tongue to speak, before you allow your eyes to look or your ears to hear, ask yourself why you are doing what you are doing. Are you remembering Allah (swt) at that moment? Are you giving Him (swt) the fear and the reverence that He (swt) deserves at that moment? Even when you are just idly passing the moments in your life by you should ask yourself this question. You know the responsibility that you have in the dawah. You know the onus that is upon us to establish Allah (swt)'s Law on the land to take His Message to mankind. Why then do you need spend your time learning knowledge, studying Arabic, teaching others, or at the very least worshipping Allah (swt) This house you are building is your life. Consider then the foundation upon which you establish it.

This ayah is yet another reminder for us that we always need to check our intentions in everything that we do. We must strive to make Allah (swt) as the reason behind everything that we do. This is especially true for the Islamic work that we do. We should not do dawah because we seek the praise of the people, or because we want to be part of a group, or because we ourselves can praise ourselves. We should not even seek to establish the Islamic State or to rescue the Ummah from suffering. Ultimately the only goal behind everything that we do should only be the Pleasure of Allah (swt). This is the reason for our actions. So I do not care whether or not I finish writing this book, I do not care whether or not you read it, I only care that Allah (swt) is pleased with me for the effort that I make. Of course I should still make my best effort, but the only goal which I seek through my striving is the countenance of my Lord.

We also see from this ayah that the seeking of Allah (swt)'s Pleasure must also be accompanied with Taqwa. We must always strive to be conscious of Him (swt) and we must always strive to have that fear and reverence for Him (swt). Because just as it is important for us to strive to do what is pleasing to Him (swt), it also important for us to strive to avoid what is displeasing to Him (swt). We must always be reminding us that Allah (swt) is watching us at this moment, and we must always ask ourselves whether or not He (swt) is pleased with us at this moment. Sometimes when we increase in the good that we do, when we become active in the

dawah, when we learn more knowledge, then Shaitan may put a taint of arrogance in our hearts. He would tell us to allow ourselves to commit some sins every now and then, every here and there. He will tell you to make comparisons between you and other Muslims. Make you to think how much better you are than them because you are working in the dawah. At least you are praying five times a day. At least you have a beard or wear a hijab. So you are better than them. Why then can you not commit this small sin here and there? These are the thoughts that he will put in your head. That is why along with your striving in this effort to seek the Pleasure of your Lord, you must also have Taqwa. You must fear and revere your Lord with the fear and the reverence that He (swt) deserves. Insha Allah this is what will protect you from arrogance and pride, from self-contentment and haughtiness, from sin and heedlessness. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace because we cannot do it without Him (swt)!

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) does not guide a wrongdoing people. In the end the guidance comes from Allah (swt). He (swt) is the One Who gives the willingness and the determination to walk on the Straight Path. The Path that leads to Him (swt). But He (swt) will not grant this guidance to a wrongdoing people. To a people who choose to base their lives on other than seeking His (swt)'s Pleasure and Taqwa of Him (swt). Thus this ayah reminds us once again that while the guidance comes from Allah (swt), our job is to seek it from Him (swt). We must make the effort. We must take the first step. If we sincerely search for our Lord then we will find Him (swt). But if we choose to turn away. If we just tell ourselves that we are waiting for the guidance to come from Allah (swt) but we continue to sin and neglect our obligations then we would certainly be a wrongdoing people. What does our Lord say here about the wrongdoing people? What hope do we have if we do not get the guidance from Him (swt)?

لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَاللَّهُ

عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

110. The building that they have built will not cease to be a doubt in their heart, except until their heart is torn to pieces, and Allah is Knowing, Wise.

You might think that this ayah speaks about the masjid that the hypocrites built, but actually this ayah is a direct continuation of the previous ayah. Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) described two kinds of buildings. One that is built upon the Taqwa of Allah (swt) and seeking His (swt)'s Pleasure, and one that is built upon other than that. This ayah speaks about the latter of these buildings. The one that is built on a precipice that is about to collapse. The one that does indeed collapse and falls into the Fire of Hell. As we mentioned this building is an analogy for a life that is based on other than the remembrance of Allah (swt). A life of heedlessness and sin. A life of chasing after this world. A life of the so-called Muslim who walks away from this path of dawah and jihad. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what such a life will do to the one who chooses to live it.

Allah (swt) says that this building that they have built, this life that they have lived, will be a cause for doubt in their heart. This doubt will not cease. It will continue to fester in their hearts until their hearts are torn to pieces. What exactly does Allah (swt) mean by this? He (swt) means that if you turn away from this path of dawah and jihad, if you turn away from a life of striving to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure while fearing Him (swt), then because of that choice which you made a doubt will be created in your heart. This doubt will continue to remain in your heart. It will not cease to bother you and trouble you. It will continue to eat away at your heart until your heart is torn to pieces. Until your heart is dead. Once a heart is dead then it is completely devoid of Iman. It can never return to Allah (swt). It can never be saved.

Doubt here specifically refers to doubt in this Message. So if you do not do your part to strive for the propagation of this Message then deep down inside you will doubt the truthfulness of this Message. The more inactive that you are in the dawah, the more that this doubt will grow.

Maybe this Message is not truly from Allah (swt). Maybe the Quran was written by men. Maybe Allah (swt) does not even exist. These are the dark thoughts that will go through your heart. They will eat away at your heart. They will suck any traces of Iman that is left in your heart. The language of the ayah gives the meaning that this doubt will not stop. It is something that will keep on festering within you. Only because you chose to walk away from this path. Only because you chose yourself over your Creator. It will not stop until your heart is torn to pieces. Until your heart is devoid of all Iman. What then will be your station with Allah (swt)? How can you save yourself?

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) is the Knowing, the Wise. There is no knowledge that escapes His (swt)'s Knowledge. So if you choose to turn away from this path when you were able to walk it, then He (swt) Knows you very well. He (swt) Knows the terrible choice that you made. In His (swt)'s Wisdom, He (swt) also Knows whether or not you are deserving of this terrible punishment for your choice. If He (swt) Knows that you were truly able to walk on this path, if you truly did have the means to contribute to the dawah, but you only turned away because of laziness and arrogance, then in His (swt)'s Wisdom He (swt) may decree this punishment for you. Once the All-Knowing and Most Wise decrees against you, then what hope is there for you? May Allah (swt) save us from His (swt)'s Names being a proof against us!

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ
 يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدَّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ
 وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمْ
 الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿۱۱۱﴾

111. Surely Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth in exchange for the Garden, they fight in the Way of Allah, they kill and they are killed, it is a promise which is binding upon Him in the Tawrah, the Injeel and the Quran, and who fulfill his covenant better than Allah? So rejoice in the trade that you have made, and this is the greatest achievement.

If there is one ayah in the entire Quran that can be thought of as the forgotten ayah it would be this ayah. This ayah is the ayah that our Ummah as a whole has forgotten. If you look to the way that the majority of the Ummah lives their lives it would become clear that we have forgotten this ayah. We say that we are Muslims. We say that we are the nation of the Quran. We say that we believe this Book to be from our Creator and Sustainer, our Lord and Master. A complete guidance for our lives. Yet we completely ignore this ayah. We have allowed ourselves to completely forget it. This ayah summarizes all that Allah (swt) has said up to this point in the Surah. He (swt) reminds us the reason why we exist. He (swt) reminds us that our lives are not ours to live as we please. He (swt) reminds us that He (swt) created us and guided us to this Din for a great purpose. So that we could live for dawah and jihad. So that we could live for Him (swt).

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah about a trade that He (swt) has made with us. He (swt) has purchased from us our lives and our wealth and in return He (swt) has given us the Garden. What a wonderful trade is this? To trade the temporary life of this world for the eternal life of the Hereafter. To trade the pain and suffering of this world for the pleasure and bliss of the Garden. To trade the anxiety and the distress of this world for the peace and tranquility of being near to Allah (swt). Could there possibly be a more profitable trade than any human can ever make?

Notice also that this transaction has already been made. It is not like Allah (swt) is inviting us to enter into this deal with Him (swt) and we have a choice. Rather it has already been done. We have already given to Allah (swt) our lives and our wealth. So this is not a contract that we can back away from. Once we say the Shahadah and enter into this Din then we have made this deal with the Lord and Master of the universe. How evil then would we be if we failed to live up to our end of the bargain? What a betrayal would it be for us to walk away from this promise? Especially when what Allah (swt) is giving us is so much better than what we are giving Him (swt).

So we should realize from this ayah that our lives and our wealth are not ours anymore. Rather we have given both of these to Allah (swt). They are dedicated completely to His (swt)'s service. So the only thought that should be going through our minds is how we can use these in the service of our Lord. How we can use these in His (swt)'s cause. The cause to establish His (swt)'s Law on the earth and to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. This is the thought that should be going through our minds, this is how we can should be spending our days. Now you realize the reality of your life. You exist only for Allah (swt). Only to work for His (swt)'s cause. So do all that you can for this dawah in the time that you have. Whether it be learning knowledge, teaching others, or helping to carry this idea to the masses of the Muslims. There is so much that you can do, if only you would put your mind to it.

However if we do not do our part. If we think that Islam only is praying on the days of Jummah and Eid, fasting in Ramadan, and only eating halal meat. If this is what we think our Din is, if this is what we think all that we have to do for Allah (swt) is, then who would we have become? The Prophet (saw) told us that the two greatest signs of the hypocrite are that when he speaks he lies, and when he is given a promise or a trust, he breaks it. What could be a greater trust to break than the trust that we have given to Allah (swt) in this trade that we have? He (swt) has already promised us the Garden, now He (swt) is expecting us to fulfill our part. What kind of a people would be if we walked away from Him (swt) now? Allah (swt) has even already promised us victory if only we are steadfast and if we have Taqwa of Him (swt). Despite this promise, if we still walk away, what kind of a people would we be? We know we just do not want to admit it. So realize from this that the only difference between the hypocrite and the believer is this dawah.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) describes what He (swt) expects from us in this trade when He (swt) says **“they fight in the Way of Allah, they kill and they are killed”**. Now do you see how jihad is such an integral part of this Din? Of all the actions that we do as part of our worship and servitude of Allah (swt), from prayer to fasting to having good manners to being kind with parents, this is the one action that He (swt) mentions in the context of this transaction that we have made with Him (swt). Fighting in the path of Allah (swt). This is why we believe that of all the actions a Muslim can do, this action of fighting is the greatest, this action has the most reward with Allah (swt), it is the most beloved to Him (swt). But how can the masses of the Muslims today fulfill this obligation? How can they earn this great reward? This is yet another reason why we need to work to restore the Islamic State. Once the State returns, and a righteous Khalifah rules over it, then all of us can go to him and fight under him. We can fight to spread the justice of the Law of Allah (swt) to the whole world, and to allow all mankind to receive this Message properly. We can kill our enemy, and be killed by them earning the reward of the martyrs just like our Lord describes the believers as doing this ayah. In order to reach this station we first have to restore the State. Thus this part of the ayah is also an evidence that what Allah (swt) wants from us today is to strive in this cause to restore His (swt)’s Law to the earth.

Allah (swt) then says **“it is a promise which is binding upon Him in the Tawrah, the Injeel and the Quran”**. Here we see that Allah (swt) has made this promise with the believers not only in the Quran but in the previous Books that He (swt) has revealed as well. First in the Tawrah, and then in the Injeel. We know that since the time of the children of Israil, Allah (swt) has punished His (swt)’s enemies not with natural disasters and calamities like He (swt) had done with the previous nations, but rather He (swt) has punished them through the hands of the believers. So since that nation, in the Tawrah that He (swt) had given to them, Allah (swt) has made this trade with the believers. He (swt) has promised them the Garden if they would strive against His (swt)’s enemies. So we realize from this that there have been countless believers before us who have made this exchange. Not just the Sahabah and all the Muslims after them, but even those who came before them. All the believers since the time that Allah (swt) revealed the Tawrah to Musa (as). They have all strove with their efforts, their time, and their wealth for

their Lord and He (swt) gave them His Garden in return. How great was the trade. How wonderful was the reward.

Then Allah (swt) tells us to remind ourselves once again who we have made this trade with when He (swt) says “**who fulfill his covenant better than Allah?**”. This is a covenant that we have made with Allah (swt), the Lord and Master of the universe. Who is better at fulfilling a covenant than He (swt)? Does He (swt) have any reason to break a promise that He (swt) makes? He (swt) Who is Able to do all things. The One Who is the Truth. Whose very Name is the Truth. Would He (swt) ever break a promise? So if we live up to our end of this trade, then is there any reason for Him (swt) not to live up to His (swt)'s end? Is there any reason for Him (swt) not to give us what He (swt) has promised us? Realize from here the absolute certainty with which you have been promised the Garden. This beautiful place, whose pleasures and delights are beyond all comprehension has been promised to you with the truest and most certain of covenants that can ever be made. A promise from the Originator of Creation Himself (swt). All that you have to do is live up to your end of the bargain.

There still may be a part of you that is having second thoughts about entering into this covenant. Of course this is from Shaitan. He will tell you that you are throwing your life away. He will tell you that you are wasting the time in which you could be enjoying yourself. He will tell you that you are wasting the money that you could be using for yourself and your pleasure. So should you have any second thoughts about entering into this covenant? Should you in any way regret it? Allah (swt) says “**So rejoice in the trade that you have made**”. Not only should you not have second thoughts, not only should you not be sad in any way, but you should actually rejoice. You should rejoice and be overcome with happiness when you think of this trade that you have made. The only reason why Allah (swt) would tell you to do this is because there is nothing but good for you in this transaction. You win in every way. You have bought the most valuable of commodities for the lowest of prices. Not only is this transaction better for us in the Hereafter but it is also better for us in this world. This life of dawah and jihad is the path that we were created to walk on, so how can we ever expect to find peace and tranquility, how can we ever expect to find the fulfillment of our existence in other than this path. As we saw in the previous ayah, if we walk on

other than this path, if we take our Din to be a joke, then doubt and hypocrisy will tear our heart into pieces. We would have a miserable existence in this life, and a far worse existence in the Hereafter. Allah (swt) saved us from this, so how then can we rejoice?

Despite all that has been said, in order for us to truly realize the value of this transaction that we have made, we have to remind ourselves of the reality of death. We have to remind ourselves of the finiteness of this worldly life. As long as we think that there is some value to this world, as long we fail to see the certainty of death, then we will never fully appreciate what Allah (swt) is offering us here. It is true that there are pleasures and delights in this world. There is not even anything wrong with enjoying these pleasures to some extent as long as they are permissible in the Law of Allah (swt). But as the Prophet (saw) told us we must always remember that which will come and destroy these pleasures. We must always remember death. We have to always remind ourselves that there is a reality that is far greater than this reality which our senses show us. Of course as soon as our souls leave our bodies we will become cognizant of it, but we have to remind ourselves of it now. We have to always bring it to mind. The Hereafter. The Garden. All the pleasures and delights therein. But best of all being near to Allah (swt). Once we truly realize this. Once we are more certain of this then we are of the world around us. Then we will truly appreciate what Allah (swt) is offering us here. We can truly rejoice at this deal that we have made. May Allah (swt) help us to come to that realization! May Allah (swt) always remind us of the finiteness of this world and of the reality of death!

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying “**and this is the greatest achievement**”. You might think that this is referring to the Garden, that the Garden is the greatest achievement. But if you look closely to the ayah, Allah (swt) said in the previous part to rejoice at the trade that we have made with Him (swt). If you make this trade with Allah (swt), and if you are steadfast to your end of the covenant, then that in and of itself is the greatest achievement. Even in the life of this world, you could have the greatest victory that any human soul can ever achieve, just by making the choice to walk in this path of dawah and jihad. If you were to think about it, how could anything in this world be greater than this? To live for Allah (swt). To work to bring the justice of

His (swt)'s Law to the earth. To take His (swt)'s Message to mankind. To be a part of this effort that the prophets and the messengers strove for. Is there any greater achievement than this?

التَّائِبُونَ الْعَبِيدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ
الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ
وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

112. The repentant, the servants, the praising ones, the restraining ones, the obedient, the humble, the establishers of Maruf and the destroyers of Munkar, the protectors of the limits of Allah, and give good news to the believers.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about this trade that He (swt) has made with us. He (swt) has given us an eternal life of bliss and joy in the His (swt)'s Garden, and He (swt) wants in return our lives and our wealth in this world. We have to dedicate both of these completely to the service of His (swt)'s Din. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that this is not enough. It is not enough that we give Him (swt) our entire lives and all our wealth and property. He (swt) wants more. In addition to our lives and wealth, He (swt) also expects us to be a certain kind of people. He (swt) wants us to inculcate within ourselves certain traits and characteristics.

The first description that Allah (swt) gives us of the people whom He (swt) wants us to be like is that they are repentant. They return to Allah (swt) after being in a state of sin and heedlessness. Allah (swt) mentions this trait first perhaps because it is the most important. We all need to come to the realization that we can never worship and serve Allah (swt) as He (swt) truly deserves to be. No matter what we do we would always come up short. Even if one of us were dragged on our face for an entire lifetime, and it was done only for Allah (swt), that still would not even come close to giving Him (swt) what He (swt) deserves from us. So before we do anything else, we first have to ask His (swt)'s forgiveness. Forgiveness for not worshipping and serving Him (swt) as He (swt) deserves. We must always be doing this. Never should a moment

pass by, except that we are asking Allah (swt) to forgive us in our inadequacies in that moment. After the Prophet (saw) received the Message, he (saw) dedicated every moment of his (saw)'s life to worshipping and serving Allah (swt). Not a moment passed in his (saw)'s day, except that in that moment he (saw) was either glorifying Allah (swt) or praising Allah (swt) or working for the propagation of the Din of Allah (swt). How short are we of this ideal? We who spend so many moments of our lives only for ourselves. Just to satisfy our lusts and desires. Too many are the moments when we have breathed the air of Allah (swt)'s earth and have been sustained by food from Allah (swt)'s earth but have used those moments for ourselves instead of for Him (swt). What utter ingratitude and insolence is this towards so Perfect and Majestic a Being. This is why we have to always turn to Him (swt) in repentance. Not only for the sins that we have committed, but even for the moments in our lives that we have lived for ourselves instead of for Him (swt). This is truly the first step in the journey towards Him (swt), and that is why He (swt) mentions it first in this ayah. If we are not even able to do this, if we are not even able to admit the wrong that we have done and try to seek His (swt)'s forgiveness and journey back to Him (swt), then there really is no point in continuing further. We might as well take our seat in the Fire right now.

The next description that Allah (swt) gives of those whom He (swt) is pleased with is that they are the servants. This means that they dedicate their lives to serve their Lord. Their lives are no longer theirs to live as they please. Rather they spend every moment to serve their Master. They are but slaves existing only to serve their Master. Every moment of their life, every action that they do, is dedicated only for Him (swt). The only thought that always fills their mind is "What can I do for my Master now? How can I please Him in this moment?". This is how they establish a permanent relationship with Allah (swt). This is how they draw closer to Him (swt) at every moment. It is by remembering that their Din is not only the five daily prayers, and not only in Ramadan, but it is twenty four hours a day, three hundred and sixty four days in a year. There is not a moment that passes by in their life but that they seek to serve their Lord in that moment. Now in our situation today we have to realize that the best way for us to serve Allah (swt) is to work in this path of dawah and jihad. Today this is what is most pressing in the Din. The Law of Allah (swt) itself is absent from the world today. The Ummah is oppressed and suffering in so

many ways. So if we say that we want to dedicate our life to serving Allah (swt), then what better way to serve Him (swt) than by working to return His (swt)'s Law to the earth. Of course Allah (swt) is the One Who will bring the victory, but He (swt) wants to see us do the best that we can.

Then Allah (swt) tells us how He (swt) expects the believers to be among “**the praising ones**”. These are the ones who are always praising Allah (swt). There are two dimensions to this praise. On the one hand they praise Him (swt) by glorifying Him (swt) and extolling Him (swt). By declaring how Perfect and Majestic a Being He (swt) IS. By asserting how He (swt) is the One Who has all the Names of Perfection. The All-Knowing. The All-Seeing. The All-Powerful. Think to yourself now how Perfect your Lord IS, and then think what He (swt) deserves in terms of praise and glorification because of such perfection. The other dimension of their praise is their thanking Him (swt) and showing gratitude to Him (swt) for all that He (swt) has given them. Think about all that Allah (swt) has given you. You cannot even number it, you cannot even begin to number it, how much then should you thank Him (swt). So to be among the praising ones you must always be thinking about how Perfect and Tremendous a Being Allah (swt) IS, and you must also always be remembering all that He (swt) has done for you. This realization must then translate into your praise of Him (swt). You must praise Him (swt) with your tongue, your limbs, and your heart. Every fiber of your being. Your tongue praises Him (swt) with the words of praise that it speaks, your limbs praise Him (swt) by doing the actions that He (swt) likes and also from refraining from the actions that He (swt) does not like, and your heart praises Him (swt) by coming to the realization that He (swt) is indeed worthy of this praise.

The next description of the true believers that Allah (swt) gives is that they are “**the restraining ones**”. This means that they hold themselves back and they prevent themselves. They restrain themselves from anything that they think might be displeasing to their Lord. They do not even allow their mouth to utter a word or their eye to take a glance if they think that it might be displeasing to Allah (swt). They even restrain themselves from many permissible things of this world for the sake of Allah (swt). This word also gives the meaning that they love to fast. They love to restrain themselves from food, drink, and their spouses for the course of an entire day. This word is derived from a root word that means to journey. When you are fasting, when you are

holding yourself back from something that you desire, you are in essence journeying. You are leaving those things behind and traveling to your Lord. This journey only ends when you stop restraining yourself or when you die.

Then Allah (swt) describes the believers as the obedient. This means that they always submit to whatever command their Lord gives them. They submit and obey even if it is difficult for them. Their relationship to Allah (swt) is like that of a faithful slave to a Master. A slave who loves his Master, a slave who fears his Master, a slave who does not want to do anything except serve and please his Master. The linguistic meaning of the word *r'aka* which Allah (swt) uses here means to bow down. So when you bow down before Allah (swt) you are admitting His (swt)'s Authority. You are admitting that you are the servant and He (swt) is the Master. You are admitting that you are ever at His (swt)'s service. This is what Allah (swt) expects from us. Not just that we bow down our heads when we are in prayer, but at every moment of our life. At every moment of our lives we should be bowing before our Lord in a state of submission and humility. Desiring nothing but to implement every command that He (swt) out of our love and reverence for Him (swt). Being content with whatever it is that He (swt) has decreed for us.

Then Allah (swt) tells us how we must also be among the humble. Humble not before the people or the creation but before Him (swt). We humble ourselves to Him (swt) so much that we put our faces on the floor before Him (swt). We have killed the ego and the self within us. We do not desire anything except His (swt)'s countenance. We are no more. Rather our bodies and our souls are dedicated to the service of our Creator. To worshipping Him (swt) and serving His (swt)'s cause on the earth. Total submission by putting our heads on the floor before Him (swt). This should not only be in our prayer but at every moment of our lives. It is said of the great Sufi scholar Sahal al-Tustari that he made the prostration from which one does not arise. This means that he had debased himself completely before his Lord and he never allowed his ego to return. He had submitted himself in humility and reverence before the Tremendousness and the Glory of the Real and the True. So to truly be among the humble we have to remove the ego from within us. There is a portion within us that does not want to submit before Allah (swt), that does not want to follow the Sacred Law, that wants to complain and be angry when anything does not go its

way. This is what we have to kill. We have to always remind ourselves that we have prostrated before Allah (swt). We have prostrated and we are never going to get up. So whatever we have to do, we do with full submission, and whatever befalls us we accept with full submission.

The next description that Allah (swt) gives of the believers, of those whom He (swt) is most pleased with, is that they are “**the establishers of M’aruf and the destroyers of Munkar**”. Here the word **M’aruf** means all that is pleasing to Allah (swt) and the word **Munkar** means all that is displeasing to Him (swt). So to truly be among the believers you have to work to establish what is pleasing to Allah (swt) and remove what is displeasing to Him (swt). This part of the ayah is also an evidence as to why it is important for all Muslims today to work for the restoration of the Islamic State. Because how can you establish what is pleasing to Allah (swt) when the systems which facilitate it are missing from the world. For example to establish the system of Zakat properly we need the Islamic State. Only an administrative and political authority can ensure that Zakat is collected from all those who should pay, and that it is distributed to all those who need it. Without the State this is just not possible. How many extremely wealth “Muslims” are there today who do not even pay a penny in Zakat? By a similar token, how many extremely poor believers are there who never receive anything. Just like this example, all that is pleasing to Allah (swt) needs the State to be established before it itself can be established. From dawah and jihad, to the criminal punishments, to the courts which deal with families and their problems, to the education system, how many of these institutions need the Islamic State in order to even exist. Even the obligation of Salah, and the obligation of educating the Ummah and teaching them the correct way to worship their Creator, needs the State in order to be properly established. So if you want to bring all the people to the masjid, if you want to teach them the correct Aqeedah and remove all innovations, then you first have to work to restore the State. The State will establish systems to ensure that the Salah is always made and the correct belief is always taught. No one will miss Salah in the masjid when the State is restored and it changes the way the economy and business is conducted. People will come to the masjid when they are not consumed by materialism and not in fear of poverty and losing their job for doing their worship properly. Everyone will also have the correct Aqeedah because even from a young age they will be taught it. One of the most important

classes in all the schools will be the correct Aqeedah of Ahl-as Sunnah. But in order to facilitate all this the Khalifah must return. The State must be restored. To work towards this goal is what it means to be among the establishers of **M'aruf**.

Similarly to destroy the Munkar also need the Islamic State. There is much Munkar in the world today, even in Muslim lands. There is much that is displeasing to Allah (swt). From banks charging usury, to alcohol and drugs, to depression and suicide, to adultery and fornication, to homosexuality and other perversions, to gluttony and extravagance, even in the way women dress. So much Munkar that it would take pages and pages just to list all of them. Do you think that you will be able to remove any of these without the Islamic State? You cannot remove any of these because the government protects them. For example what do you think would happen if you tried to remove all the banks that charge usury? You cannot because the entire economic system of this society is based on usury. So the government has systems in place to protect these institutions. We saw in the recent financial crisis how the government spent billions to bail out the banks that were failing. Do you then think that they would allow you to remove these banks? It is what feeds them. So in order to remove all the Munkar you first have to remove the government that protects them. This is why the destroyers of Munkar whom Allah (swt) speaks about here are those who work in this dawah. This effort to restore the Islamic State.

The next description that Allah (swt) gives of those whom we should try to be like is that they are **“the protectors of the limits of Allah”**. The limits of Allah (swt) are His (swt)'s Laws. Every law that Allah (swt) reveals are from His (swt)'s limits. They limit and restrict the behavior of the human so that he only does what is pleasing to his Lord. They tell him what is pleasing to Allah (swt) and what is not pleasing to Him (swt). Similarly these rules and systems also guide the society as a whole so that even the government, even the nation as a whole, only does what is pleasing to Allah (swt). What has happened to the vast majority of the laws of Allah (swt) today? Is there any government that will implement them in their totality? Is there anyone protecting them? Ensuring that they are always implemented. Where are the sincere believers who will make certain that this Divine Law is always implemented on the earth? Where are the guardians of Allah (swt)'s Law?

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by telling the Prophet (saw) to “**give good news to the believers**”. These are the believers. The people whom Allah (swt) has described in this ayah. To be a believer is not just words on your tongue, nor is it even a belief that you think you have in your heart, rather it is what Allah (swt) has told you here. If you do not have all of the traits that Allah (swt) has described here, can you truly be said to be a believer? But if you do have them, if you are sincerely trying your best to attain them, then rejoice because the Lord and Master of the universe is giving you good news. Good news of His (swt)’s Pleasure with you. Good news of the Garden that awaits you. Good news of the peace and tranquility in your heart that comes walking this path. Good news of the victory of Allah (swt) that is coming soon. It is the best of news, but it is for you only if you are a true believer. A believer as Allah (swt) has described in this ayah. May Allah (swt) give all the sincere believers in this world to receive this good news. When we see such darkness in the world, all that gives us hope is the good news that our Lord gives us.

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أَوْلَىٰ
 قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٣﴾

113. It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed with Him to ask for forgiveness for the ones who do shirk, even if they were near relatives, after it has become clear that they are the companions of the Hellfire.

Now Allah (swt) has shown us what our path should be. He (swt) has shown us what our purpose in life is. He (swt) has shown us what are the characteristics and the traits that we have to inculcate within ourselves. We have to dedicate ourselves completely to Him (swt). We have to be among those who live only for Him (swt). But now what should be our relationship with those who do not choose this path? What should be our relationship with those who turn away from Allah (swt)? What should be our relationship with those who have something else in their lives that is more important or as important as Him (swt)? This is what He (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. He (swt) shows us that to be a dawah carrier means that you cannot have anything

else in your life as important as Him (swt). You have to dedicate yourself completely to Him (swt). And the only people that you can have any kind of real relationship with are those who dedicate themselves completely to Him (swt) as well. You have to disassociate yourself completely with those who choose to be distant from Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed with Him to ask for forgiveness for the ones who do shirk**”. First of all notice how Allah (swt) says “*the* Prophet”, this shows us that He (swt) is speaking specifically about the Prophet (saw). It is not just any prophet or messenger that Allah (swt) is speaking about, but rather He (swt) is speaking specifically about His (swt)’s beloved (saw). He (swt) says that it is not fitting for the Prophet (saw) and the believers who are with him (saw) to ask for forgiveness of those who do shirk. In other words it is not proper for the Prophet (saw) and the believers who are with him (saw) to ask Allah (swt) to forgive those who make shirk with Him (swt). The truth is that the Prophet (saw) and the believers with him (saw) are at a level much higher than that of those who make shirk. They have dedicated themselves to Allah (swt). They live for Allah (swt). So on the only true measure on which humanity can be judged they are the highest. They are much higher than those who do shirk. Those who dedicate themselves to other than Allah (swt). This is why it is not proper, it is not fitting, for them to ask forgiveness for those who do shirk. For those who are less than them.

The fact that Allah (swt) would command the Prophet (saw) and the believers to not even ask for forgiveness for the ones who do shirk shows that He (swt) does not want them to have any kind of relationship with these people whatsoever. How distant do a people have to be from you that you are forbidden to even ask for forgiveness for them? Asking for forgiveness is only a simple prayer that you make, and with it you might be able to save someone from eternal damnation in the Fire. But even this Allah (swt) told the believers not to do. This shows how much He (swt) wanted to distance the believers from those who associated partners with Him (swt). So look here at what your Lord wants from you. Not only does He (swt) want you to dedicate yourself to Him (swt) completely, but He (swt) wants you to be so devoted only to Him (swt) that you will not even ask forgiveness for a people who are not devoted to Him (swt) like you. If a certain

people make shirk, if a certain people have something in their life as important or even more important than Allah (swt), then you are expected to cut yourself from them completely. You cannot have anything to do with them whatsoever. This is what is expected for those who walk on this path. Are you ready to make this sacrifice?

Then Allah (swt) says “**even if they were near relatives**”. Who is closer to you than your near relatives? Your blood brothers and sisters, your father, your mother. These are the people who are the nearest to you. The same blood that flows through your veins flows through theirs. You have spent the most time of your life with them. You know them better than anyone else and they know you better than anyone else. Yet despite this closeness, despite this nearness, despite whatever love and affection that you might feel for them, Allah (swt) wants you to cut yourself off from them completely if they are among those who associate partners with Him (swt). You should put such a distance between you and them that you would not even ask Allah (swt) to forgive them. You live for your Lord, you exist only to please Him (swt), how then can you have any kind of relationship with those who chose other than Him (swt).

If you think that it is difficult for you then think how difficult it must have been for the Prophet (saw). When his (saw)'s beloved uncle Abu Talib passed away, he (saw) made a promise that he (saw) would continue to seek forgiveness for him from Allah (swt). Now we should realize that Abu Talib passed away when the Prophet (saw) was still in Makkah, before he (saw) even established the Islamic State, and this ayah was revealed in Madinah several years later. So this shows us that for several years the Prophet (saw) had been praying to his Lord for his uncle. Praying for his uncle to be forgiven. Praying for his uncle to be spared the torment of the Fire. Then after all these years the Prophet (saw) receives this ayah commanding him (saw) not to make this prayer anymore. Just imagine how painful it must have been. First of all how much did he (saw) love his uncle? Abu Talib was the one who had raised the Prophet (saw) since he (saw) was a young child. He provided for him (saw) and gave him (saw) shelter when no one else would. After the Prophet (saw) received the Message, Abu Talib was the person who stood between him (saw) and his enemies. He used all his influence to protect the Prophet (saw) from harm. He even put himself in harm's way to give the Prophet (saw) this

protection. When the Quraysh launched the boycott against Banu Hashim, Abu Talib and his entire family had to suffer because of the dawah of the Prophet (saw). They had to starve, eating only the leaves of the trees and the tiny morsels of food that could be smuggled into their camp. Most likely it was this ordeal that led to his death. So how much must the Prophet (saw) love this man who supported him (saw) and cared for him (saw) through all those difficulties and trials? Yet despite all this, he (saw) was forbidden from asking for forgiveness for him because he had died as a disbeliever. Just imagine how difficult this must have been for the Prophet (saw). Having been praying for his (saw)'s uncle for all those years and then to find that all those prayers would not be accepted. To realize that his (saw)'s beloved uncle would be among those who would be in the Fire forever. How painful must it have been for his (saw)'s blessed heart. Just as it was very difficult for the Prophet (saw), it was also very difficult for many of the early Muslims who also had close family members who had chosen kufr over Iman. They also had been praying to Allah (swt) for years to forgive their fathers and mothers, their brothers and sisters. Now they too had to deal with the pain of knowing that these prayers were not answered.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says “**after it has become clear that they are the companions of the Hellfire**”. This part of the ayah gives the meaning that this prohibition of praying for those who make shirk only applies after it becomes clear that they are in the Fire. However the question to be asked is when is this? When can we know for sure that a certain person is in the Fire? We do not have knowledge of the future, nor do we have knowledge of the unseen. Some scholars have said that this is when they pass away without accepting Islam. So if the Message was clearly presented to them, along with all its evidences and proofs, and if they still do not accept, and then they die in this state of rejection, that is when it has become clear that they are companions of the Fire. Other scholars have said that it is even earlier than this. They have said that it is after they reject the Message. So after you present Islam to them, along with the evidences and proofs, and you are certain that they received the Message correctly, if they were to then reject it, then it is clear to you that they are the companions of the Hellfire. Because at this point they have rejected this Message. You do not know the future. You do not know if they will later on accept the Message or not. So you have to pass a judgment on them

based on what you know then you have to conclude that they are companions of the Fire. Of course Allah (swt) is their Judge, and it is He (swt) Who will decide their final destination. But as far you are concerned, from what you can see, they are among those who have rejected the Message. So you cannot pray to Allah (swt) to forgive them. They have chosen to walk away from Allah (swt) so you cannot have any relationship with them whatsoever. Allah (swt) Knows best but we believe the second of these opinions is stronger. Once a people turn away from Allah (swt), then we can no longer pray to Him (swt) for Him (swt) to forgive them.

Thus the lesson that we must take from this ayah is that we must break our relationships completely with those who choose other than Allah (swt). We have to be so distant from them that we do not even pray to Allah (swt) to forgive them. Now if they are still alive, we may pray to Allah (swt) that He (swt) guides them and that He (swt) brings them to the Straight Path, but we cannot pray to Him (swt) that He (swt) forgives them. They have chosen to walk away from Him (swt), they have chosen to associate others with Him (swt), how then can we ask Him (swt) to be pleased with what they have done? How can we ask Him (swt) to forgive them?

Now if they are close relatives then we still have to be kind and respectful to them and we still have to fulfill all of our trusts and obligations towards them. This is especially true if they are parents, but it is also true for all our near relatives. Kind treatment of parents and near relatives is one of the pillars upon which this Din is established. But at the same time, if they turn away from Islam, if they are dedicated to something other than Allah (swt), then we cannot be close to them. We cannot have love in our hearts for them. This is because if we do then they will take us away from Allah (swt). They have chosen a path that is other than the path which leads to Allah (swt). If we allow them to be close to us, if we allow them a gateway into our heart, how can we be certain that they will not take us along that path as well? For the one who lives only for Allah (swt) what could a worse fate than to be distant from Him (swt). That is why especially today when we consider the world that we live in, this world of Secularism, this world of materialism. This world of heedlessness to the Divine. Especially in this world we need to be careful of the company that we keep. No matter how close we may be to a people, we cannot allow them to influence us if they are among those who do not care for Allah (swt) and striving in His cause.

We should also note that it is only those who make shirk with Allah (swt), those who have chosen to dedicate their lives to other than Him (swt), that we are forbidden from asking for forgiveness for. If a people are Muslim but they have just committed some sins, and we all commit sins, then we should pray to Allah (swt) to forgive them. To pray for forgiveness for the Ummah is one of the most pleasing of actions to Allah (swt), so this is something that we should always be doing. It is only those who completely turn away from Allah (swt), even after they have been presented with the Message again and again, those who dedicate their lives to other than Him (swt) even when they know the Truth. These are the ones that we should not ask forgiveness for. These are a people who have something else in their lives other than the Real and the True. So we have no place in our hearts for them. Our hearts are only for the believers. The ones who truly believe in Allah (swt) and who live for Him (swt). We ask Him (swt) to forgive them their sins and shortcomings and we pray that they do the same for us.

How then would this ayah apply to the Ummah today? If we look at the Ummah today, we see many Muslims who have attached their hearts to other than Allah (swt). There is something else in their lives more important than their Creator. Should we then pray for forgiveness for these people? It comes down to whether or not they know the Truth. If they know what this Din truly is. If they know their responsibilities in the dawah. If they have been shown the evidences which prove without a doubt that this Message is the Truth, and then despite all this if they were to turn away then we cannot ask forgiveness for them. Even if they claim that they are Muslim we cannot ask forgiveness for them. This is because they have already chosen their path. They have already chosen to turn away even after they knew the Truth. How then can we have any love for such people? These people are nothing but hypocrites and so they do not deserve our prayer.

However for those Muslims who are ignorant, for those who truly do know what their Din is, for those who have never been shown the evidences and the proofs with which they may know with certainty the Truth of this Message, for such people we should pray for them. We should pray for Allah (swt) to guide them and we should pray to Him (swt) to forgive them for their ignorance. Even if they have something more important in their lives than Allah (swt). Even if they may live for their wealth, or their family, or for themselves. Despite all this we should still pray for

them. The only reason they are this way is because they do not know any better. For them Islam is simply an inheritance that they had taken from their parents. They were never shown the Truth of this Din. They were never shown the Glory and Majesty of their Lord. They always thought of the Din as something backward. They did not recognize it for the ideology and the complete way of life that it truly is. So we should pray to Allah (swt) to forgive such among our brothers and sister, and we should pray to Him (swt) to guide them. At the same time we also should be trying our best to reach out to these people and to show them what this Din truly is. To allow them to come out from their darkness and be sincere workers in this dawah. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace! May He (swt) forgive the Ummah of His (swt)'s Beloved (saw)!

So the main lesson that we should take from this ayah is to realize that our community must be built based on Iman. We are a nation that live for Allah (swt). So the bond that unites us, can only be a bond based on our relationship to Allah (swt). We cannot form relationships with others based on language, on country, on race, even on family. If someone comes from the same land as us, and they speak the same language, even if they are part of our family, we cannot form any bond with them unless they are dedicated to Allah (swt). If they are not among those who believe in Allah (swt) and who strive to please Him (swt), then we cannot form any kind of relationship with such people. For us all that matters is Allah (swt) and pleasing Him (swt). We have to dedicate ourselves completely to Him (swt). This means that we have to be distant from those who are distant from Him (swt). This is the level that we have to be at if we are going to be among those who carry this Message. This is the level that we have to be at if we are going to be part of the effort that will establish the Divine Kingdom on the earth once again! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace because we cannot do it without Him (swt)!

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَهَا إِيَّاهُ

فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾

114. And the request for forgiveness that Ibrahim made for his father was only because of a promise that he had promised him, but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah he disassociated himself from him completely, surely Ibrahim was full of pity, forbearing.

This ayah is an evidence that our Din must be established on a rational conviction. It cannot be something that is taken only on blind faith. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) had commanded the believers that they should not pray for forgiveness for those who associate partners with Him (swt). They should not be close with those who are distant from Him (swt). Now some of the early Muslims may have recalled a another ayah that Allah (swt) had revealed. An ayah in which He (swt) had told them how Ibrahim (as) had asked for forgiveness for his father. Because of this a thought may have gone through their minds. Are not the prophets protected from sin? Is it not impossible for them to ever do something that is forbidden? How is it then that Ibrahim (as) prayed for his father, whom they knew was an idol-worshipper, if it was a sin to do so? This question may have appeared in the minds of some of the Sahabah. That is why this ayah was revealed. In this ayah Allah (swt) explains the request for forgiveness that Ibrahim (as) made on behalf of his father in relation to the previous ayah. So notice how Allah (swt) did not require the Muslims to accept this apparent contradiction in the Quran. But rather He (swt) right away reveals this ayah explaining any doubts the Muslims may have had after the previous ayah. In this ayah He (swt) explains fully the apparent contradiction between the previous ayah and the prayer that Ibrahim (as) made for his father. This shows us how we do not need to take our Din based on blind faith. Rather it shows us that there is an answer for every question. This is a resolution for every doubt. When a Muslim accepts this Din with conviction then it leads to tranquility in his heart. He is absolutely certain that what he is on is the Truth. Now he knows where he came from, why he is here, and where he is going.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**And the request for forgiveness that Ibrahim made for his father was only because of a promise that he had promised him**”. Ibrahim (as) had made a promise to his father that he (as) would ask Allah (swt) to forgive him, and that is the only reason why he (as) made this prayer. In the beginning, Ibrahim (as) loved his father very much. More than any son could love his father. That was why after Allah (swt) guided him (as) to the Truth, Ibrahim (as) tried desperately to carry this dawah to his father. He (as) wanted very much for his father to be a believer just like he (as) was. But it was not to be, the more that he (as) called his father to the Truth, the more that he rejected him (as). Until finally out of desperation, out of his love for his father, Ibrahim (as) gave his father a promise that he (as) would ask Allah (swt) to forgive him. If he (as) could not make his father into a Muslim then he (as) thought that this was the least that he (as) could give him. At least he (as) could pray for his father. However giving his father this promise was not the right thing for Ibrahim (as) to do. It was something that he (as) did in a moment of desperation. Out of his love for his father. He (as) did not realize at that moment the consequences of this promise.

Now it is important for us to note that this was not a sin on the part of Ibrahim (as). At the point when he (as) gave his father this promise that he (as) would pray for him, there was no explicit command that Allah (swt) had given Ibrahim (as) forbidding him (as) from doing so. Recall that this incident, the giving of this promise, happened early in the dawah of Ibrahim (as), so most likely the command prohibiting the praying for disbelievers still had not been revealed yet. So Ibrahim (as) did not sin by giving his father this promise. Still even though it was not a sin, it was not the best course of action for him (as) to follow. He (as) should have realized that his father was among those who were distant from Allah (swt). Among those who had rejected the Message even after it had been clearly presented to him. He (as) should have realized this and so he (as) should not have given his father this promise. But he (as) did out of his love for his father and out of his tender-hearted nature. This was why he (as) did make this prayer. But this example of Ibrahim (as) is not an example for us to follow. No matter how much love we may have for our parents, no matter how compassionate and forgiving our nature may be, once we realize that they are distant from Allah (swt). That they have rejected Him (swt), then we should not have

anything to do with them anymore. We should not even have any love or compassion for them anymore once we see that they are a people who have rejected Allah (swt). We live only for Allah (swt) so all that we care about is Him!

Then Allah (swt) says “**but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah he disassociated himself from him completely**”. As the time passed, it became clear to Ibrahim (as) that his father was not the man whom he (as) thought he was. He (as) thought that his father was a good person. He (as) thought that his father was worthy and deserving of his love. But then he (as) realized that no matter how kind or generous a person may be, if that person does not dedicate himself to Allah (swt) completely, even after they have clearly received the Message from Him (swt) then there is no good in that person whatsoever. In fact it even became clear to Ibrahim (as) that not only was his father not a good person, but he was in fact the worst of people. He was an enemy of Allah (swt). Because what can you say about someone who turns away from this Message even after they are certain that it is the Truth. Allah (swt) sends to you a Message, and you then turn away from that Message. You choose yourself over Him (swt) even though you know that He (swt) is your Creator and your Sustainer and that He (swt) has a right over you that you submit yourself to Him (swt) completely . How evil then is such a person? Is there any good whatsoever in such a person? Allah (swt) did not create us just to live. Rather He (swt) created us to live for Him (swt). Not only to worship Him (swt) but to participate in the effort to establish His (swt)’s Din on the earth. If someone rejects this Message, and then turns away from this responsibility, then is that person anything less than an enemy of Allah (swt)? Not everyone received this Message. The ones that did were the fortunate ones. But they also have a responsibility to accept this Message and then carry it to others. If someone were to turn away from this responsibility, are they not frustrating the cause of Allah (swt)? They are the ones who have the responsibility of establishing Allah (swt)’s Din on the earth and of carrying His (swt)’s Message to the people. If these people were to turn away from this responsibility, are they then not frustrating this cause? Are they then not the enemies of Allah (swt)? Ibrahim (as) in time realized that this was what his father was. When this happened, he (as) disassociated himself from his father completely. He (as) lived only for Allah (swt), so he (as)

did not want anything to do with those who were His (swt)'s enemies. He (as) stopped praying for his father, he (as) did not have any kind of relationship with his father, and he (as) did not even have any love in his heart anymore for this enemy of Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by describing for us Ibrahim (as)'s nature. He (swt) says **“surely Ibrahim was full of pity, forbearing”**. Ibrahim (as) was the kind of person who was full of pity to all the people, and he (as) was very forbearing in that he (as) forgave and pardoned whatever wrong was done to him (as). He (as) just had such kindness and compassion to all the creation. It pained him (as) to see anyone else suffer or be in distress in any way. He (as) wanted nothing but the best for all people. This was the reason why he (as) gave this promise to his father. Even though his father had done great evil in rejecting this Message, in rejecting the dawah that he (as) presented to him, he (as) still could not find it within himself to blame his father at first. He (as) forgave his father the wrong that he did to him (as), and he (as) felt pity and remorse for his father. This was the kind of person whom Ibrahim (as) and this was the reason why he (as) gave his father this promise. Actually the words that Allah (swt) uses to describe Ibrahim (as) here actually give a deeper meaning than what we have said here. The Arabic word *awala* means one who frequently prays and asks of Allah (swt). One who is always in a state of making dua and asking of his Lord. This was also part of the nature of Ibrahim (as). He (as) always prayed to Allah (swt) for his needs. Whenever he (as) was in difficulty, whenever there was a need that he (as) needed to be fulfilled, he (as) would always turn to his Lord and ask of Him (swt). In addition the word *haleem* means one who dreams a lot. The one who sees nothing but good in the world. The one who when they look at the world they only see the good in it and they do not see the evil. The one who sees the good in people, and does not see their evil. An idealist. An optimist. This was the kind of person that Ibrahim (as) was. What a pure heart he (as) had. We should all wish that we had such a heart. Because this is the heart that mirrors Allah (swt). This is the heart that is closest to the Divine. We should be dreamers, we should see the good in the world. At the same time we should wish for a better world than there is today. A world in which the people are not suffering. A world in which there is justice. A world in which the wealth and resources of this planet are fairly distributed. We should always be praying to Allah (swt) for

this to happen, and we should try our best to make it into a reality. This was the kind of person that Ibrahim (as) was. One who dedicated himself completely to Allah (swt). One who saw the beauty of his Lord in the world around him. One who tried to bring that beauty to the world.

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ
مَا يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

115. And it is not for Allah to misguide a people after He has guided them until He has made clear to them what they should avoid, surely Allah is of every single thing Knowing.

In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us what was the relationship that the early Muslims had with Him (swt), and consequently He (swt) also shows us what was the relationship that He (swt) had with them. Recall from a previous ayah how Allah (swt) had commanded the early Muslims that they should not pray for those who associate partners with Him (swt), even if they may be near relatives. Now before Allah (swt) had revealed this ayah many of the early Muslims had been praying for their family members who were idol-worshippers. They were praying for their sins to be forgiven and for them to be spared the punishment of the Fire. However after the ayah was revealed these early Muslims not only stopped praying for their family, but they even felt great remorse that they had done so. They saw from the ayah that such an action was not pleasing to their Lord so they regretted doing it. They even thought that Allah (swt) was displeased with them for having done so. They even feared that now He (swt) might misguide them like He (swt) had done for the hypocrites and the disbelievers. See the kind of relationship the early Muslims had with Allah (swt). See how much they feared being in His (swt)'s Wrath. Do we as an Ummah today have this kind of relationship with our Lord? Then we wonder why the Help and the Victory of Allah (swt) is not coming. This then is the reason why Allah (swt) revealed this ayah. It was to alleviate this fear and this worry that the early Muslims had. Because they were so worried about displeasing Him (swt), He (swt) did not want to displease them in any way.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah that He (swt) will not misguide a people after He (swt) has guided them until He (swt) makes clear what they should avoid. Insha Allah let us study this statement closely so that we can understand what our Lord is saying. What Allah (swt) is saying here is that He (swt) will not misguide a people until He (swt) has given them the knowledge of what is displeasing to Him (swt). Once Allah (swt) gives them this knowledge, if they were then to turn away by not following what they know, by persisting in doing what they know is displeasing to Him (swt), then that is when He (swt) will misguide them. So Allah (swt) is telling the early Muslims here that they did not know beforehand that they were not supposed to pray for their relatives who were idol-worshippers, Allah (swt) had not given them this knowledge beforehand. Because of this they were not responsible for what they did. He (swt) will not hold it against them because they were ignorant. This prohibition not to pray for one's relatives who were idol-worshippers had not been made clear to them when they made their prayer. Thus they should not fear Allah (swt) misguiding them what they did.

The lesson that we can take from this is to see that Allah (swt) will only misguide a people after they have misguided themselves. He (swt) will only turn away from them after they have turned away from Him (swt). Allah (swt) will not misguide a people for no reason. He (swt) is the Just and He (swt) always does only what is just. It is only after He (swt) gives a people the knowledge of what is right and wrong, what is permissible and what is forbidden, what is pleasing and what is displeasing to Him (swt), it is only after He (swt) gives this knowledge, if the people were then to turn away by not following this knowledge, it is only then that He (swt) will misguide them. He (swt) will punish them for their turning away from Him (swt) by allowing them to go further in their misguidance.

Thus this ayah is a consolation for the early Muslims. Allah (swt) is telling them that they do not need to fear Him (swt) misguiding on account of their praying for their family members who were idol-worshippers. They made that prayer before they were specifically commanded not to, so Allah (swt) tells them here that it would not be held against them. Similarly we too must have a hope in our hearts that our Lord will forgive us what we did out of ignorance. Even our staying away from this path of dawah and jihad, even our not contributing to this effort, if it was done in a

state of ignorance, if we were never informed of this responsibility and this obligation, then we should have a hope that our Lord will forgive us for our days of ignorance. But now that we know we do not have an excuse anymore. Now that we know if were to continue to neglect this obligation then we would be sin. What then is preventing Allah (swt) from misguiding us?

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us of how He (swt) has Knowledge of every single thing. Allah (swt) Knows the hearts of all people. He (swt) Knows what were the intentions in the hearts when certain actions were done. Specifically Allah (swt) is telling the early Muslims here that He (swt) Knew very well the state of their hearts when they made this prayer for their family members. Did they make this prayer only out of the genuine love that they had in their hearts for their family members? Did they realize when they made this prayer that perhaps it might not be pleasing to their Lord? What was the knowledge that dawned in their hearts at that moment and what were they ignorant of? Did they realize that Allah (swt) might not have been pleased with their prayer and did they then make it anyway? Were their hearts more attached to their fathers and their mothers, their brothers and their sisters, their spouses and their children than they were to their Lord? Allah (swt) Knows all of this very well. He (swt) is the One Who is Aware of the innermost and the deepest of subtleties. Not one iota exists in the heavens and the earth except that He (swt) encompasses it with His (swt)'s Knowledge. The most perfect of Knowledge that does not decrease or increase. This is our Lord. How then can you turn away from Him (swt)? From His (swt)'s Majesty and His (swt)'s Tremendousness. From His (swt)'s Purity and His (swt)'s Sublimity. Once we truly realize Allah (swt) then we should realize how we can never turn away from Him (swt). We should realize also that we do not need to fear any injustice whatsoever from Him (swt). He (swt) Knows us better than anyone else. He (swt) Knows the state of our hearts better than anyone else, even better than ourselves. So we have to believe that He (swt) will only allow us to go astray if we are not deserving of His Guidance. Not deserving of His Love and Mercy. But if there is even a drop of sincerity in our hearts, if we make even the smallest of efforts for this dawah, then we have to realize that our Lord Knows us well. This is enough for us. If Allah (swt) Knows this sincerity in our hearts and the efforts that spring forth from it then this is enough for us. We do not need the praise of the people. We do not need

any reward or recognition. The Perfect Knowledge of the All-Knowing suffices for us. We exist only for Him (swt). We spend every moment of our waking day seeking only His (swt)'s countenance. And we pray to Him (swt) that He (swt) never allows us to go astray from this state.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١١٦﴾

116. Surely to Allah alone belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, He gives life and takes death, and you do not have from below Him any protecting friend or helper.

This ayah is yet another powerful evidence as to why we need to work for the restoration of the Islamic State, why we need to work in this path of dawah and jihad. Allah (swt) has taken us on a long journey in this Surah and now He (swt) begins to draw it to a close. He (swt) does so by reminding us of Himself. We have been reminded in this Surah about the mission that we are on, about the importance of this mission, of the enemies on the outside that we have to strive against and the enemies on the inside that we have to protect ourselves. But as Allah (swt) ends this Surah, He (swt) does so by reminding us of Himself (swt). By reminding us how everything that we do is only for Him (swt). By reminding us that the only reason why we strive on this path is to return to Him (swt) the right that belongs to Him (swt). The right to rule over the people of this earth just like He (swt) Who rules over the universe.

Recall the very first ayah of this Surah where Allah (swt) told us how He (swt) and the Prophet (saw) were completely free of those who make shirk. Those who make something else or someone else as partners with Him (swt). By Allah (swt) telling us this we were reminded that this is what He (swt) expects from us as well. He (swt) wants all the believers to dedicate themselves completely to Him (swt) and to cut themselves off from those who are distant from Him (swt). In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) reiterated this point once again when He (swt) commanded us to not even pray for forgiveness for those who made shirk. Imam Razi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how some the early Muslims found this command difficult to implement. At the very least

they wanted to pray for their fathers and their brothers, their spouses and their children. That is why Allah (swt) once again tells them about Himself (swt). He (swt) reminds them Who He (swt) IS. Why He (swt) deserves that they dedicate themselves to Him (swt). Why He (swt) deserves that they even break their relationships with their close relatives for Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins to describe Himself (swt) here by reminding us that it is He (swt) to Whom belongs the entire dominion of the heavens and the earth. The Arabic word *mulk* that Allah (swt) uses here gives the meaning of dominion, governance and sovereignty. That is why both the word for “king” and the word for “government” in Arabic are derived from this word. From this we should remind ourselves once again that Allah (swt) is not only the Creator and the Sustainer for this universe, but also the King and the Ruler. Only He (swt) has the right to rule, only He (swt) has the right to legislate. This earth belongs to Him (swt) and so only that which is pleasing to Him (swt) can be allowed to exist on it. This should be among the most basic pillars of our Aqeedah. This should be something that we should always be reminding ourselves of. So the next time someone asks you where in the Quran Allah (swt) speaks of the Islamic State then you should show them this ayah and the hundreds of other ayahs similar to it. Ask them how it is that we can say this universe is the Kingdom of Allah (swt) and then allow men to rule over it. If we truly love Allah (swt), if we truly fear and revere Him (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be, then how can we give this right to legislate which belongs exclusively to Him (swt) to someone else? What kind of hypocrisy and ingratitude would that be? When we live in a world where men rule and we do not work to change this situation, then our silence and our inactivity is a tacit approval. In other words by not participating in this dawah, by not supporting this effort to restore the Islamic State, we are saying that we are more content with men ruling over us than Allah (swt).

Just as this ayah should be an evidence for us to work in this effort to restore the Khilafah, it should also be a motivation for us. It should remind us that Allah (swt) deserves that we work in His (swt)'s cause. He (swt) deserves that we dedicate ourselves to Him (swt) completely. He (swt) deserves that we strive for our utmost for Him (swt), that we sacrifice everything for Him (swt). Just look at Who He (swt) IS. He (swt) is the Master and the Ruler over this entire universe. Everything in all creation is completely under His (swt)'s Dominion. There is

not a single creature except that He (swt) controls completely its fortunes and its destiny. How Powerful and Tremendous a Being is He (swt) that He (swt) can subjugate and control this vast creation? How can you turn away from such a Being? How can you be arrogant and proud when you know that there is such a Being? How can you make yourself, or your job, or your family or anything else as important or more important than He (swt)? Even the possibility of gaining the Pleasure and the Contentment of such a Being should make all our efforts worthwhile.

Allah (swt) then describes Himself (swt) as the One Who gives life and the One Who takes death. This fact as well should remind us why He (swt) deserves that we strive out utmost for Him (swt) and why He (swt) deserves that we give Him (swt) all that we have. You are alive at this moment only because of Him (swt). Every vision that touches your eye, every sound that reaches your ear, every smell that comes to your nose, every food and drink that you taste, every touch you take, every thought that you have is only possible because of Him (swt). Your very existence is only possible because of Him (swt). He (swt) is the One Who gave you life, He (swt) is the One Who continues to maintain your life, and when He (swt) wills He (swt) is the One Who will give you death. How then can you be heedless of such a Being? How then can you allow even a moment to pass you by without striving to please Him (swt)?

Just as you should be grateful to Allah (swt) for giving you life, you should also be grateful to Him (swt) for giving you death. Because for the believer, death is a liberation for him or her. It is when they leave the confines of this world and return to their Lord. Would you really want to live in this world forever? This world of suffering and pain. This world of disease and ugliness. Of course there are some pleasures to be had here, but they are all temporary. The sweetness and the joy of all of them will disappear in time. Can you imagine spending eternity in this world? Paradise was created to keep you content forever. This world was not. So even if you are allowed to live in this world forever, after a certain period of time, you would be begging Allah (swt) to die.

Not only should you be grateful to Allah (swt) for Him (swt) giving you life and death but this fact should also make you humbled and awed before His (swt)'s Power. What can you say about the Power of a Being Who has given life to all creatures that have ever existed, Who has sustained their existence for every moment, and Who has then taken their existence away with

deaths. From the mightiest of angels who flies over the seven heavens to the smallest of ants that crawls on the earth, their entire existence is completely under His (swt)'s Power. He (swt) gave them their existence and whenever He (swt) wills He (swt) will take away that existence. How can you turn away from such a Being? How can you allow men to rule over you instead of Him (swt)?

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying “**and you do not have from below Him any protecting friend or helper**”. If you are hesitant to dedicate yourself to Allah (swt), if you are hesitant to strive hard in His (swt)'s cause, if you are hesitant to break relationships with those who are distant from Him (swt), then realize that without Him (swt) you do not have anyone. If Allah (swt) were to abandon you then there is no protector, no helper, no friend for you. You have to realize that in the end all that matters is Allah (swt). Our life is nothing but the journey to Him (swt). He (swt) has given us a test, He (swt) has given us the free-will to choose. To choose whether to seek Him (swt) or to seek other than Him (swt). This choice is a heavy responsibility. Even the mountains refused to accept it. But we accepted it. Now we are being tested. We are being tested on how well we worship and serve our Creator. How well we dedicate the moments of our life to Him (swt). But can we pass this test on our own? Are we ourselves enough to protect ourselves from Shaitan and his minions? Of course not. We need Allah (swt). Only by His (swt)'s enabling grace can we make it. Only through His (swt)'s help, His (swt)'s protection, and His (swt)'s companionship can we pass this test. Now if we choose to turn away from Him (swt). If we choose not to support this dawah. If we choose to be with those who are distant from Allah (swt) and we allow their thinking and their behavior to influence us. If we do this then can we expect Him (swt) to be our protector, our friend, our helper? Why would He (swt) be when we have chosen to walk away from Him (swt)? Who are we to Him (swt)? We are easily replaceable.

So this part of the ayah as well is a motivation for us, just like it was a motivation for the early Muslims. It reminds us that were it not for Allah (swt) we do not have anyone. We are on a journey and it is only He (swt) Who can see us through to our destination. He (swt) is the Protector Who will save us from our desires and from the demons. He (swt) is the Friend Who will keep our company and Who will be a source of comfort and solace for us. He (swt) is the Helper Who will enable us to complete our actions and achieve our objectives. He (swt) is the Guide

Who will show us the way forward. But He (swt) will only be all of these if we make the choice to turn to Him (swt), He (swt) has given us the choice and He (swt) wants to see us use it. May we all be granted the enabling grace to make the right choice!

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ
 الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ
 بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾

117. Most surely Allah has turned towards the Messenger the Muhajiroon, and the Ansar, the ones who followed him in the hour of difficulty, after the hearts of a party of them were about to deviate, then Allah turned towards them, surely He is to them Most Compassionate, full of Mercy.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continue to describe Himself (swt) for us. He (swt) continues to show us why it is that He (swt) is deserving of our worship and servitude. Why it is that He (swt) is deserving that we dedicate ourselves to Him (swt) in this effort. In the previous ayah He (swt) reminded us how He (swt) was the King and the Sovereign and the Owner over all that exists. How He (swt) was the giver of life and the taker of death. And how we do not have anyone from below Him (swt). No protector, no friend, no helper. Allah (swt) told us all of this to make us to realize Him (swt). To make us realize that He (swt) is indeed worthy for us to not only worship and serve Him (swt), but He (swt) is worthy for us to dedicate our entire lives to. Now in this ayah He (swt) gives yet another reason why we should commit our lives to Him (swt). This reason is even greater than the reason He (swt) told us about in the previous ayah. Of all the Names and attributes of Allah (swt), there is nothing as sublime and beautiful as His (swt) Forgiveness and Mercy. So of all the reasons for us to dedicate ourselves to Him (swt) there is no greater reason than this. Just the fact that He (swt) can be so loving is enough of a reason to worship Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**Most surely Allah has turned towards the Messenger, the Muhajiroon, and the Ansar**”. The meaning of this is that most surely and most definitely Allah (swt) has forgiven the Prophet (saw), the Muhajiroon, and the Ansar. Whenever Allah (swt) speaks of turning, we do not in any way take the literal meaning but rather we take it to mean turning in a metaphorical sense. Turning towards in mercy and in forgiveness. So the meaning here is that most surely Allah (swt) has forgiven this group. Most surely Allah (swt) has taken this group from a state where they were in His (swt)’s displeasure to a state where He (swt) was pleased with them. Most surely He (swt) has now shown them mercy and kindness after previously showing them other than that. Now what exactly does Allah (swt) mean by this? Why does He (swt) need to forgive the Prophet (saw) when he (saw) was protected from sin? Even the Sahabah, were they not the best generation? Did not Allah (swt) describe them in a previous ayah as the foremost of the Sabiqoon? The ones who were closest to Him (swt) of all mankind. So how is it that Allah (swt) forgave them? How would they ever need His (swt)’s forgiveness?

If we truly realized Allah (swt). If we realized the right that He (swt) had upon us to be worshipped and served. Then we would see that we are all in need of His (swt)’s forgiveness. Even the Prophet (saw). Even the Sahabah. The Prophet (saw) himself said in an authentic hadith that he (saw) sought the forgiveness of Allah (swt) more than seventy times a day. This shows that even though he (saw) never committed any sins, even though he (saw) strove to his utmost to please his (saw)’s Lord, even though he (saw) always carried out every obligation, despite all this he (saw) still recognized even his (saw)’s inadequacy in giving Allah (swt) the worship and servitude that He (swt) deserves. That is why all of mankind is in need of the forgiveness of Allah (swt), all of mankind is in need of Him (swt) turning to us in mercy and kindness. We should never interpret this ayah to mean that the Prophet (saw) sinned, he (saw) was protected from sin. In fact never did a moment pass by in his (saw)’s life except that he (saw) strove to please Allah (swt) in that moment. But even this is less than what Allah (swt) deserves. So Magnificent and Tremendous a Being is He (swt) that He (swt) deserves all that we can give Him (swt) and more. If you were to just reflect on Him (swt) for just a moment then you would see how this is so.

So here Allah (swt) is telling us that He (swt) has forgiven the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah any lapses or weaknesses they may have had in their servitude of Him (swt). Even if it was not sin, even if they did something that was just not pleasing to Allah (swt) but not a violation of His (swt)'s Law. He (swt) has forgiven them. For example recall from ayah 43 how Allah (swt) was not pleased that the Prophet (saw) gave permission for the hypocrites to remain behind. This was not a sin on his (saw)'s part but it was an action that Allah (swt) was not pleased with. For all such actions on the part of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah, Allah (swt) pardons them here. He (swt) emphasizes with the utmost certainty that they have been pardoned. How then could anyone after this find fault with them?

We should realize from this that such is the state that we need to be in to earn the Forgiveness and Mercy of Allah (swt). We have to make the effort to please Him (swt). We have to be striving to please Him (swt). It is nothing short of foolishness to neglect our obligations and to constantly fall into sin without making any kind of effort whatsoever and then hope for the Forgiveness and Mercy of Allah (swt). This is not why Allah (swt) created you. He (swt) did not create you to be your own master and then keep a false hope in Him (swt). Such was not the way of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. Do you think that Allah (swt) would ever be pleased with you if you chose a way other than that of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah? Now it is true that we are not angels, and that we are going to commit sins. Such is part of what it means to be human. But we also need to make a sincere effort to avoid sins. We also need to make a sincere effort to do the actions which are pleasing to Allah (swt). Only then should we keep the hope that He (swt) will turn to us just like He (swt) turned to the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah.

Allah (swt) then describes the Sahabah as “**the ones who followed him in the hour of difficulty**”. The hour of difficulty here refers to the expedition to Tabuk. Here Allah (swt) acknowledges the fact that the Sahabah followed the Prophet (saw) during this difficult and trying expedition. Not only was it difficult in that the long distance of the Arabian desert had to be traversed in the extreme heat of summer, not only was it difficult in that the Islamic State could not afford to offer the Muslims much in terms of supplies and mounts, not only was it difficult in that the Muslims would have been away from their homes and their families for many weeks, not

only was it difficult in that the Muslims would be facing a powerful enemy that was much more numerous and well-equipped than their own, nothing less than the centurions of the mightiest empire of the known world, but it was also difficult in what the Muslims were forced to leave behind at home. This was the time when all the harvests were reaped and all the fruits had ripened. It was known to be a time of relaxation and enjoyment. When the rewards of all the hard work that they had made during the harvesting months could be enjoyed. This was the time which everyone was looking forward to. The time which everyone had been working towards. Now they were being told to leave all this behind and march forth into the enemy land. Carrying nothing with them but the most basic of supplies. It has been narrated that on this journey five men would share a single date. This was all that they could carry for that great distance. So just imagine how difficult it was. Yet despite this difficulty the blessed companions of the Prophet (saw) marched forth alongside him (saw). Here Allah (swt) acknowledges this effort and this sacrifice that they made and He (swt) tells us that He (swt) has forgiven them. Forgiven them on account of the difficulty and the suffering that they endured only to please Him (swt).

From this we should be reminded once again of the high status of the Sahabah, may Allah (swt) be pleased with all of them. They sacrificed and strove hard for this Din more than any other generation, more than any other people ever have. They sweat, and bled, and ached, so that you could know your Creator. So that you can have the peace and tranquility in life that comes from being near to Him (swt). Here Allah (swt) Himself acknowledges their sacrifice and their efforts for this Din. He (swt) acknowledges the fact that they followed the Prophet (saw) in the most difficult hour. That hour when many hypocrites and even many Muslims chose to remain behind. At that most difficult hour they followed the Prophet (saw). This was why they were the best generation. They gave their lives for this dawah. How then can anyone ever speak against them? How then can we ever think anything less than the best of them?

Another lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see how Allah (swt) is well pleased with those who support the dawah in times of difficulty and hardship. It is easy to carry dawah when one does not meet with much resistance, when there are no challenges that one must rise above. But at times when speaking about Islam, the real Islam, becomes difficult,

even dangerous, that is when the sincere believers are distinguished from the hypocrites. We know that the world changed after the recent terrorist attacks. Now political Islam has been equated with violence and terror. To even speak about it is not safe anymore. Even in the West where they supposedly have a concept of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. The enemies of the dawah do not care that we are calling for the restoration through peaceful means. The point is that they have identified us as a threat to their way of life and the current world order. So they have made it difficult to speak about our Din as it truly is. To carry this idea to the rest of the Ummah. But we see here that if we are able to be steadfast on this path, the path of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah, despite the difficulty and the danger involved, then Allah (swt) would be well pleased with us. He (swt) will forgive us our sins and turn to us in mercy. What could be better than that? Even the possibility of earning this Forgiveness should make any sacrifice or difficulty well worth it.

Allah (swt) then says **“after the hearts of a party of them were about to deviate”**. Here Allah (swt) describes for us what happened to a group of the Muslims who were marching with the Prophet (saw) on the Tabuk expedition. Recall how in the days before the expedition, the hypocrites had been making excuses to remain behind. They were bringing every excuse that they could think of to the Prophet (saw) in the hope that they could escape this obligation. Now not only did they themselves want to remain behind, but they were discouraging their brothers and their tribesman from marching forth as well. They were telling them not to accompany the Prophet (saw) on this extremely difficult journey, one that almost seemed like a suicide mission. So many of the Muslims were torn between these two sides. On the one hand they believed in this Message, they loved and feared Allah (swt), they loved and regarded the Prophet (saw), they recognized the importance of this path of dawah and jihad, so they wanted to march forth with him (saw) and the believers. But then on the other hand Shaitan, their desires, and these hypocrites among their relatives were reminding them of the difficulty of the journey. They brought to their minds the sufferings that they would have to endure. They made them picture themselves marching in the heat of the desert. The sun beating down on them, the searing heat on their skin, the sweat oozing all over their body, their throats parched with thirst. These were the images that

the hypocrites tried to put in the minds of these Muslims when they were deciding whether or not they should march forth on this expedition. So these Muslims were torn. Torn between Allah (swt) and this world. Torn between serving their Lord and serving themselves. Torn between following the way of the Prophet (saw) and following the way of the hypocrites. Even though they were sincere, for a moment their hearts were inclining towards the side of the hypocrites. That is why Allah (swt) tells us here that their hearts were about to deviate. Their hearts were about to go towards the direction of the devil. Towards the direction of sin and heedlessness. But Allah (swt) saved them. He (swt) brought them back to the Straight Path because they were sincere to Him (swt). Not only that but as we see from this ayah He (swt) also pardoned them. He (swt) forgave them for their weakness. For their almost inclining towards the way of the evil ones. Recall from a previous ayah how Allah (swt) had told the believers that the hypocrites were all around them. So from all corners and all corridors these Muslims must have heard words of evil discouraging them from marching on this path, from helping the Prophet (saw). But Allah (swt) saved them from this. He (swt) prevented their hearts from deviating and He (swt) turned to them in Mercy and Forgiveness. How Merciful and Forgiving is He (swt)!

One lesson that we can take from this is to see that if we are sincere to Allah (swt) and we try our best to serve Him (swt) then He (swt) will save us from our own selves. He (swt) will save our hearts from deviating. Allah (swt) Knows that we need Him (swt) to save us. We by ourselves cannot protect ourselves from evil. We are too weak. We are too neglectful. We are too heedless. We always forget. So we must always be praying to Allah (swt) not to allow our hearts to deviate after He (swt) has guided us. Not to allow Shaitan, our desires, and the hypocrites in our midst to influence us. Just as Allah (swt) must constantly be forgiving us our sins, He (swt) must also be constantly saving us from sins. Were it not for Him (swt), were it not for His (swt)'s Mercy and Grace and Bounty upon us, then we would be immersed in sin. We would be just like the hypocrites. So if you are ever able to avoid evil then do not praise yourself but praise your Lord Who saved you from yourself. Were it not for Him (swt) then you would be completely destroyed. This then is another reason why you should turn to Him (swt), why you should dedicate yourself to Him (swt). How can you not when He (swt) saved you from destruction?

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying **“surely He is to them Most Compassionate, full of Mercy”**. This applies to all the sincere believers, Allah (swt) is towards them full of compassion and most merciful. If we are fortunate enough to be in this blessed company then this applies to us as well. In everything that Allah (swt) would have done to us we would see His (swt)'s Mercy and Compassion towards us. From His (swt)'s creating us, to His (swt)'s sustaining us, then to His (swt)'s guiding to this Din, to His (swt)'s allowing us to walk on this path of dawah and jihad, to His (swt)'s allowing us to being eligible to attain the greatest of achievements and this is His (swt)'s Pleasure. Even in the difficulties and trials that we face in life we would see His (swt)'s Mercy and Compassion for us. Through these hardships, through the pain that we feel, we know that He (swt) is bringing us closer to Him (swt). He (swt) is forgiving us our sins and raising us in our station to Him (swt). When we feel pain in this world then we can remember that this world is not for us. We were not created for this world. So we gladly endure and have any patience with this pain because we know that it will soon end. Furthermore know that this pain could be a means for us entering the Garden. That place in which there is no pain whatsoever. This is the Mercy and the Compassion that Allah (swt) has for us. This is the Mercy and the Compassion that He (swt) had for the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah as they marched forward towards Tabuk. Even though they were suffering greatly on that journey, they could taste the mercy and forgiveness of their Rabb. Can any creature possibly be this merciful and kind to any other creature? It cannot. This Mercy and Compassion is so great that it cannot be described in words. But this is only for the sincere believers. The ones who truly believe with all their hearts in this Message that their Creator has sent them. The ones who strive with their utmost to fulfill their responsibilities for this Din and this Ummah. These are the ones who Allah (swt) is full of mercy and compassion towards.

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلِّفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
 الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوْا أَن لَّا مَلْجَأَ
 مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
 التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾

118. And to the three, those who were left behind until the earth became constricted for them despite its vastness, and their souls became constricted, and they were certain that there was no refuge from Allah except towards Him, then He turned towards them so that they may return, surely Allah He is the Oft-Turning, Most Merciful.

This ayah was revealed specifically about three of the Prophet (saw)'s companions. These were three who were sincere believers. They believed with all their hearts in this Message that Allah (swt) had sent. They had a real desire to worship and serve their Creator. To support the effort to spread His (swt)'s Message and establish His (swt)'s Law. Yet despite their Iman, and despite their sincerity, when the call was sounded for the expedition of Tabuk they remained behind. They did not accompany the Prophet (saw) and the other believers. One of them was named K'ab bin Malik (ra). He (ra) has told us of his account in the books of hadith. He (ra) has told us that when the call for jihad was sounded on the Day of Tabuk, he (ra) was never more ready and more able to march forth. He (ra) had more than enough provisions for the journey. His body at that time was healthy and strong. And he (ra) did not have any responsibilities or obligations that might have excused him (ra). Yet despite all of this, the difficulty of the journey and the suffering that would be required weighed down heavily upon him (ra). He (ra) allowed the days to pass without making the needed preparations. Every day that passed him, he said that he would prepare tomorrow. He told himself that he had the intention to go but he kept on procrastinating. Until finally the day came when the army would march forth and he was not even prepared. Even then he told himself that he could catch up with the army later on. So he allowed the army to leave without him, and he was thus of those left behind.

This is why Allah (swt) begins this ayah by referring to K'ab (ra) and those with him (ra) as the three who were left behind. Notice how Allah (swt) does not say that they remained behind, even though they did choose to remain behind, rather He (swt) says that they were left behind. Here we see the mercy and compassion of Allah (swt) for K'ab (ra) and his companions. This is the ayah why Allah (swt) forgives them for the wrong that they had done. This is the ayah where He (swt) accepts their Tawbah. So in no way does He (swt) blame them in the ayah. Even though they chose to remain behind, even though they were neglectful of their duties towards their Lord, He (swt) does not criticize them here. He (swt) simply calls them the ones who were left behind.

But this pardon did not come right away. This ayah was not revealed immediately. It was in fact revealed fifty days after the Prophet (saw) and the believers returned home from Tabuk. In those fifty days Allah (swt) made K'ab (ra) and his companions to suffer a trial. A trial to purge them of their sin. In his narration, K'ab (ra) told us what he (ra) did when the Prophet (saw) returned. He (ra) did not offer the Prophet (saw) any excuses. He (ra) told the Prophet (saw) that had it been anyone else whom he was speaking to, then he (ra) could have offered some excuse. But he (ra) knew with certainty that he (ra) was speaking to the Messenger of Allah (swt). So there were no excuses that could ever be presented to him (saw). K'ab (ra) knew that any excuse, any lie, could easily be exposed because he (saw) was receiving revelation from the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing, and the All-Hearing. So K'ab (ra) did not make any excuses. He (ra) told the Prophet (saw) the truth. The whole truth that it was only his desires that made him remain behind from this expedition. While the Muslims were suffering in the sweltering heat of the desert, he was at home with his wife and his comforts. At that moment of testing, he chose himself over his Lord. We should remind ourselves at this point that K'ab (ra) was one of the best of the Prophet (saw)'s companions. Prior to Tabuk he (ra) had fought alongside the Prophet (saw) in all his (saw)'s battles with the exception of Badr. So close was K'ab (ra) to the Prophet (saw), that the Prophet (saw) even specifically asked about K'ab while the army was in Tabuk. He (saw) wondered why this close companion of his (saw) was not with him (saw). Thus it was not a simple matter for someone like K'ab to remain behind on an expedition as important as Tabuk.

That was why Allah (swt) legislated for him (ra) and his companions a severe punishment. He (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) not to speak with these three at all. Even the Muslims were not allowed to speak with them. Even their families were not allowed to speak with them. Even their wives were not allowed to live with them anymore. They were to be completely ostracized and segregated from the rest of the Muslim community. This is the severe punishment that Allah (swt) legislated for them because they chose to remain behind from this path of dawah and jihad. This shows how displeased He (swt) is with those who do not participate in this effort. This was indeed a difficult trial for the three of them. K'ab (ra) tells us how he (ra) would walk in the markets and no one would greet him at all. They would not even return the greeting that he (ra) would give to them. He (ra) would go to the masjid to make Salah in congregation and no one would even look at him (ra).

Allah (swt) describes the situation of these three companions during this trial when He (swt) says **“until the earth became constricted for them despite its vastness”**. This was how they began to feel as the days slowly passed. The earth in all its vastness seemed to constrict itself upon them. Everywhere they went, they were reminded of the sin that they had done. They would not meet one person except that in the behavior of that person they could see their crime. There was nowhere that they could go where they could find comfort, nowhere that they could find solace. The earth itself became their enemy, their surroundings became their enemy. Just imagine how painful it must have been for them. To have the very world in which they live close in around them and destroy them. The pain became so bad that K'ab (ra) tells us how he (ra) once climbed the roof of one of his cousin's garden. He (ra) then shouted to his cousin and said “O my cousin, do you not know that I love Allah and His Messenger”. All that his cousin said in reply was “Allah and His Messenger know best”. This was the response that K'ab (ra) got from his beloved cousin. He would not even acknowledge his Iman, his love for Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw). This was how he (ra) felt everywhere that he went. He (ra) could not find any shelter from his crime. In the faces of all his brothers and sisters he was reminded of what he had done. They all treated him (ra) as a hypocrite, as a traitor. This was how the earth closed in on him from all sides. There was nowhere that he could go to find refuge from his sin.

One lesson that we can take from this is to see how closely knit the Muslim community at that time was. All the believers spent much time with each other and kept each other's company. That was why this social boycott was so difficult for K'ab (ra) and his two companions. They were not used to being away from others in the community. They needed the love and the support, the companionship and the friendship of their brothers and sisters. They realized that they were a people on a mission, and they realized that they needed to work together to accomplish this mission. We can almost imagine how it must have been like in Madinah at that time. The Muslims would pray together in congregation, they would sit in halaqahs and sessions of dhikr together, they would remember Allah (swt) together and learn the Quran together, they would discuss the administrative affairs of the State together and they would plan their military campaigns together.

Where is this unity and this sense of companionship and brotherhood among Muslims today? How often do you even see your Muslim brothers and sisters these days? When was the last time that you travelled to meet with a brother or sister only for the sake of Allah (swt)? When all that you talked about was Islam and how we can rescue the Ummah from her suffering? When was the last time that you were in a gathering of Muslims and the Name of Allah (swt) was mentioned? The last time that you were in the masjid what percentage of the people there gave you salam? So we have to realize that we as an Ummah have lost this sense of brotherhood and companionship that existed at the time of the Prophet (saw) and the early generations. Once we come to this realization we have to make our best effort to correct the problem. Of course we will not be able to fix the whole Ummah but we can start with the Muslims that we know. We can make an effort to come closer to them. We can make an effort to remind them of our obligations in the Din. We can make an effort to remind them that the basis of our unity must be Islam and the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). In reality however this lack of unity among the Muslims is a symptom of a greater problem. On the one hand we as an Ummah are divided. On the other hand we have forgotten Allah (swt). We believe that both of these problems can be traced to the absence of the Islamic State. The State is what unites us under a common political entity, and the State is what reminds us of our Lord. So while we should all do what we can to come closer to our brothers and sisters, we have to also remember what the real solution to this problem is.

Allah (swt) then tells us in the ayah that not only did the earth become constricted around them but even **“their souls became constricted”**. It was not just that the Muslim community had turned against these three but even they blamed their own selves. They realized the wrong that they had done. Now even their own souls would not give them peace. Even their souls would not let them be. Even when they were alone they could hear the voice of blame coming from within themselves. They knew that they had done wrong. They knew that they had sinned against their Creator. This is how the believer feels when he sins. This is how the believer feels when he has done something that is displeasing to his Lord and Master. It tears him up inside. His own soul accuses himself and makes him regret deeply the sin that he has committed. So Allah (swt) tells us here of K’ab and his companions how they could not even escape the blaming of their own souls. So great was their guilt and their regret at having stayed behind from this path of dawah and jihad that even their own souls began to constrict them with guilt and remorse.

The suffering of K’ab (ra) was so great that it even spread outside the Islamic State. One king of an Arab tribe in Syria heard of K’ab’s situation. He heard about how the entire Muslim community had boycotted him and would not even speak to him (ra). The king knew that K’ab (ra) had a reputation among his people for being a leader and a great warrior. So the king offered K’ab (ra) an invitation to come and stay with him. The king promised him (ra) that he (ra) would be welcomed amongst his people. He would no longer have to feel the suffering of being rejected and shunned by the people all around him. He would no longer be reminded of his sin everywhere that he went. He would no longer even be required to participate in this path of dawah and jihad. He could just sit at home and relax. So this was indeed a tempting invitation. But K’ab (ra) knew that it was a ploy of Shaitan to take him (ra) away from his Lord. Despite all the suffering he (ra) was going through, he (ra) never diminished in his love and reverence for Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw). He (ra) always had a hope deep within him (ra) that Allah (swt) would accept his repentance and lift this boycott. So he (ra) took the letter of this king and burned it in the oven. For the sincere believer, no matter how great his suffering becomes, he never gives up in Allah (swt). He always keeps the hope in his Lord to come through for him. No matter how dark it becomes, he knows that in the end, there will be Light.

Allah (swt) then says **“and they were certain that there was no refuge from Allah except towards Him”**. Soon not only did K’ab (ra) and his two companions realize the wrong that they had done but they also realized that there was no hope for them except in Allah (swt). There was nowhere for them to hide. There was no shelter that could find. Even if they may have been able to escape Allah (swt) in the life of this world, they were certain that they could never escape Him (swt) in the Hereafter. For example if K’ab (ra) would have accepted the offer of the Syrian king, he (ra) knew that he may have been able enjoy himself a bit in this life. But then what would be the fate that awaited him (ra) in the Hereafter? How could he ever escape Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment? This is what we need to realize as well. If we ignore our responsibilities, if we allow ourselves to fall into sin, then where can we find refuge from the Real and the True? K’ab (ra) and his companions realized that the only refuge from Allah (swt) was towards Him (swt). They had done wrong. They had allowed themselves to become distant from Him (swt). Now their only hope was to journey back towards Him (swt). This means to bear patiently the punishment that He (swt) had legislated for them and to supplicate earnestly for Him (swt) to forgive them and to accept their Tawbah. This was the journey back to their Lord. This was the only hope for them. So this was what they did.

Then Allah (swt) says **“then He turned towards them so that they may return”**. This is where Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) has forgiven K’ab (ra) and his companions. Allah (swt) turned towards them in Forgiveness and Mercy. He (swt) has turned from a state where they are in His (swt)’s Wrath to a state where they are in His (swt)’s Pleasure once again. Look at the beauty in the language of the ayah. Allah (swt) tells us that because He (swt) turned towards them they were able to return. They were able to return to being normal Muslims once again. They would no longer be boycotted by their brothers and sisters. They would no longer feel like strangers in their own community. Now their sin had been pardoned. Now they could return a state of peace and tranquility once again. Now the earth has opened up for them once again. Now their souls have released them. Allah (swt) turned towards them so that they could return to Him (swt). Even their repentance, even their coming back to Him (swt), was only possible because of His (swt)’s Mercy and Love for them.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that **“surely Allah He is the Oft-Turning, Most Merciful”**. This is perhaps the most important lesson for us in this ayah. We are reminded Who our Lord and Master IS. He (swt) is a Lord of Mercy, a Lord of Kindness, a Lord that often turns to His (swt)’s slaves and accepts their repentance. Why does Allah (swt) need to accept our Tawbah? Who are we to Him (swt)? What have we done for Him (swt)? He (swt) only accepts our Tawbah because He (swt) chooses to. Because He (swt) is so Loving, and so Compassionate. He (swt) would allow us to return to Him (swt) even when He (swt) has no need for us whatsoever. Not only does He (swt) allow us to turn to Him (swt) but He (swt) turns to us. He (swt) comes back to us even after we have walked away from Him (swt). This is only because He (swt) has a sublime beauty that we as selfish humans will never fully understand. All that we can do is be awed by it and prostrate in worship before it.

Not only does Allah (swt) accept our Tawbah time and time again, but when He (swt) does He (swt) turns to us in Mercy. He (swt) does not simply accept our repentance and then leave it at that. No rather with the acceptance of Tawbah comes a shower of love and mercy. First of all He (swt) gives us the enabling grace to journey back to Him (swt) after we had been distant from Him (swt). When we committed that sin we had become distant from Him (swt). The sin had become pleasing to us and we had forgotten about Him (swt). At that moment of darkness when we committed the sin we only thought about ourselves and our desires. We had forgotten our Lord Who was so close to us and Who was sustaining us and giving us life even at that moment of sin. Now after the acceptance of repentance, the first part of His (swt)’s Mercy is that He (swt) allows us to journey back to Him (swt). He (swt) enables us to remember Him (swt) more and more, to allow Him (swt) to be the reason for our being once again. The next part of the mercy that comes with repentance is that He (swt) withholds or even removes completely the punishment that is due for that sin. Then He (swt) continues to provide for us and continues to guide us. This is the Mercy of our Lord and this is what K’ab (ra) and his two companions felt after their Tawbah was accepted.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾

119. O you who believe, have Taqwa of Allah and be with the people of Sidq.

In this ayah Allah (swt) is calling out to all the believers. He (swt) tells us to have Taqwa of Him (swt) and to be with the people of Sidq. We could write pages and pages on just what it means to have Taqwa of Allah (swt) and on just what it means to be among the people of Sidq. But all that we can do in our humble tafsir is to scratch the surface of the meaning. On the one hand we are restricted because we are limited to the English language, and on the other hand the intention of our tafsir was never to write a comprehensive and exhaustive explanation of the Quran. Rather we only want to give you a small taste of its meanings and we ask you to finish the journey on your own. We have only gotten your feet wet, now we invite you to swim into the rest of this ocean.

Basically Taqwa means to be conscious of Allah (swt). To remember Him (swt) at all times. But not just to remember Him (swt), but to remember Him (swt) with the fear and the reverence that He (swt) deserves. So just think about it now. You have a Lord and Master. The One Who created you. The One Who is sustaining you for every moment of your life. The Perfect One. The Sublime One. The One Who Knows all things. The One is Able to do anything. He (swt) is closer to you than your jugular vein. How then should you behave when you are cognizant of such a Being and His (swt)'s Presence so close to you? Can you even think of doing something that might be displeasing to Him (swt)? How can you even allow the moments in your life to pass by without remembering Him (swt)? This is what it means to have Taqwa. It is to always remember your Lord and then as a consequence of that remembrance to only do what is pleasing to Him (swt).

The people of Sidq are not only those who speak the Truth but they are also those who confirm the Truth. When they see something as true then they acknowledge the Truth of what they see. What could be a greater acknowledgement for you to make than your acknowledgment in the Truth of this Message that your Creator has sent to you? When you say that you are a Muslim you are saying that you have believed in this Message that your Creator has sent to you

and that you have submitted to it. Now to be among the people of truth you have to verify this claim that you make. If you say that you have believed in and submitted to this Message than you must prove what you say with your actions and your emotions. Your Shahada, your testification of faith, cannot simply be words on your tongue. It must be reflected in your behavior, in your thinking, in your feelings, in every aspect of you. This is what it means to be among the people of Sidq. It is not simply to always speak the Truth, but rather it is confirm with your life what you say with your tongue. It is for you to prove to yourself that you truly do believe.

From this we can also see why it is very important to always look at proper tafsirs rather than simply reading translations. Most translations would translate the People of Sidq as the "Truthful", but we see from here that there is much to this word than merely be among the Truthful. Of course it means to speak the Truth but that speaking of the Truth is only the surface of the meaning. First and foremost you must speak the Truth out of your conviction in this Message. It is not just that you speak the Truth for the sake of speaking the Truth but rather you speak the Truth because your Lord has commanded you to speak the Truth and you know that speaking it is most pleasing to Him (swt). This should remind us that in order to get a proper understanding of the Quran, we have to learn the Arabic language. If we cannot then at least we have to look into tafsirs such as this one. Simple word for word translations not only give an incomplete meaning, but often times a misleading one.

Now how exactly does this command to have Taqwa and to be among the People of Sidq relate to the previous ayah where Allah (swt) told us how He (swt) is the Oft-Turning and the Merciful? How does it fit with the context of these ayahs as whole speaking about the path of dawah and jihad? The answer to both of these questions is that we have to realize our responsibility. It is true that Allah (swt) is the Most Merciful and He (swt) is the One Who turns to us again and again by accepting our Tawbah. But does this mean that we can ignore our responsibility? Does this mean that we can make no effort for this dawah but rather keep a false hope in Allah (swt)? If this is what we think then we should remind ourselves of this command that Allah (swt) gives in this ayah. We should have Taqwa of Allah (swt) and be among the People of Sidq. If we truly fulfill this command how then can we ignore this obligation?

مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَسُولِ
 اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلَا
 نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطْئُونَ مَوْطِئًا يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا
 يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ نَيْلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ
 أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

120. It is not proper for the people of Madinah and those around them of the desert Arabs to remain behind the Messenger of Allah and that they should desire their own lives to his, that is because there afflicts them not thirst nor fatigue nor hunger in the Way of Allah and nor do they tread a path to enrage the disbelievers, nor do they gain from the enemy a gain, except that it is written for them as a righteous deed, surely Allah does not waste the reward of those who have Ihsan.

In this ayah Allah (swt) gives His (swt)'s final verdict on those who abstain from this path of dawah and jihad. Those who choose not to make this effort to restore the Law of Allah (swt) to the earth. Although this ayah is speaking first and foremost about the Sahabah and the early Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw), there is really no evidence to restrict its meaning only to their generation. Rather here Allah (swt) speaks about all Muslims in all the generations. He (swt) tells us what He (swt) has to say about those of them who ignore this responsibility. In this ayah there is a threat but there is also an encouragement and a great incentive. Allah (swt) shows us to what low station we will be reduced to if we ignore this responsibility, and at the same time here He (swt) also shows the great reward that He (swt) would give us if we walk on this path. So realize from this ayah as well how this Quran is calling on you to rise up and to perform your duty to your Creator. Allah (swt) created you and He (swt) guided you to this Din for a reason. In this ayah He (swt) reminds you what that reason is.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying **“It is not proper for the people of Madinah and those around them of the desert Arabs to remain behind the Messenger of Allah”**. Imam Qurtubi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that here Allah (swt) is speaking about the station of the believers. Allah (swt) has raised the believers to a very high station. He (swt) has allowed them to be part of the Ummah of His (swt)’s beloved (saw). He (swt) has given them the Quran, which is His (swt)’s own Divine Speech, He (swt) has made them into the nation that would carry His (swt)’s Message till the end of time, He (swt) gave them Salah, He (swt) has made the spoils of war lawful for them, He (swt) has made the entire earth into a masjid for them to pray on, even He (swt) has made them into half the total population of the people of Paradise. These are but a few of the favors that Allah (swt) has conferred upon this Ummah. For all these favors, He (swt) expects something in return. He (swt) expects that we behave up to the standard of the believers. There is a very high station that Allah (swt) has put us at and He (swt) expects us to behave like the people of that station. One of the actions that is not acceptable for the people of this station is that they remain behind the Messenger of Allah (saw). It is not fitting for them to remain behind him (saw). It is not in any way proper for them.

The Prophet (saw) walked on this path of dawah and jihad. Read the classical books of Seerah and you will see that this was his (saw)’s life. He (saw) spent his life calling the people to Allah (swt) and establishing His (swt)’s Law on the earth. This was his (saw)’s path. Allah (swt) is telling us here that for us to remain behind, for us not to follow him (saw) on this path, is not proper for us. It does not behoove someone who calls them a believer to do such. If we were to abandon the Prophet (saw), if we were to choose to remain behind and sit at home doing nothing for this dawah, then Allah (swt) is telling us here that we are not even worthy to have the status of the believer. We are not even worthy to call ourselves believers. In reality we would be nothing better than hypocrites. Can you realize how serious a threat this is? Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that this is the most serious of threats that could be given to any Muslim. It is like Allah (swt) is saying that you are not even fit to be a believer if you ignore this duty. Can you now even imagine what would happen to you if you were to return to Allah (swt) having ignored this responsibility? Having remained behind His (swt)’s beloved (saw).

Then Allah (swt) says **“that they should desire their own lives to his”**. Here Allah (swt) tells us that just as it is not fitting for the believers to remain behind when the Prophet (saw) marches forth on this path of dawah and jihad, it is also not proper for them to prefer their own lives to his (saw). Actually the Arabic word *raghba* that Allah (swt) uses here gives a much stronger meaning than “preferring”, it gives a meaning of “desiring” and “yearning”. So in essence what Allah (swt) is saying is that we should not prefer or yearn for our own selves instead of the Prophet (saw). People naturally have a desire for their own selves. They desire themselves to be successful, they desire wealth for themselves, they desire to have good families and for their families to be happy, they desire good health and to be free from pain, these are all desires that people naturally have for themselves. However here Allah (swt) is telling us that for the believer, they cannot desire themselves over the Prophet (saw). In other words for the believer, the Prophet (saw) must be given preference over his or her own self. Before you seek to please yourself you should seek to please the Prophet (saw). This is what is fitting for the believer. This is what is proper for the believer. Anything less than this would not be worthy of the station of the believer. Allah (swt) did not allow you to be part of the Ummah of His (swt)’s beloved (saw) so that you would put yourself ahead of him (saw).

So in the first part of this ayah Allah (swt) gave you the threat. He (swt) said that if you turn away from this path of dawah and jihad, if you remain behind from the path that the Prophet (saw) walked on, then you are not even worthy to be a Muslim. You are not worthy of the high station which your Lord raised you to when He (swt) allowed you to be a part of this Ummah. It does not matter if you are a Sahabah from Madinah, or a Bedouin Arab living in the desert, or a Muslim living in the twenty first century. No believer is excused from this obligation, and for any believer to remain behind does not behoove his or her status as a believer. Just think about it, if an illiterate desert Arab who barely knew two Surahs of the Quran was not excused from this obligation then what makes you think that you are. This then is the threat. If you neglect this duty to follow the Prophet (saw) on this path then in Allah (swt)’s estimation you are not even worthy to be part of this Ummah. That is how seriously He (swt) views remaining behind from this path of dawah and jihad. The path of the Prophet (saw).

Then in the second part of the ayah Allah (swt) gives you the encouragement and the incentive. He (swt) tells you what you will receive if you do walk on this path. He (swt) shows you that if you make this effort then not only would you be rewarded for the effort, but any calamity or any difficulty that touches you while you are on this path, then that difficulty as well will be written for you as a good deed. It does not matter how large or small that difficulty was, it will be a source of reward for you. Allah (swt) says **“that is because there afflicts them not thirst nor fatigue nor hunger in the Way of Allah and nor do they tread a path to enrage the disbelievers, nor do they gain from the enemy a gain, except that it is written for them as a righteous deed”**. Here Allah (swt) tells us that any affliction which the believers suffer on this path, any way in which they enrage the disbelievers, or any achievement that they achieve will be written for them as a good deed. When it comes to the afflictions, Allah (swt) specifically mentions thirst, fatigue and hunger but the meaning is not restricted only to these three. Rather it encompasses any difficulty whatsoever that might befall the believer while he or she is on this path. So any fear, any sadness, any worry or anxiety, any loss of provisions, any injury, any pain, anything that causes the believer any discomfort will be a reward as long they are on this path. When it comes to thirst and hunger, it is not only the physical feelings of thirst and hunger for which the believer will be rewarded, but also any need that is not satisfied or quenched. We all have needs and desires. Allah (swt) created us with these needs and desires. The need for companionship. The desire for members of the opposite gender. The desire for wealth and prosperity. For recognition and status. Human beings naturally desire such things. But if we deny ourselves these things because of our working in this path of dawah and jihad, if we sacrifice these things for Allah (swt), then we would be rewarded for any difficulty or inconvenience that we have to endure in forgoing these pleasures. If we have patience for the sake of Allah (swt) and we suffer through our hunger and thirst for these things then we would be rewarded for every moment in which we demonstrate that patience. The Prophet (saw) has told us that patience is the one good deed that Allah (swt) rewards without limit. This means that for every moment in which you have patience, then you are rewarded for that moment. As the time passes, and you continue to remain hungry and thirsty, then the good deeds are being continuously added to your Scale.

We know that only those whose Scale of good deeds is heavy will be saved on the Day of Judgment, so how certain are you that your Scale is heavy enough? We who commit so many sins. We who allow so many moments to pass by in heedlessness. We who do so many deeds for other than Allah (swt). How can we be sure that we will have enough deeds to save ourselves on that Day? How can we be sure that Allah (swt) accepted even one of our deeds? But when it comes to afflictions that are suffered in this path, Insha Allah we can be certain that we will be rewarded because we ourselves are not doing anything for them. All that we are doing is tolerating them and being patient through them. So when it comes to such afflictions all that we need to have is the intention in the beginning to walk on this path, once we have done that, then anything that befalls us while we are on this path is automatically a reward for us. We do not need to do to anything other than tolerate that difficulty, be it thirst or hunger or fatigue or anything that may befall us. So see how easy Allah (swt) has made it to receive good deeds when you work in this dawah. Even something that for you might be difficult or uncomfortable, is actually a reward for you. It might even be the one deed that tips the Scale in your favor and allows you to go to the Garden instead of being sent to the Fire.

Let us ponder a bit more on the three afflictions that Allah (swt) gave as examples in this ayah. Without a doubt these are the three that almost any dawah carrier has to face. You will feel thirsty, you will feel hungry, and you will become tired. Thirst and hunger shows us that this dawah demands sacrifice. It demands that we restrain ourselves from quenching our appetites and our thirsts. So if we are going to work in this dawah then we need to learn to do without. We should realize the excellence of a life of renunciation from the pleasures of this world. Now this does not mean that we have to become monks and forsake everything of this world, but it does mean that we have to learn to control ourselves. We should eat less food, we should consume less things of this world, and we should not even desire for ourselves the riches and extravagance of this world. We have to always remind ourselves that we are on this earth for a mission. We not here to chase after this world like the rest of mankind are doing. Because we have committed ourselves to this path, we should assume that we are going to have less than those people who are committed to only to this worldly life. But we are rewarded for our patience.

Realize also that Allah (swt) promises us fatigue and exhaustion if we work in this path. This dawah demands all of our time and all of our effort. As soon as the Prophet (saw) realized that he (saw) had become the Messenger of Allah (swt), he (saw) told his wife that from this day onwards there would be no more rest. This means that from that day onwards, he (saw) would have to spend all of his (saw)'s time in this effort. Just think for a moment as to how daunting is the task that you have ahead of you. You are trying to establish the Din of Allah (swt) on the earth, you are trying to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. This was the task that was given to the prophets and the messengers, the very best of mankind, and even they thought it to be the most daunting and challenging of missions. Some of them were even almost ready to give up because it was so difficult. Do you think then that you will be able to do your part without putting in any effort? Without putting in the utmost that you can do? So realize from this that you are going to suffer fatigue and exhaustion in this path. But realize also from this ayah that you will be rewarded for every discomfort that you go through as a result of this fatigue. You will not even feel the slightest of discomfort or pain except that a good deed will be written for you as a consequence of it. All that you have to do is receive it is to commit yourself to this path.

Allah (swt) also promises us reward in this ayah for any path that we take to enrage the disbelievers. The word "disbelievers" does not refer to the average non-Muslims, rather it refers to those who oppose this dawah. Those who know that this Message is the Truth but who still choose to turn away from it. The ones in power who are not willing to return the sovereignty to Allah (swt). These are the ones who do kufr, the ones who know the Truth but who cover that Truth with their falsehood and their arrogance. These are the most evil of people because they know Allah (swt) and still they choose to oppose Him (swt). So any way in which you frustrate them, any way in which you cause them anger and rage, will Insha Allah be a source of reward for you. The Prophet (saw) and the believers frustrated the Romans when they marched forward in Tabuk. The Roman Emperor was never expecting the Muslim army to leave Madinah and come to the frontier lands of the Islamic State. Just the presence of this army frustrated all his plans and he had to return home. Of course today none of us are in any capacity to launch an army. Only the Khalifah can do that once the Islamic State returns Insha Allah. But we can do our

part. The disbelievers today are trying to destroy this Din by trying to convince the Muslims that Islam is compatible with secularism. They want to convince us that we can live contently in the world the way it is today. That we do not need to work for a change. So one way in which we can frustrate this plan is by countering such lies and such propaganda. We have to remind the Muslims what Islam truly is. How it is an ideology that spans across every sphere of a human's individual and collective life. How it is a Divine Law that must be allowed the rule the earth. If we can do this, if we can teach the Muslims whom we know what this Din really is, then Insha Allah this will be one way in which we can enrage the disbelievers. They would be building something and we would be breaking it down. So just imagine how much this would enrage them? When we do this then not only would we be defending our Din but we would gaining reward from our Lord.

Allah (swt) also tells us how He (swt) will reward us for any accomplishment that we are able to achieve, any gain that we are able to gain, in the path of this dawah. This part of the ayah is general and so it refers to any accomplishment whatsoever that we are able to achieve. So if you are able to give a halaqah in which the people benefitted, if you are able to convince one Muslim about the need for an Islamic State, if you are able to learn Arabic, if you are able to finish a book, any goal which you are able to achieve will be a source of reward for you. Now think about how wonderful this is, you will have one joy in the life of this world because you were able to attain your goal and you will have yet another joy in the Hereafter when you see the reward that your Lord has kept for you attaining that goal. See from here how Generous and Bountiful Allah (swt) IS, He (swt) is not requiring us to restore the Islamic State in order for us to have a reward. Rather He (swt) is promising this reward for any goal or accomplishment whatsoever that we are able to reach.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) will never allow the reward of the ones who have Ihsan to be wasted. To have Ihsan as we know means to serve Allah (swt) as if we can see Him (swt), and if we are not able to reach this level then at least to be absolutely certain that He (swt) Sees us. Now this is not a state that one has only in the prayer but rather it is a state that one has at every waking moment. At every waking moment one is conscious of one's Lord and at every waking moment one strives to please Him (swt) in it.

So consider now that if the people who have Ihsan remember Allah (swt) at every moment and they strive to please Him (swt) at every moment, then how much reward must they be receiving? If every waking moment of their life is an act of servitude that is dedicated only to Allah (swt) then how much reward must they have? Not only are their acts themselves sources of reward, but as we saw in this ayah, any affliction or difficulty that they have to endure is a source of reward for them as well. Not only that but any time they achieve some accomplishment in this dawah or anytime they frustrate the plans of the disbelievers in some way, these are all also sources of reward for the people who have Ihsan as well. So consider now how much reward they must have with their Lord? Consider how close they must be to Him (swt)? Now the question to be asked is that if these are the people of Ihsan, and if they have so much reward with their Lord, will they then be denied any of this reward? Would Allah (swt) hold back even a tiny fraction of this reward since they have so much? No of course not, because as He (swt) tells us in the ayah He (swt) will never allow the reward of those who have Ihsan to go to waste. This point is stressed with emphasis and certainty in the language of the ayah. In no way whatsoever would Allah (swt) allow even the tiniest fraction of their reward to be lost. So if you dedicate yourself to this path, if you live only for Allah (swt), if you are among those who have Ihsan, then how much reward is waiting for you with your Lord? Gardens of bliss very near to the Pure and the Sublime. Can you even begin to comprehend the joy and the pleasure that awaits you? When Allah (swt) is promising us this, then how can we settle for anything of this world? What is there in this world that even comes close to this? So strive with the best of your ability to serve your Lord, to support His (swt)'s cause, and always remember that every moment of your life is being recorded in the most excruciating of detail. Any good whatsoever that you send forth you can be certain that you will find it with Him (swt). What is left now other than for you to be sincere to Him (swt)? What is there left for you now other than to join this effort?

وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِيًا
 إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

121. And they do not spend a spending, be it small or large, nor do they traverse a valley, except that it is written for them, in order that Allah may recompense them for the best of what they used to do.

It is ayahs like this that created the Sahabah. It is ayahs like this that created the greatest generation mankind has ever known. It is ayahs like this that created a people who were able to establish Allah (swt)'s Din on the earth. This is because the Sahabah did not view the Quran as an academic book merely to be studied, nor did they view it as a philosophical book of discourse and speculation, rather they took it as a book to be lived by. For every ayah that they learned they tried to apply it in their lives. That is why they were able to live for Allah (swt) instead of living for themselves. That is why they were able to make all manner of sacrifices. So ponder closely on what your Lord is telling you in this ayah and realize that if only you knew this ayah then that would be enough for you to dedicate every moment of your life for Him (swt).

Allah (swt) speaks in this ayah about the efforts and the sacrifices of His (swt)'s sincere servants. About this He (swt) says that anything whatsoever that they spend, be it small or large, or any valley that they traverse, He (swt) has it written for them as a good deed. Spending here is not restricted only to spending with money. But it means anything whatsoever that you spend for Allah (swt). So even if you give to Him (swt) a moment in your life, a moment in which you served His (swt)'s Din or you glorified Him (swt), then this moment will be written for you as a good deed. In regard to spending notice also how Allah (swt) mentions small before He (swt) mentions large. This is to remind us once again that we should not belittle any good deed. Anything whatsoever that we do for Allah (swt) can be a good deed. All that we have to do is to make Him (swt) as the intention behind that deed. The people who have Ihsan are the ones who remember ayahs such as these. They know that their Lord is counting for them every moment of their lives. So they resolve to live every moment of their lives only for Him (swt).

Just as Allah (swt) will reward us for anything that we spend for Him (swt), He (swt) will also reward us for any valley that we traverse for Him (swt). To traverse a valley involves difficulty because one must climb up the mountain and then climb down. So this analogy can be applied to any difficulty that we are able to overcome for Allah (swt). Whether it be as soldiers marching through a valley, or as students of knowledge trying to learn a difficult subject, or as dawah carriers trying to carry a particular point or idea to the people. All of these involve difficulty, all of these involve effort, but Allah (swt) promises here a reward for this effort. In fact the greater the difficulty involved in accomplishing a particular task, the more will be the reward. So just as you should not overlook any small deed, you should also not be overcome by the size of any daunting task. Even if you have to climb a tall mountain and cross through a great valley, even if you have to return the Islamic State to a world of secularism, know that your efforts are not in vain. On the contrary they are being recorded by Allah (swt) Himself, the Real and the True. How then can you feel intimidated by the task that lies ahead of you? It is just another valley that you must traverse, and many were the valleys that your brothers and sisters before you overcame.

But what is the purpose of Allah (swt) writing down our deeds? He (swt) tells us in the last part of the ayah when He (swt) says **“in order that Allah may recompense them for the best of what they used to do”**. So the reason why Allah (swt) is writing down our deeds is because He (swt) wants to repay them to us. He (swt) wants to reward us for them. Not just to reward us but to reward us according to the best of what we used to do. What exactly does Allah (swt) mean by this? Ultimately there are three standards upon which Allah (swt) judges our deeds. The first is the sincerity that we have to Him (swt) in it, the second is the difficulty that was involved for us in it, and the third is the correctness or the soundness of that deed. Now of course all of our deeds vary in these standards. Every act of servitude that we do to Allah (swt) throughout our lives varies in these measures according to which they could be judged. Some of our deeds we do purely for Allah (swt), and some are tainted with some insincerity. We may do it for ourselves or to show off to others. Similarly some of our deeds are easier to do than others. Some deeds require a lot of effort such as learning Arabic, or fighting in the Way of Allah (swt), or trying to convince a stubborn person the correct ideas, or fasting the long hot days of Ramadan. Other

deeds do not require much effort like remembering Allah (swt) or giving salam to your Muslim brother or making dua. Still other deeds we do in the most perfect way, with no errors or mistakes in them and other deeds have mistakes in them. Mistakes like not conforming entirely to the Sacred Law when that action was done. Mistakes like not performing that action in the best way. So in all these three standards upon which our deeds can be judged, our deeds vary. Some of our deeds are better than others. For example even in our Salah, sometimes we do the most perfect prayer where we remember Allah (swt) throughout the Salah. Other times we rush through our prayer, and at other times our mind is distracted by something of this world. Thus our actions vary in how pleasing they are to our Lord. Some are better than others. Now what does Allah (swt) mean in this ayah when He (swt) says that He (swt) wants to reward the believers according to the best of what they used to do. It means that when He (swt) is judging them, when He (swt) is rewarding them for their actions, He (swt) will reward all of their actions according to the best of their works. So in all your acts of worship and servitude to Allah (swt), He (swt) will take those deeds which were the best. Those deeds which were the most pleasing to Him (swt). Then He (swt) will reward all of actions according to this best. Now even if you may have had many actions which were less than perfect, Allah (swt) will still raise these actions to the level of your best deeds. This is what He (swt) means when He (swt) says that He (swt) wants to reward you according to the best of what you did.

But this special mercy, this special bounty, is not for everyone. It is not for any Muslim. It is only for those who dedicate themselves to this path of dawah and jihad. The ones who dedicate themselves completely to Allah (swt). Because we have to remember that the context of these ayahs is those believers who marched forth with the Prophet (saw) in the expedition of Tabuk. The ones who committed themselves to this path no matter how difficult it was. So it is these believers whom Allah (swt) would reward according to the best of their deeds. Allah (swt) will give them more than what He (swt) has given any of the other creation because He (swt) is so pleased with them. Because He (swt) loves them so. You too can this station if only you live for your Lord, if only you dedicate every moment to Him (swt). If you live for this cause.

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ
 مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

122. And it is not proper for the believers that they should go forth all together, rather from every party of them that goes forth a group should remain behind, so that they may give them understanding of the Din and so that they may warn their people when they return to them, in order that they may be cautious.

Recall from a previous ayah how Allah (swt) had said that it was not proper for the believers to remain behind when the Prophet (saw) marched forth into battle. Allah (swt) had told the early Muslims that for them to remain behind the Prophet (saw) was not at all becoming of their station as believers. Now was the meaning of this that every time the Prophet (saw) marched forth then all the believers should have followed behind him (saw)? In other words was it an obligation for all the believers to follow the Prophet (saw) every single time that he (saw) went out into battle? In this ayah Allah (swt) shows the early Muslims how this was not so. Rather every situation, every scenario, was different and so had a different ruling upon it. In the case of the expedition of Tabuk, the Islamic State was facing invasion. So the ruling for that situation was that of the defensive jihad and not the offensive jihad. The ruling for defensive jihad is that it is an obligation for all Muslims. There is no one who is excused from this responsibility. That was why when the Prophet (saw) marched forth that day towards Tabuk, all able-bodied Muslim men were required to go with him (saw). Allah (swt) Knows best but perhaps the only reason why he (saw) did not obligate the women and the children to come was because he (saw) was going out to meet the enemy in their land. If the Roman soldiers would have entered the territory of the Islamic State then the women and the children of those lands where they had penetrated into would be required to fight as well. Allah (swt) Knows best! But with other battles of the Prophet (saw), the ruling was different. Other battles of the Prophet (saw) were not part of a defensive jihad but

rather they were part of the offensive jihad. Military campaigns where the Prophet (saw) would be the one aggressing against the enemies of Allah (swt). In such cases it was not a requirement for all the Muslims to march forth with him (saw). In fact they should not have, and this ruling is what Allah (swt) explains to us in this ayah.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**And it is not proper for the believers that they should go forth all together**”. Recall this language from the previous ayah. This means that it is not fitting, it is not at all proper for the believers to march forth all at once. Such behavior is not at all becoming of the believers. Now this shows us that just as it is most displeasing to Allah (swt) for the believers to remain behind the Prophet (saw), it also shows us that it is most displeasing to Him (swt) for the believers to go forth altogether when the expedition or campaign is not for one for defensive jihad. This fact shows us that this matter is also serious. It is a serious matter for all the believers to go forth together. It is something most displeasing to Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says “**rather from every party of them that goes forth a group should remain behind**”. This is what Allah (swt) desires from every party of Muslims that go forth on an expedition for offensive jihad. He (swt) wants a group from them to remain behind. Notice how Allah (swt) says that the group that remains is “from” the party that goes forth. This shows us that there is a close companionship, a strong relationship, between the group that goes forth and the group that remained behind. One is from the other.

Then Allah (swt) tells us why He (swt) wants a group to remain behind from the group that goes forth when He (swt) says “**so that they may give them understanding of the Din and so that they may warn their people when they return to them**”. It was only to gain knowledge. Knowledge of the Din. Knowledge of Allah (swt). Now the scholars have differed on what each of the pronouns “they” in this ayah refers to. Is it that the ones who go forth will give the ones who remained behind the knowledge or is that the ones who remained behind will give the ones who go forth the knowledge. Allah (swt) Knows best but we believe that both of these opinions are correct. In other words those soldiers who went out in jihad would teach their brothers and their companions when they returned, just like their brothers and companions who remained behind would teach them. They would each teach the other.

This shows us that there was some knowledge to be gained when one was out in the path of Allah (swt), and there was some knowledge to be gained when one remained behind. Of course when one remains behind one can read books and attend halaqahs at the masjid. The Sahabah who remained behind most likely attended the halaqahs which the Prophet (saw) gave in his (saw)'s masjid, and then they would teach this knowledge to their companions when they returned from their expedition or raid. Similarly there is also knowledge to be gained when one goes out in the path of Allah (swt). When you travel great distances you meet new people and often times you take knowledge from them. Your eyes are exposed to new visions and new realities, and these give you more insight into understanding the creation and the meaning of life. But even more important when you are out in the path of Allah (swt), and you are striving and fighting in His (swt)'s way, you develop a relationship with Him (swt) that you cannot develop if you sit at home. Once you are close to Him (swt), once you strive for Him (swt), then He (swt) guides you to Him (swt). You are given knowledge of Him (swt) and understanding of His (swt)'s Book and His (swt)'s Din. This then was knowledge that those who went out in the path of Allah (swt) could have taught their companions when they returned home.

Today none of us can go out in the path of Allah (swt) for jihad because the Islamic State is not present. But we can go out in the path of Allah (swt) in search of knowledge of the Din. The Prophet (saw) has told us that when one goes out in search of knowledge of the Din, then one is rewarded as if they had gone out fighting in the Way of Allah (swt). From the moment that you leave your home to the moment that you return, you are rewarded as if you had gone out for jihad. Think then how much reward one gets in this path. But as see from this ayah, not only would you get knowledge, not only will you get the reward for that knowledge, but you will also get rewarded for teaching your family and those close to you when you return from your journey. So Insha Allah we should all make an effort to travel in search of knowledge. Not even so much for the knowledge itself, but for the reward that Allah (swt) gives us for making the journey and the reward for teaching when we return home. For us to revive this Din, we first need to know it. We need to learn every aspect of it, from tafsir to fiqh to hadith to usul. We will not be able to gain all this knowledge if we just sit at home. We have to go forth in search of it only for our Lord.

Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that the very fact that those who went out on jihad would be teaching those who remained behind should remind us that the true knowledge of this Din will only come to those who walk this path. This path of dawah and jihad. This Quran is not a book to be studied purely as an academic endeavor, rather it is Book to be lived by. When you study the Quran, you have to put yourself in the shoes of the ones who walked this path. You yourself have to be part of the effort to establish Allah (swt)'s Kingdom on this earth and to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Only when you are at this level will you truly understand this Book, this Din. If you choose not to then you will simply be a hypocrite who may have knowledge of the Din but you will not have its understanding.

Let us now look closely at the reason why Allah (swt) legislated this law where one group had to remain behind from the group that goes forth. Specifically He (swt) says **“so that they may give them understanding of the Din and so that they may warn their people when they return to them”**. Firstly it is to gain understanding of the Din. Notice how Allah (swt) does not say “knowledge” but He (swt) says “understanding”. So it not just that they learned knowledge, but they gained understanding of that knowledge. The knowledge penetrated deep into their hearts. They understood completely this Din. So it not just that they knew what was halal and what was haram. It is not just that they knew a hadith and its chain. It is not just that they knew the ruling for this situation or that situation. But they realized the purpose of the Din. They knew that the Din was a way of drawing closer to Allah (swt). They knew that Allah (swt) is the Real and the True, and they knew that the Din is naught but a journey to Him (swt). This is what we should seek as well. Not just seeking knowledge, but seeking understanding. To have the knowledge that we learn penetrate deep into our hearts. To make it have a practical impact on our lives. To make our behavior change because of this knowledge.

We also see from the ayah that the knowledge must be gained in order to warn people. The purpose of Allah (swt) sending us this knowledge, this revelation, is to warn us of the reality that we are ignorant of. The truth is that this world, this existence, is only an illusion. It is not what it seems to be. The reality of this existence is that it is a test. We are being tested at every moment. There are two angels next to you right now writing down every single thing that you do.

We are all Muslims so we know the truth of this reality. But we often forget, so we need to be reminded. We need to be warned. Warned of the reality that we are heedless of. Warned of the Day of Judgment that is approaching with every passing moment. Warned of the Lord Whose Gaze we are always under. This has to be the purpose of the knowledge that we gain. Not simply to make us increase in the amount of facts that we have in our mind. But to be warned of the Real and the True, and to be enabled to warn others.

What is the purpose of us warning the people with this knowledge? Allah (swt) says “ **in order that they may be cautious**”. The purpose of this warning is that the people may take heed. That they may make the needed precautions. Precautions to save themselves on the Day of Judgment. Save themselves from Allah (swt) and from His (swt)’s punishment. We take so many precautions in the life of this world. We make sure that our door is locked at night in the hope of preventing intruders from entering our house. We wear our seatbelts when we drive in the hope of protecting ourselves from injury if we are in an accident. We save money in the bank in the hope that this will protect us from poverty. But what precautions do we take to protect ourselves from the greatest of calamities? From the Wrath of Allah (swt). This then should be the purpose of the knowledge that we gain. To make us come closer to Allah (swt). To motivate us to do what is pleasing to Him (swt). To make us avoid what is displeasing to Him (swt). Allah (swt) Knows that the believers need this reminder, this warning. That is why He (swt) legislated that the party of the believers who go forth and the party of believers who remain behind both had to teach each other. To remind each other. To warn each other. This is the importance of knowledge. It is what can save us from the torment of the Fire, and it is what can save us what is even worse than that, the displeasure of our Lord and Master.

Now when you go out in search of knowledge, make certain that the knowledge which you gain helps you to fulfill this purpose. Make sure that it makes you want to fear Allah (swt), to take caution against His (swt)’s punishment. If the knowledge that you gain does not motivate you to do more that is pleasing to Him (swt) and to avoid what is displeasing to Him (swt), then is there any worth in that knowledge?

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ
غُلَظَةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

123. O you who believe, fight those who do kufr who are near to you, and let them find within you *ghiltha*, and know that surely Allah is with those who have Taqwa.

In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again what He (swt) expects from us. What our Din is all about. Our Din is not retreating to the wilderness and living with the animals, our Din is not compromising and integrating with the heedless and adopting their systems and their culture, our Din is not even mediating the entire day long and increasing in acts of worship and devotion. More than worship, more than good manners and good character, more than community service and social activity, the very core and essence of our Din, the apex of its manifestation is this path of dawah and jihad. This is what Allah (swt) expects from us. To join this effort to establish His Law on the earth and to carry His Message to mankind. This is what He (swt) reminds us of here.

In this ayah Allah (swt) commands us to fight those who do kufr who are near to us. Now we know that the ones who do kufr are the ones who reject this Message when it is presented to them. They are not the average non-Muslim that is walking on the street today. The one who has never even been presented with this Message along with all its proofs and evidences. Rather they are ones who turn away from this Message even when they are certain that it is the Truth. That is why Allah (swt) calls them the ones who do kufr. The ones who reject this Message even after they are certain that it is the Truth. Allah (swt) commands us to fight such people. To fight them because they have made themselves into His (swt)'s enemies by their rejection of the Message that He (swt) sent to them.

To understand the meaning of this ayah we have to remind ourselves once again of the context in which it was revealed. Recall that the Islamic State had just consolidated its power over the entire Arabian Peninsula with the conquest of Makkah. Now all the tribes in Arabia had come under the dominion of the Islam. But of course this is not enough for Allah (swt). He (swt) desires that the enter earth be ruled under His (swt)'s Law. For all mankind to live under His Justice.

That is why He (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to send emissaries and messengers to all the empires that bordered Arabia. They were invited to Islam, invited to submit completely before Allah (swt) as they had been created to do. But the kings and emperors of these nations rejected the Message. They were shown all the proofs and evidences. They knew that it was the Truth. Yet still they rejected it. They did not want to give up their power and their control over the people, over the land and its resources. There is nothing that corrupts men quiet so much as power does. That is why they did not want to return the sovereignty to Allah (swt), even though they knew that He (swt) was more deserving of it than they were. This then was when Allah (swt) revealed this ayah commanding the Muslims to fight against such kings and rulers. The ones who refuse to return the sovereignty of their lands to Allah (swt). The ones who rejected this Message from their Creator even when they were certain that it was the Truth. They must be fought until they submit to the Authority of the Divine.

Allah (swt) refers to such people as those **“who are near to you”**. This shows us that the dawah must first focus on those lands that are neighboring the Islamic State. The Khalifah must first invite to Islam those nations which border the Islamic State. If you think about it this makes perfect sense, because how can you try to conquer a nation that is far away when the nation that is close to you still has yet to come under your dominion? This is why Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to first and foremost focus the dawah on those nations and tribes which border the Islamic State. They are the ones who are most accessible, and they are also the ones who pose the greatest threat because they are so close. Once the neighboring states were brought under Islam then the dawah could be spread to the distant lands. For example once the Persian Empire was conquered and all its lands became part of the Islamic State, the dawah then spread to more distant land like Central Asia and North India.

One lesson that we can take from this for our dawah is that we also should focus first on those who are close to us. Our family members, our close friends, the people in our community, whoever we interact with the most. How can we focus our dawah on those who are distant from us when those who are close to us are still distant from Allah (swt)? Once we have clearly presented the Message to those who are close to us then we can turn to the others.

Then Allah (swt) says to the Prophet (saw) and the believers to “**let them find within you *ghiltha***”. This Arabic word ***ghiltha*** is difficult to translate into a single English word. It gives meanings of firmness, harshness, depth, and sternness. Imam Qurtubi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that it also means strength and unity. This is what Allah (swt) wants those who do kufr to find within us. When they fight against us, this is what they should find us as having. As soldiers on the battlefield, we must be firm and determined. No matter how powerful the enemy might be, we must never waiver or falter. They should find us to be a foe that keeps on coming, that does not back away. The depth of our resolve and our determination should know no depth. We live for Allah (swt), we fight for Allah (swt), we strive for Allah (swt), and there is nothing whatsoever greater than He (swt). So our resolve and our determination and our strength should also be the greatest. We should also be united and supportive of each other. We should think and move as one common unit, and we should help and encourage each other as much as possible. Each one of us should draw strength from the other, and as a consequence of this the strength of the group as a whole must increase.

Now of course this is not restricted only to the battlefield. Rather in any effort that we make on this path of dawah and jihad we should we have this firmness and strength. This determination and resolve. This unity and cohesion. So whether the effort that you are making is studying, or whether you are organizing halaqahs and teaching Quran at your masjid, or you are speaking to Muslims about the Islamic State and our responsibility to live under it, or you are working and doing business in this world in order to support the dawah financially, in anything that you do for this effort you must have this ***ghiltha***. You must do what you do with strength and resolve. With a firmness and determination that will never break or waiver. Always remind yourself of your Lord. Always remind yourself that you are doing what you are doing only to seek His countenance. This should be the source of your strength. The source of your determination. Your love of Allah (swt). Your hope in His (swt)'s Mercy and your fear of His (swt)'s punishment. This is what Allah (swt) expects from those who walk this path of dawah and jihad. This is what is required of the Muslims today if the Divine Kingdom is to be restored on the earth once again. May Allah (swt) give us all this strength because we would never have it without Him (swt)!

Sayyid Qutb reminds us in his tafsir of this ayah that although Allah (swt) uses this word **ghiltha** in the context of fighting against the disbelievers, we should never think based on this that we can be cruel or barbarous towards them. Based on this word we should never think that we can violate the rules of combat that Allah (swt) has already legislated for us. Being firm and strong against the disbelievers only means that we are steadfast and unwavering in our efforts against them. It does not mean that we can kill the innocents and non-combatants among them, nor does it mean that we can torture and persecute them, nor does it mean that we can mutilate their bodies or violate them in any way. Even if they may do this to us, it does not give us the right to do it to them. We have to always remember that we answer to a higher authority.

We also have to remind ourselves that even the purpose of war for us is the most noble of purposes. We do not seek power, or wealth, or prestige, or glory, or honor. Rather we only seek to please the Lord and Master. We seek to establish His Law on the earth so that all mankind can live under its justice. We seek to convey His Message to the people so that they all can know the reason why they exist and so that they can know their Creator and Sustainer. So that they can know the peace and tranquility that comes from a life of Islam. So that they can be saved from the Fire and admitted into the Garden. To then know nothing but pure bliss for all eternity. This is the reason why we fight. This is the reason why we kill and we are killed. What more noble purpose can there be than this? How then can anyone criticize the sword in our Din?

Mawdudi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that in addition to fighting against the disbelievers, Allah (swt) also speaks in this ayah about fighting against the hypocrites. This is because he says of all the enemies of this Message, the hypocrites are the ones who are closest to us. They are the ones who influence us the most, thus they are also the most dangerous. The most likely to take away from Allah (swt). Now to fight against the hypocrites does not mean to fight against them with the sword, rather it means to strive within ourselves to protect ourselves from their influence. Even though the hypocrites seem to be Muslims, they are really among the heedless. They are among those who do not remember Allah (swt). Now if we are not careful they will make us forget our Lord as well. They will encourage us to sin. They will encourage us to neglect our obligations in the Din. Even when they speak, they will only speak about this world.

They will rarely if ever mention Allah (swt) in their conversations. So to strive against them means to strive against their influence. To protect ourselves from allowing them to turn us into one of them. In this day and age this truly demands a mighty effort. This is because there are so many of such hypocrites in our midst. So-called Muslims who speak against working in this effort to restore the Islamic State. Who call for integration, compromise, and political participation with the systems of kufr. Who say that the Islamic State is an unattainable ideal. Who say that we should be content living in a secular society. This is what we have to strive against. We know the Truth. We know what Allah (swt) demands of us. So we should never allow them to take us away from this path. Just as we have to strive against the disbelievers on the battlefield with **ghiltha** we also have to strive against these hypocrites in our hearts with **ghiltha**.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) is with those who have Taqwa. Now we know that to have Taqwa is to always be conscious of Allah (swt). As a result of this consciousness to strive to protect ourselves from His (swt)'s Wrath. What then is the connection between having Taqwa of Allah (swt) and having this **ghiltha** when we strive in this path of dawah and jihad? Of course the connection is that one of the ways to have Taqwa, one of the ways to protect ourselves from the punishment of Allah (swt), is to have this **ghiltha**. If we do not have this determination and this strength. If we allow ourselves to become soft and lazy. If we allow ourselves to become complacent and neglect this path. Then we are not in a state of Taqwa. Then we are not in a state where we are remembering our Lord. Then we are not in a state where we are safe from His (swt)'s punishment.

So we should remind ourselves from this ayah what this Din is truly about. Yes being kind to the neighbors is part of Islam. Yes performing social services and helping the community is part of Islam. But these are all branches of the Din, while this path of dawah and jihad is the trunk and the core. This Surah should be a testament to this fact. How many ayahs did you find here about community service and how many ayahs did you find about dawah and jihad? When the Law of Allah (swt) is restored, when the Ummah is saved from oppression, then we can worry about these branches. Until then we have to focus on the core of this Din.

وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَقُولُ أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ
 إِيمَانًا فَآمَنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾

124. And whenever there comes down a Surah, from among them there are those who say 'Which of you has because of this increased in Iman'. But as for those who believe their belief is increased by it, and they rejoice.

Now we know the mission that we are on. Now we know the path that lies before us. We also know that in our community there are the true and sincere believers and there are the hypocrites. There are those who dedicate themselves to this path of dawah and jihad and there are those who turn away from it. Now what is it that distinguishes between the hypocrites and the true believers? Why is that one of these groups is able to strive hard in this path and why is it that the other turns away from it? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah. He (swt) shows us the one thing that the believers have which gives them the strength to be steadfast on this path. To be steadfast no matter how difficult it becomes. This is nothing less than His (swt)'s Book. His (swt)'s Divine words. The believers have a special relationship with this Book. This relationship is what gives them strength. This relationship is what allows them to be steadfast on this path. So we have to realize from this ayah that if we are going to walk on this path then we also need to build a special relationship with the Quran. If we do not then we will not be able to complete this mission. We will have nothing to save ourselves from becoming hypocrites.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling us what was the response of the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) to any Surah that was revealed to them. They would ask each other as to who has increased in Iman as a result of this Surah. Realize from this first of all that even though they were hypocrites they knew the purpose of the Quran. They knew that the purpose of this Book was to increase one in Iman. To increase one in certainty and conviction in this Message that Allah (swt) had sent. They knew the effect that the Quran was supposed to have on them, and they wondered amongst themselves as to why it was not having this effect. So they questioned each other as to why their Iman had not increased as a result of the Quran

But were they really in doubt as to why the Quran was not increasing their Iman? Were they sincere in this question that they were asking? Allah (swt) Knows best but most likely they were not. You see these were a people who had already decided to reject this Message even after they were certain that it is the Truth. They had already made up their minds that they were not going to believe. That they were going to serve their own worthless selves rather than the Perfect One and the Pure One. Because of this conclusion that they had already come to in their minds, they were never turning to Quran for guidance in the first place. They were not looking to be guided because of this Book. So this claim that they made where they asked themselves as to who among them had increased in Iman because of a Surah that was revealed was never a sincere claim. It was pure falsehood that they spoke.

Why then did they speak it? What objective did they hope to achieve? Of course it was to frustrate the cause of Allah (swt). To destroy this dawah to mankind. To prevent this effort to spread the Message to the people and establish the Law on the earth. They knew that the best way to destroy the dawah was to prevent the believers from striving in its path, and they knew that the best way to take the believers away from this path is to take this Quran away from them. That was why these hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) made this statement to themselves. They asked each other as to which of them has increased in Iman as the result of a Surah being revealed. But we see now that even though they addressed each other with this question, their words were really intended for the believers. They wanted their family members who were believers to hear them questioning each other about this Quran. In the hope that they could separate the believers from their Book even an inch. In the hope that perhaps then they can take them away from this path.

Then Allah (swt) says “**But as for those who believe their belief is increased by it**”. Whenever a Surah or an ayah of the Quran was revealed, these hypocrites sought to take the sincere believers away from this path by their doubts and their questions. Their asking each other as to who among them has increased in Iman as a result of this Quran. Here Allah (swt) tells us that the true and sincere believers, they have increased in Iman. The Sahabah (raa) and all who believed in this Message sincerely. Their reaction to this Quran was that it increased them in

Iman. Every time a Surah was revealed. Every time even one ayah was revealed. Their certainty in this Message grew. As a consequence of this their motivation to strive hard in this path grew. So Allah (swt) is telling us here that the plan of the hypocrites was to no avail. They sought to take the believers away from Him (swt) with their questions and their doubts, but the believers paid no heed to their words. The believers had a relationship with the Quran which was so strong that no one would be able to tear them away from it. They did not even listen to what others said. This was the Book of their Lord. The path with which they may approach Him (swt). They dedicated themselves to it and that was why it increased them in Iman every time it was revealed onto them. They believed in it so it increased them in their belief.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how Allah (swt) will guide those who seek the guidance from Him (swt). He (swt) will increase in Iman those who choose to have Iman in Him (swt). If we look back to the ayah we can ask what was the essential difference between the hypocrites and the believers. What was it that the believers did which the hypocrites did not? Quiet simply the believers chose to believe. Notice in the ayah how Allah (swt) describes them as "the ones who believe". So this is an action that they themselves did. It was a choice that they made. They themselves chose to believe out of their own free-will which Allah (swt) had given them. Because of this choice, because they wanted to turn to Allah (swt), He (swt) turned to them. He (swt) opened for them the doors of Quran and allowed the guidance to flow out from it into their hearts. So we have to realize from this that even though Allah (swt) is the One Who turns the hearts and even though He (swt) is the One to grant guidance, He (swt) wants to see us make the effort. Remember that He (swt) has told us Himself (swt) in His (swt)'s Book that He (swt) has placed on this earth for a test. How can it be a test if there were no effort on our part? How can it be a test if we are not given the choice? So we have to make the choice, we have to make the effort, then Allah (swt) will guide us to Him (swt).

Another lesson that we can take from this is to see how the Quran is the key to guidance. Even the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) realized this fact, but how many Muslims today realize it? How many Muslims today claim that they are waiting for the guidance to come to them yet they choose to be distant from the Quran? They never take the time to learn this Book

even though their Lord and Master Himself has called it guidance. In this age of skepticism and doubt, of secularism and materialism, of sin and heedlessness, if we want to keep our Iman strong, if always want to maintain that conviction we have in the absolute certainty of Allah (swt) and this Message that He (swt) sent then we have to dedicate ourselves to this Book. We should be spending our days reading it listening to it, learning it, and teaching it to others. It is the only that we can survive. Otherwise we will melt in the melting pot like so many other have before us.

Not only is the Quran what can save our Iman, but it is also what can keep us steadfast on this path of dawah and jihad. Even the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) realized this fact. In this Book Allah (swt) speaks to us. He (swt) exhorts us to work in His (swt)'s cause. To be steadfast on it no matter how difficult it becomes and no matter how long it takes. Were it not for these words of encouragement we would give up. We would be overwhelmed by our desires and our laziness. The Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah were able to stick to this path despite several setbacks that they faced because of their close connection with this Book. How many years did the dawah drag on in Makkah without success? How many tribes rejected the Prophet (saw)? Yet he (saw) never gave up. He (saw) knew that this effort would take time. He (saw) knew that there would be setbacks and failures. But because he (saw) had this close connection with the Quran, he (saw) was able to remain steadfast. Insha Allah so too must we.

In the final part of the ayah Allah (swt) says **“and they rejoice”**. Not only do the believers increase in Iman when this Quran is revealed onto them, but they also rejoice. They love this Book because it is the Book of their Lord. They know that in it He (swt) speaks to them. Because they love Him (swt) they love to hear His (swt)'s Words. So any time the Prophet (saw) would recite onto them this Quran they would be ecstatic and overjoyed. They know that their Beloved is speaking to them. They know that not only is He (swt) is speaking to them but He (swt) is guiding them to Him (swt). He (swt) is telling them what is pleasing to Him (swt) and what is displeasing to Him (swt). Through this guidance they can journey to Him (swt). They can come ever closer to Him (swt). This also must be our attitude as well towards this Book. Whenever we learn a new ayah we have to rejoice. We rejoice because we are coming closer to our Reason for Being.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا إِلَىٰ رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوا

وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

125. But as for those in whose hearts is a disease, it only increases filth to their filth, and they will die while they are doing kufr.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what was the response of the hypocrites when the Quran was revealed onto them. Remember that these are a people who chose to turn away from this Message even after they were certain that it was the Truth. They knew that the Prophet (saw) was truly the Messenger of Allah (swt). They knew that their Creator and Sustainer was trying to speak to them through him (saw). Yet still they chose to turn away. Not only did they turn away, but they pretended to believe. They pretended to be among the believers. While they were among the believers they heard the Quran being recited onto them. They heard the Divine Words with their very own ears. What then was their reaction to this Quran? Did they allow it to save them from their hypocrisy? Did they allow its Light to shine into the darkness of their hearts? Did they make an effort to ponder over its verses? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah what this Quran did to them. From this you should realize just how evil a people they are. Just how distant they have become from the Divine. And just how much you should fear ever becoming like them.

Notice first in the ayah how Allah (swt) describes them as the ones in whose hearts is a disease. Recall from our tafsir of Surah Baqarah where we said that the disease in the hearts of these hypocrites was their hypocrisy itself. Their choice to turn away from this Message even after they were certain that it was the Truth. Their choice to pretend to be among the believers and speak falsehood on their tongues. Their arrogance where they thought that they were above having to submit themselves before Allah (swt). This was their disease. A disease that festered and grew in their hearts, the very core of their being. The Prophet (saw) has told us that there is a part of us such that if this part is sound then we as a whole are sound, and if this part is corrupted then we as a whole are corrupted. He (saw) then said that this part was the heart. This analogy which the Prophet (saw) gave us shows the importance of our hearts. How it more than anything

else defines who we truly are. But as for these hypocrites they had this disease in their hearts. What then can you say about such people? All that we can say is that they are not normal. Their hearts are not sound. A healthy heart is one that recognizes the purpose of its existence. A healthy heart is one that responds to the Message of its Creator. A healthy heart is one that recognizes the Beauty and the Majesty of Allah (swt) and that wants to submit itself completely to Him (swt) as a result of that recognition. These people do not have such a heart. They have a heart filled with darkness upon darkness. The wraiths of arrogance and greed haunt their hearts. They have no desire at all to worship and serve Allah (swt). They have no desire to come closer to Him (swt). This is why they would turn away from Him (swt) even though they know well that He (swt) is their Lord and Master.

What then was the reaction to such hearts when the Quran was revealed onto them? Allah (swt) tells us that it only added filth to their filth. Not only were their hearts diseased but they themselves were covered in filth. Now by filth here Allah (swt) does not mean any kind of physical impurity, rather He (swt) means their heedlessness of Him (swt). When a heart does not remember Allah (swt), when a heart chooses to turn away from Allah (swt), then that heart is filled with everything other than Him (swt). Now if a certain person does not know Allah (swt) properly, if they were never presented with the Message from Him (swt), then perhaps they could be excused for filling their heart with other than Him (swt). But what can you say about a person who does receive the Message but then turns away from it? A person who is invited by Allah (swt) Himself to come closer to Him (swt) but who chooses to turn away. Is there any good in this person? Is there any justification for their filling their hearts with other than He (swt)? What can you say about such a person other than that he is filled with filth? He is occupied with everything other than the Pure One and the Perfect One. This was the situation of the hypocrites. Now when the Quran was revealed to them, it only increased them in this filth. Instead of it being a light for them. Instead of it guiding them to Allah (swt). It only made them more distant from Him (swt). It only made their hearts to fill with more of what is other than Him (swt). Now they were thinking more about how they could oppose the Prophet (saw) and the dawah. Now they were thinking of more ways to destroy this Message. Such filth was all that the Quran increased them in.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by telling us how these hypocrites will die when they are in a state of kufr. They chose to reject this Message. They chose to be heedless of Allah (swt). So this is the state that they will die in. Even the very Book of Allah (swt), His (swt)'s Divine Speech, did not bring them back from their kufr. On the contrary it only added filth to their filth. This shows us how far astray they were. How they were in darkness upon darkness. Now we know what is the fate of those who die on kufr. We also know what is the fate of those hypocrites who die on kufr. Nothing less than the lowest levels of the Fire. So as a result of their hypocrisy, as a result of their turning away from this Message, as a result of their neglecting the Quran and not allowing it to guide them, they have only secured for themselves a seat in lowest valleys of Hell.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the direct correlation that exists between hypocrisy and a neglect of the Quran. Allah (swt) is telling us here that these hypocrites were only led further astray by His (swt)'s Book. Now how could this be? There is nothing wrong with the Quran. It is a Book of Guidance. So why did not guide these people? Why did it send them even further astray? It did not guide them because they did not allow it to guide them. They did not make the effort to study and learn this Book. They did not ponder and reflect over its meanings. They did not allow this Book to be their life as Allah (swt) had revealed it to be. Rather they neglected it. They may have heard being recited onto them, and they themselves may have recited it in front of other Muslims, but they did not develop that deep and personal relationship with it. That was why they only increased in their hypocrisy, they only increased in filth and uncleanness, the disease that was in their heart continued to fester and grow. All because of their neglect of the Book of their Lord. Do we not see the same tragedy happening to the Muslim Ummah today? How close is the Ummah as a whole to the Quran today? What percentage of Muslims today even know the meaning of what is in this Book? Then we wonder at why so many of our brothers and sisters are neglectful of their Salah, and the dawah, and their other obligations? The way to alleviate this problem is that we must reconnect the Muslims to the Book of Allah (swt). We should start with the people that we know. We should show them tafsir books like this or we should hold halaqahs where we teach them ourselves. This is the only way that we can save ourselves and save them from becoming like the hypocrites Allah (swt) described here

أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ وَلَا
 هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

126. Do they not see that they are tried every year once or twice, yet afterwards they do not make Tawbah nor do they remember.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe for us His (swt)'s Love and Mercy. The Love and Mercy that extends even to the hypocrites. Even though these hypocrites had decided to turn away from Him (swt). Even though they had pretended to accept this Message that He (swt) had sent. Even though they had completely rejected His (swt)'s Book and not allowed it to be the purpose of their lives. Even though they had lied to the Prophet (saw) and the believers. Still despite all of this Allah (swt) still wants to forgive them. He (swt) still wants to give them one more chance to come back to Him (swt). In this ayah He (swt) tells us how.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by asking us a question. He (swt) says **“Do they not see that they are tried every year once or twice”**. The reason for Allah (swt) posing this is as a question is because this fact should have been so obvious for them to see. They should have seen how they were tried once or twice every year. Now the Arabic word *Fitna* which we have translated here as “tried” actually gives a far deeper meaning. It is derived from a root word that means to purge impurities from gold. In the original state gold has some impurity mixed into it. The process through which this gold is purged of its impurity is known as *Fitna*. Thus this is what Allah (swt) did to these hypocrites every year, sometimes even twice a year. He (swt) put them through some trial so that they may be purged of their hypocrisy. So that the filth which envelops them could be cleaned away. Could be burned away by the difficulty of that trial. Although it may seem like Allah (swt) is being cruel to them by putting them through such trials, these trials were actually a mercy for them. It was a means for them to recognize the errors of their ways. An opportunity for them to come back to Allah (swt). A chance for them to see beyond the life of this world. This is what Allah (swt) did to them every year, sometimes even twice a year. He (swt) made some calamity or difficulty to befall them so that perchance they would return to Him (swt).

This fact should have been so obvious but these hypocrites did not realize it. They did not even know that when such trials befell them Allah (swt) was showing them mercy and allowing them to come back to Him (swt). On the contrary they actually thought that through these trials Allah (swt) was punishing them. They may even have asked themselves why He (swt) was doing such to them. They thought these trials to be from His (swt)'s Wrath when on the contrary they were from His (swt)'s Mercy. From His (swt)'s Love and Compassion for them. This shows us how distant these people were from the Divine. How blinded they were by the life of this world. Any calamity that befell them in this world, whether it be some disease or some lose of wealth or any difficulty whatsoever, they thought it to be a punishment. They could not see past the life of the world and realize the bigger picture. Realize that beyond this world there is Allah (swt), and that in the end all that matters is He (swt). So the language of the ayah gives the meaning that Allah (swt) is almost surprised on their behavior. How they could continue to be stubborn in their hypocrisy and not return to Him (swt) despite these constant trials that He (swt) gives them.

The scholars have given several opinions as to the nature of these trials that Allah (swt) inflicts these hypocrites with. Some have said that it is hunger and illness. Others have said that it is loss of wealth and provisions. Yet others have said that it is when the hypocrites are called out to march forth in the path of dawah and jihad, and then they are forced to come forth or expose themselves. Allah (swt) Knows best but it is most likely all of these. In all of these ways and more did Allah (swt) try them. In fact the trial did not even have to be one of difficulty and hardship. Sometimes Allah (swt) may even have tried them with prosperity and ease. He (swt) may have give them some benefit or some blessing in this world to see if they would realize that such is from Him (swt). So that perhaps they may turn to Him (swt) in gratitude.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying **“yet afterwards they do not make Tawbah nor do they remember”**. This is what Allah (swt) expected from these hypocrites as a result of the trials that He (swt) gave to them. He (swt) expected them to make Tawbah and to remember. Tawbah as we know means a sincere repentance. When these trials came to them they should have realized the error of their ways. They should have realized their heedlessness and their negligence. They should have realized the mistake that they made in not participating in this

effort of dawah and jihad. As a result of this realization and this remorse, they should have made a resolution to come back to the Straight Path. The Path that leads to Allah (swt). The Path that has the footsteps of the Prophet (saw) on it. The Path of striving with this Book to establish the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth and to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Because of these trials they should have realized that this life is not the life for them. This life is not the life in which to find true pleasure and felicity. Rather this life is only about struggle. This life is about trying our best to pass the test that our Rabb has given to us. They should have come to this realization. They should have made Tawbah and come back to the path of dawah and jihad.

In addition to making Tawbah they should have also remembered. Remembered that they were created for a much greater purpose than simply chasing after the life of this world. Remembered their Lord and Master Who was so close to them and Who so completely enveloped them. When that trial struck them it should have made them remember. Made them remember who they were and what their purpose in life is. Remember the Real and the True. The Divine and the Sublime. Remember how all that matters in the end is pleasing Him (swt).

We as Muslims today can also take a lesson from this ayah. Whenever we stray from the Straight Path. Whenever we become heedless of Allah (swt). Whenever we allow ourselves to fall into sin. Whenever we neglect our obligations in this effort. Then we should watch out for these trials that Allah (swt) may send to us. When these calamities come then we should never think that Allah (swt) is punishing us. Rather we should look at our own lives and see if we are doing anything that might be displeasing to Him (swt). If we find something, if we find some area for improvement, and we always will, then we should thank Allah (swt) for His (swt)'s Mercy upon us. We should strive to rid ourselves of this aspect of our selves and then we should continue on our journey to Him (swt). We should always remember that in the end this life is only a test. Everything that happens to you in this life, even the calamities and difficulties, are only a part of this test. And if you are sincere to Him (swt), if you are true to Him (swt), then nothing whatsoever that happens to you in this world is bad for you. Rather it is an opportunity for you to be purified. It is an opportunity for you to journey back to Him (swt).

وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ هَلْ يَرَيْنَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ
 أَنْصَرَفُوا صَرَفَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

127. And whenever a Surah is revealed, some of them look at others saying “Has any one seen you” then they turn away. Allah has turned their hearts away because they are a people who do not understand.

In this Surah Allah (swt) has told us a lot about the hypocrites. It would not even be an exaggeration to say that the majority of the ayahs in this Surah speak of the hypocrites. Now this ayah is the last ayah of the Surah where Allah (swt) speaks of such people. Here He (swt) gives His (swt)’s final verdict on these people. So ponder deeply on what Allah (swt) is saying here. These are a people whose path you must know very well. Because if Shaitan were to mislead you, if he were to send you astray like he promised he would do, like he is always striving to do, then this is the path that he will lead you to. The path of the hypocrites. The path of those who say that they are Muslims with their tongues but who do not dedicate themselves to Allah (swt). The ones who neglect this effort to support Allah (swt)’s cause on the earth. This is the path that we must always watch out for. This is the path that we must save ourselves. May Allah (swt) give us strength because we cannot do it without Him (swt)!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**And whenever a Surah is revealed, some of them look at others saying “Has any one seen you”**”. To understand what Allah (swt) is saying here we have to understand the context in which this ayah was revealed. Firstly we should realize that when Allah (swt) says “Surah” in this ayah, He (swt) is referring only to a portion of the Quran. It does not necessarily refer to the Surahs as we have them today in our mushaf. So for example Surah Tawbah today is 129 ayahs long. But not all of these ayahs were revealed to the Prophet (saw) at once. Usually a set of five to ten ayahs would be revealed. When such ayahs were revealed to the Prophet (saw), he (saw) would recite them to a gathering of Muslims. He (saw) would call all the Muslims in Madinah to come and listen to the most recent Quran that had been revealed onto him (saw). So everyone would gather in one place to listen to the

revelation, to listen to the Divine Words. It is such a gathering that Allah (swt) speaks of in this ayah. Specifically He (swt) tells us the behavior of the hypocrites at these gatherings.

So just imagine how it must have been like. The Prophet (saw) was standing on a podium and reciting the latest Quran that had been revealed onto him (saw). The Sahabah and the sincere believers were listening intently to all that he (saw) was reciting. Many of them were even writing down this Quran. As we mentioned previously they had a very close relationship with the Book of their Lord. They lived by it. They were always listening to it. It was the guide for every moment of their lives. So they must all have been most intently listening to the Prophet (saw) as he (saw) recited this Quran onto them. They wanted to absorb every word that he (saw) recited. To make into a very core of their being.

But what was the reaction of the hypocrites. Were they also intently listening like the believers were? This is what Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah. They were not. In fact they were not even listening in the first place. Their hearts were not at all focused on this Quran that the Prophet (saw) was reciting. Rather they were looking at each other. As Allah (swt) tells us, some of them were looking at others of them. Instead of focusing on the Quran, they were focusing on each other. Instead of their hearts being attached to the Creator, their hearts were attached to the creation. Can you even begin to imagine how evil these people are? Here the very words of the Creator are being recited onto them and they do not even take heed. They do not even pay attention. How distant have they become from the Divine? How dark must their hearts be that they would hear the very Speech of Allah (swt) and It would not affect them in any way?

Unfortunately does this not also remind you of how many Muslims are today? Does it not remind of how we ourselves often are? How many of us today stand in Salah and we hear the Quran being recited onto us but we do not pay any attention to it whatsoever? Our hearts are more focused on the person next to us then it is on the Divine Words of Allah (swt). Is it not frightening how much our behavior resembles the hypocrites whom Allah (swt) speaks of here? Even if we know the Arabic of the Quran, even if we may know the meaning of the Quran that is being recited, we still do not pay attention. Our hearts are not awed and shaken by the Power of the Divine Words. Then we wonder as to why we are in the situation that we are in.

Notice also how Allah (swt) tells us how the hypocrites ask each if anyone has seen them. This shows us how when they came to the gatherings where the Prophet (saw) would recite the Quran, not only would they not pay attention to the Quran that was recited, not only would they focus only on each other, but they would even question each other as to whether anyone had seen them. What was the purpose of their asking each other such a question? There are actually two dimensions to their asking each other this question. On the one hand they wanted to be seen by the other Muslims as attending these gatherings. They wanted the other Muslims to see that they also are alongside with them listening to the Prophet (saw) reciting the Quran. On the other hand they also worried that someone had seen them making their mischief. They worried that someone had observed their secret gatherings where they made plots to destroy the Islamic State and silence the dawah. That is why they asked each other this question. They asked each other if anyone had seen them. When they attended the gatherings of the Prophet (saw) only to show off in front of others, then they wanted others to see them. But when they gathered together in secret to make plots against this Message, then they did not want anyone to see them.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us how these hypocrites turned away. They were listening to the Quran. In this Book Allah (swt) was calling out to them. Telling them to come closer to Him (swt). But they did not pay any heed whatsoever to the words of their Lord and Master. Instead they turned away. They turned away from the invitation of their Creator. How evil are a people who would turn away from Allah (swt)? When you realize how Pure and Majestic and Tremendous a Being He (swt) IS, then how evil are a people who would purposely turn away from Him (swt)? Once again we should not think of this ayah as speaking only about the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw). Every time that we ourselves hear an ayah of the Quran, and that ayah does not motivate us to increase in our worship and servitude of our Lord, then are we also not turning away? If we become arrogant and we do not contemplate and ponder deeply on what Allah (swt) is telling us in this Book, then are we also not turning away? It is like Allah (swt) is calling out to us and we are walking away from Him (swt). This is literally what we are doing if we do not dedicate ourselves to this Quran.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by telling us that He (swt) turned their hearts away because they were a people who did not understand. What was the reason for their turning away from the Quran when it was recited to them? What was the reason for their choosing not to listen to the recitation of the Prophet (saw)? What was the reason for their making plots against the dawah? What was the reason for their focusing only on the creation and not on the Creator? It was only because they did not understand. They did not comprehend the reality as it truly was. They did not understand the fact that this world was only an illusion and that behind it there is Allah (swt). They did not understand His (swt)'s Glory and Majesty. They did not understand His (swt)'s right upon them to be worshipped and served. This was the understanding that they were lacking. Now it is important to realize that the only reason why they did not understand is because they did not want to understand. They did not want to know the reality as it truly was. They preferred a life where they only existed to serve their lusts and desires. So they never took the time to contemplate deeply on the meaning of their existence and the existence of this universe. They never thought as to why they were alive and what they were doing. Thus because they did not make the effort to search for the Truth, the Truth never dawned upon them. They never came to the understanding, to the realization, of the One Truth. Allah (swt).

So because these hypocrites chose not to have this understanding, because they chose not to contemplate and reflect, because they chose not to study and learn, as a consequence of this Allah (swt) turned their hearts away. Allah (swt) turned their hearts away from Him (swt) because they chose to turn away from Him (swt). They chose not to have the understanding of His (swt)'s Book. They chose only to live the life of the heedless, a life of only chasing after this world, instead of living for Allah (swt). Because of this terrible choice that they made their hearts were turned away from the Truth. So we have to realize from this once again that if we want the guidance, if we want to be near Allah (swt), then we must be people of understanding. We must realize the purpose of our existence. We have to study and learn the Quran. We have to see past the life of this world and realize that behind it there is Allah (swt). This is the greatest of understanding that very few people truly achieve.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

128. Most certainly a messenger has come to you from among yourselves, extremely grievous to him is your suffering, extremely eager for you, with the believers most compassionate and full of mercy.

With this ayah and the next Allah (swt) concludes this wonderful Surah. We have seen that this Surah has been nothing but an exhortation for us to strive hard in this path of dawah and jihad. Strive hard in the worship and servitude of Allah (swt), to raise His (swt)'s word to be the uppermost. Both on the earth and in the hearts of mankind. Now in this Surah Allah (swt) has given us several reasons to join this effort. Among them being that this dawah is an action most beloved to Him (swt), among them to save ourselves from becoming hypocrites, among them to save mankind from oppression and suffering. But now in this ayah He (swt) gives us another reason for us to join this effort, and this is the greatest of all. This reason is the Prophet (saw). This dawah was the life of the Prophet (saw). It was what he (saw) dedicated his (saw)'s existence to. In this ayah Allah (swt) describes the Prophet (saw) for us. So contemplate deeply on who he (saw) was and then ask yourself how you could ever turn away from his (saw)'s path.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**Most certainly a messenger has come to you from among yourselves**”. Of course the Messenger here refers to the Prophet (saw), but who does the pronoun “you” here refer to? Many classical scholars are of the opinion that it refers to the Quraysh or it refers to the Arabs, however we believe that it refers to all mankind. This is because the Message of the Prophet (saw) was not restricted to the Arabs but rather it was for all mankind. So he (saw) was sent for all mankind and thus all mankind is who Allah (swt) refers to here with the pronoun “you”, every single human being who has ever walked on the face of this earth since the moment that he (saw) was sent. This shows us how we can not always blindly follow the opinion of the classical scholars. Sometimes there is a better opinion.

So in this ayah Allah (swt) is addressing all mankind. With utmost certainty and emphasis He (swt) presses the point that the Prophet (saw) has been sent as a messenger to all of us, and that he (saw) is from among us. He (saw) is among us because he (saw) is also human just like we are. He (saw) had all the emotions and feelings as any human would. He (saw) got tired and fatigued, he (saw) felt pain and discomfort, he (saw) made mistakes in judgment. He (saw) desired the touch of women and he (saw) enjoyed the taste of sweet foods. He (saw) became sad, and afraid, and anxious, while at the same time he (saw) also became happy, and pleased, and content. He (saw) had hopes and aspirations and he (saw) was troubled with worries and fears. In other words he (saw) was a human being. He (saw) was one of us.

But at the same time he (saw) was also the Messenger of Allah (swt). This means that even though he (saw) was human, he (saw) was the perfect human. He (saw) was the role model that Allah (swt) has given all mankind if they should desire to journey to Him (swt). The path to Allah (swt) is the path that has his (saw)'s footprints on it. This means that he (saw) never committed any sins, he (saw) never violated the Sacred Law of Allah (swt). Not even once. At the same time he (saw) never neglected any of his (saw)'s obligations. He (saw) always and at every moment did what he (saw) was supposed to do. In fact at every moment he (saw) was striving to please Allah (swt). This is what Allah (swt) expects from all mankind, and so this is what the Prophet (saw) did. He (saw) did it better than any of us ever could.

So there are three benefits that we can take just from this first part of the ayah. The first is to see that the Prophet (saw) has been sent for all mankind. He (saw) has come to us from our Lord and Master, our Creator and Sustainer. For every single one of us, not one soul is excluded. The second benefit is to see that he (saw) is from among us. He (saw) is human just like us. This means that to follow in his (saw)'s footsteps, to make the effort to be like him (saw), is not beyond any one of us. Of course we will never reach his (saw)'s station but we are capable of making the journey to it. The third benefit for us in this ayah is to see that he (saw) is the Emissary of the Divine. This shows us that although he (saw) is human, he (saw) is not tainted by any of the negative traits of men. He (saw) does not sin, he (saw) is not lazy, he (saw) does not have arrogance or hatred. He (saw) is the best human being that a human could possibly be.

Then Allah (swt) continues to describe the Prophet (saw) for us. The next description that He (swt) gives of him (saw) is that “**extremely grievous to him is your suffering**”. The meaning of this is that the suffering of mankind is extremely painful for the Prophet (saw) to bear. It causes him (saw) much grief and sorrow to see mankind suffer. Allah (swt) uses the word *aziz* to describe the enormity of his (saw)’s grief. This word is usually used in the Quran to describe the Greatness and the Majesty of Allah (swt). Here Allah (swt) uses it to describe the greatness and the tremendousness of the grief of the Prophet (saw) for the suffering of mankind. Think now about the Greatness of Allah (swt) and then think how great must the grief of the Prophet (saw) be for Allah (swt) to use a word such as this. The greatness of the grief of the Prophet (saw) for the suffering of mankind can be compared to the Greatness of Allah (swt). So how tremendous must have been his (saw) grief for us?

Now what exactly does Allah (swt) mean here by the suffering of mankind? How exactly is mankind suffering for the Prophet (saw) to be so grieved over it? Of course the first way in which most of mankind is suffering is that they are heedless of the Divine. What can you say about a soul that does not know Allah (swt)? A soul that does not remember Him (swt) and does not glorify Him (swt)? That soul is suffering in so many ways and it does not even realize its own suffering. The Prophet (saw) is the one who recognized the Majesty and Beauty of Allah (swt) better than anyone else. And it grieved him (saw) so much that there were so many people who were not at this realization. Who had not perceived and comprehended this Majesty and Beauty. Who did not even know that there was a Being such as He (swt).

The next aspect of the suffering of mankind which made the Prophet (saw) grieve was that they were deprived of the Message of their Lord. They were deprived of the Guidance of this Din. So not only was he (saw) sad because the people did not know Allah (swt) but he (saw) was also sad because the people were living without the guidance of Allah (swt). How corrupt, and depressing, and stressful, and confused, and futile is the existence of those who live without the Guidance of this Din? The people simply waste away their existence, not even knowing who they are or what they are doing here. Because of this as well the people are suffering in a way that they do not even realize. This also caused the Prophet (saw) unspeakable grief.

Not only was the Prophet (saw) grieved that mankind was deprived of the Message of their Lord, but he (saw) was even more grieved that the earth was deprived of the Law of its Lord. Just as mankind suffers because they have never received this Message, they also suffer because the Divine Law does not rule over them. In fact the absence of the Islamic State is a suffering not only for mankind but for all creation. All mankind, all creation, from the animals to the plants to the very earth itself suffers when the Law of Divine is missing. How much injustice is there in the world today because men rule instead of Allah (swt)? How unfairly are the wealth and resources of this earth distributed? How much wealth is just squandered and wasted only to satisfy the arrogance and lusts of men? How many children are starving? How many women are dishonored? How many men are killed? This entire earth is covered in the darkness of injustice and tyranny because men have taken for themselves the role of legislator? Most of us do not even realize how much we are suffering because we are not living by the Law of our Lord. However the Prophet (saw) knew. He (saw) knew just how much all mankind was suffering when they lived under a flag other than his (saw). Because of this he (saw) grieved for them. He (saw) grieved for us. Grieved more than anyone else ever could.

Allah (swt) then tells us in the next part of the ayah how the Prophet (saw) was also **“extremely eager for you”**. So not only was the Prophet (saw) grieved for us on account of our suffering but he (saw) was also extremely eager for us. He (saw) was most eager for us to know Allah (swt). He (saw) did not want us to live anymore in heedlessness of the Divine. He (saw) wanted us to know our Creator. To experience His (swt)’s Glory and Majesty just like he (saw) had. He (saw) was also eager for us to receive the Message from Allah (swt) and to live under His (swt)’s Law. He (saw) desired this for all mankind. Not only for the Arabs, not only for the Quraysh, but for all mankind. He (saw) wanted all mankind everywhere to know their Creator, to properly receive the Message that He (swt) has sent, and to live under the Mercy and the Justice of His (swt)’s Divine Law. The Arabic word that Allah (swt) uses here gives the meaning that the Prophet (saw) most eagerly and most vehemently desired this. More than other men desired power, or money, or women, or status, even more than a starving man desires food, he (saw) desired for all mankind to know their Creator and to be guided to Him (swt).

The final description that Allah (swt) gives for the Prophet (saw) in this ayah is to say that he (saw) is **“with the believers most compassionate and full of mercy”**. While the previous two descriptions applied to all mankind, this one is specific for the Muslim Ummah. What we can see from this is that although the Prophet (saw) is grieved much by the suffering of mankind, and he (saw) is eager for them to receive the Message from their Lord, he (saw) is not necessarily so kind and compassionate with them. This is something that the Prophet (saw) has reserved only for the believers. This kindness and compassion is reserved only for those who submit themselves to Allah (swt). Only for those who believe in Allah (swt) and who fulfill the requirements of this belief. This shows us that although the Prophet (saw) was concerned and worried for the welfare of mankind as a whole, it is only the believers who had his (saw)’s love. The kind of compassion and mercy that Allah (swt) describes the Prophet (saw) here as having is that special kind of compassion and mercy that one would only give to their most beloved.

So realize how beautiful is this. Although the Prophet (saw) was sent for all mankind, although he (saw) is the leader of all mankind, he (saw) has a special love just for you. A love that no one else outside our nation has the great fortune of receiving. How fortunate then are we to be his (saw)’s beloved. The manifestation of this love is his compassion and mercy for us. He (saw) always wanted nothing but the best for us. He (saw) did not want to see us go through any hardship or difficulty. He (saw) wanted us to experience only peace, joy and contentment. That was why he (saw) strove so hard only so that we would receive this Message. He (saw) strove so hard only so that we could live under the Divine Law. This is the love that he (saw) had for us. It has been narrated that every prophet or messenger was given one prayer by Allah (swt) that would always be answered. Every other prophet or messenger besides the Prophet (saw) already used their prayer in the life of this world. However the Prophet (saw) reserved it for his (saw)’s Ummah on the Day of Judgment. He (saw) did not use it on himself like the other prophets had done but rather he (saw) reserved it for us. This was how much he (saw) loved us. This was the amount of mercy and compassion that he (saw) had for us. He (saw) saved the one guaranteed prayer that he (saw) had just for us, just to save sinners like us from the Fire and to carry us to the Garden. Even on his (saw)’s deathbed, the Prophet (saw) was more concerned for us than he

(saw) was for his (saw)'s own self. The narrations tell us that he (saw) would repeat the words "My Ummah", "My Ummah", as he (saw) was about to leave this world. It has even been narrated that he (saw) argued with his (saw)'s Lord on our behalf. When Allah (swt) first legislated our obligatory prayers we know that the number was fifty. It was only because the Prophet (saw) that the number was reduced to five. These examples are but a small taste of the mercy and compassion that he (saw) had for this Ummah. Had for you and me.

Recall from ayah 117 how Allah (swt) had told us that He (swt) was towards the believers most compassionate and most merciful. Now here He (swt) uses this same description for the Prophet (saw). Thus in being so loving and so concerned for the believers, the Prophet (saw) was emulating his (saw)'s Lord. The love that the Prophet (saw) has for this Ummah comes from the love that Allah (swt) has for this Ummah. This once again demonstrates for us how he (saw) was one who lived for Allah (swt). He (saw) only did that which was pleasing to Him (swt). What was beloved to Allah (swt) was beloved to him (saw) and what was hated by Allah (swt) was hated by him (saw). He (saw) was the one who was the closest to Allah (swt). Closer than any other human being ever was or ever will be. This then is yet another reason for us to love him (saw). For us to want to follow in his (saw)'s footsteps. He (saw) is our gateway to the Divine.

So we said the Prophet (saw) is the greatest reason yet for us to walk on this path of dawah and jihad. We know that it is a requirement of our Iman to love him (saw) more than we love anyone else from among mankind. But we see from this ayah just why he (saw) is deserving of our love. Just look at how pure and selfless a human being he (saw) was. How he (saw) cared so much for everyone else among mankind. Even for the people whom he (saw) had never even met or never even seen. How could it be possible for a soul to be so selfless? So loving and caring. How could you know that there was such a person who loved you so much, who loved all mankind so much, and who loved Allah (swt) so much, and then not love him (saw) in return? If you do truly love him (saw) then what better way for you to express your love for him (saw) than by walking on his (saw)'s path? Not only should you strive hard in this effort of dawah but you should desire to most vehemently. Just like the Prophet (saw) was grieved by the suffering of mankind, you also should grieve. Just like the Prophet (saw) desired eagerly for mankind to be

guided, you also should desire. Just like the Prophet (saw) loved this Ummah you also should love her. How can you say that you love the Ummah, how can you say that you are kind and compassionate towards her, and then do nothing when you see her going through such oppression and suffering? Now that the Law of Allah (swt) is absent from the world, there is not one single sincere believer on the face of the earth except that this believer is in pain. Just look at the situation that the Muslim Ummah is in today and you will see how this is true? How can any believer not be in pain when they see such suffering in the world? How can any believer not be in pain when they see the Law of Allah (swt) absent from the world?

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ

الْعَظِيمِ

129. But if they turn away, then say “Allah is sufficient for me, there is no illah except He, on Him I place my trust and reliance, and He is the Lord the Great ‘Arsh’”.

This is the last ayah of this wonderful Surah. In this Surah Allah (swt) has called to this path of dawah and jihad. He (swt) has called us to follow the blessed footsteps of His (swt)’s beloved (saw). To establish His (swt)’s Law on the earth and to carry His (swt)’s Message to mankind. That has been the theme of this entire Surah. To bring us closer to the station of the sincere believers who walk this path and to take us further away from the hypocrites who remain behind. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what should be our attitude as we walk on this path. He (swt) does this by bringing to us the worst case scenario. He (swt) tells us what we should do when the people whom we carry this Message to reject our call. However this attitude which Allah (swt) tells us to have when they reject us should not be limited only to when we are rejected. Rather it is a state of mind that we should always have. A state of mind that does not rely or depend on the creation in any way. A heart that depends only on the Divine. A heart that draws strength and sustenance only from Him (swt). This is the heart that we should have at every moment of our lives as we walk this path. Because we have to always remember that in the end what matters is not establishing the State. In the end what matters is our Lord.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying “**But if they turn away**”. This statement alone is enough to remind us that the Quran is a book of dawah. The Quran is a manual for the dawah carrier. It was not meant to be read in a monastery out in the middle of nowhere, nor was it meant to be read at ceremonies and events. Rather it was meant to guide those who walk this path. This path of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to the people. Allah (swt) tells us here what we should do if the people reject the Message that we are carrying to them. What should be our response to their rejection of our call. This includes all the different ways in which we may call the people to Allah (swt). Whether it is calling a non-Muslim who is sincere to accept this Message, or it is calling on a Muslim ruler to return the sovereignty of the land to Allah (swt), or it is calling a Muslim to do their obligations in this Din. All of these are ways in which the people may be called to Allah (swt). However while we are working on this effort, while we are calling the people, without a doubt we will meet with rejection. Without a doubt we will meet with opposition. Without a doubt we will meet with those who do not want to listen to what we have to say. Should that happen then Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah what our response should be.

First we should say “**Allah is sufficient for me**”. The Arabic word *hasaba* which we have translated here as “sufficient” actually gives a far deeper meaning. It gives meanings of counting and reckoning. Of calculating and measuring. Now if man were asked to count all the things that he needs, he would keep on counting forever. His desires and his greed and his wants know no limits. But this is not what Allah (swt) expects from the true and sincere believer. This is not what Allah (swt) expects from the dawah carrier. From the person who walks on this path, Allah (swt) expects them to be at a level where He (swt) is all that they need. They do not need anything else or anyone else but Him (swt). If He (swt) is always with them, if they are constantly working on an effort to gain His (swt)’s Pleasure, then this is all that they need. This is the state of mind that we need to be in when people reject our call. This is the state of mind we need to be in when we face setbacks or encounter problems. When things do not turn out as we planned. This is the state of mind that we always need to be in. By our reckoning, by our counting, by our calculations all that we need is Allah (swt). As long as we can hope that we are pleasing Him (swt) we are content. We do not need anyone or anything from amongst the creation.

Then Allah (swt) commands us to say “**there is no illah except He**”. Why is that only Allah (swt) is sufficient for us? Why is it that we need only Him (swt) and we do not need anything or anyone from amongst the creation? It is because there is no other illah except He (swt). These are the truest of words in all existence. Let us revisit the meaning of this word illah to remind ourselves of what it really means to say that there is no illah except Allah (swt). Not only does it mean the One Who is worthy of worship, but it also means the One Who is worthy of adoration and respect. The One Who is worthy of servitude and obedience. The One Who is worthy of sovereignty and legislation. The One Who deserves to be all of these because of Who He (swt) IS. He (swt) is the Perfect One, the Pure One, the One with all the Perfect Names and attributes. The All-Knowing, the All-Powerful, the All-Seeing, the All-Hearing, the Most Wise, the Most Majestic, the Most Merciful, the Most Forgiving, the Most Just. This is who Allah (swt) IS, and this is why He (swt) deserves that we dedicate ourselves to Him (swt). This is why He (swt) deserves that He (swt) be all that we need.

Then Allah (swt) commands us to say “**on Him I place my trust and reliance**”. Because Allah (swt) is the Only One Who we have dedicated ourselves to, He (swt) is the Only One Who we put our complete trust and reliance upon. We do not know what the future holds for us. We do not know what the next moment of our life holds for us. We do not know what we will face as we walk on this path. We do not know what difficulties and calamities are waiting for us. We do not know if our efforts will meet with success or failure. But we do know that there is Allah (swt) and we know that He (swt) is greater than everything else. So we place our complete trust and reliance on Him (swt). We depend on Him (swt) to see us through our journey. Now of course we ourselves do make our best effort. This is part of what it means to serve Him (swt). This is part of what it means to worship and adore Him (swt). The effort that we make only to please Him (swt). But while we strive for our utmost for Him (swt) we do not ever depend upon our striving to meet any of our goals. We try our best but we depend completely upon Him (swt) for the fulfillment and completion of our endeavors. We depend completely upon Him (swt) to guide us and to keep us safe as we walk on this path. To protect us from dangers and to provide us with sustenance. If Allah (swt) is with us then He (swt) is all that we need.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) is the Lord of the mighty **Arsh**. Now what exactly does Allah (swt) mean here when He (swt) speaks of the **Arsh**? Some have said that it refers to the "Great Throne". They have said that it is the greatest of His (swt)'s creations. Such people also say that we cannot in any think of the nature of this "Throne". They say that only Allah (swt) Knows how it is and how it looks like. If this is the meaning that we adopt from this part of the ayah then this part of the ayah indeed provides very little benefit for us. How can we be awed at the Majesty and Tremendousness of Allah (swt) when we cannot even think of the **Arsh** in the first place. Everything that Allah (swt) tells us about in the Quran serves the purpose of bringing us closer to Him (swt). He (swt) always uses examples that we can sense, examples that we know about, in order to draw us closer to Him (swt). For example often times He (swt) directs our attention to the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the falling of the rain and the coming of the winds. All of these are evidences that we can sense. All of these are evidences that we can reflect upon and through that reflection we can draw closer to Allah (swt). But when you say that the **Arsh** is a giant throne somewhere in the sky, and we are not even supposed to think about the nature of such a throne, then how will this bring us closer to Allah (swt)? What benefit is there for us in knowing this? That is why we believe that when Allah (swt) speaks of the **Arsh**, it does not mean any physical object that is beyond human perception. Rather it refers to the creation itself. The creation is the **Arsh**. This entire universe is the **Arsh**, from the earth and all that is in it to the heavens and all that is in them. Every single thing that Allah (swt) has created, it is all a part of the **Arsh**. Allah (swt) is the Lord over all of this, over all that exists in the universe. This is Who Allah (swt) IS. The Creator. The Controller. The Sustainer. The Nurturer. The Sovereign. The Owner over every single thing that exists. This is Who our Lord IS. How then can we turn away from Him (swt)? How then can we not make the effort not to support His (swt)'s cause? How then can we continue to live in heedlessness of Him (swt)? Look around this vast universe and realize the tremendousness and the expansiveness of it. Then realize that it does have a Lord and Master. If you truly believe in such a Being how then can you ever allow any but He (swt) to be a sovereign over you.