

LA ILAHA ILLA LLAHU, MUHAMMADU RASULU LLAHI



MUHAMMAD SA'IDU JIMADA

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INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

All praises and gratitude belong and return to Him, because He has revealed Himself to creations, from behind different veils. Neither was nor can anything or anyone become without creation. And no love or care can surpass to create, to make Himself known and to guide to prosperity.

This makes ignorance a most unfortunate status because it amounts to wretchedness in what is necessary. This makes denial foolhardy since it does not affect the truth. This makes knowledge the path to reality.

What is right is therefore true and real. It is not and cannot be isolated or independent of what is absolutely and finally made available. And the source of the origin and destination of what is right, true, that is real, is and must remain the only and final reference.

As a result, the primary and continuous responsibility of man is to seek, by knowledge and discipline, submission to Allah (SWT). Any form of this, will amount to praise and gratitude. This is the essence of creating us and our reality rests essentially on worshipping Allah.

All praise and gratitude be to Allah (SWT) who has favoured us with numerous messengers to the Seal and several scriptures to the Complete and Final Qur'an.

This material is an attempt to introduce the key and stepping stone to *Iman*, upon which every other thing and all things hang, to rest and prosper.

The objective of this work is to refresh the mind of the reader on the recorded evidences on the life and identity of Rasul (SAW), to further affirm our faith and

commitment. It is aimed at laying out the foundation upon which believers stand and the stand of Muhammad (SAW) in Islam.

In Islam, reality and reliability are established by the twin factors of the credibility of the source or bearer and the truthfulness of the matter. This is because matters can differ and matters can change. For the purpose of our use, based on what is rational and reasonable, we require to choose and work on only those that are WITNESSED by credible persons. This is why even in common law witnesses are placed on some sort of oath before their submissions are entertained for recording and management.

This work is based on the Hadith collection by Imam Bukhari. The authenticity of his collection and reliability of Imam Bukhari can be depended upon given the history of his scholarship and piety. Imam Bukhari has the outstanding credibility of having admitted and collected HADITH that are most authentic. His impeccable personality for reliability has at times been highlighted by his spiritual consultation before his admission of each hadith. This was a believer who was travelling and shared with a fellow traveller that he had some money on him. The fellow then told the captain of the ship that the same amount of money had been stolen from him. Passengers were searched and nothing was found. On alighting from the ship, he asked Bukhari what happened to the money. Bukhari said he threw the purse into the river. His reason was that, his false labelling as a thief would have affected his collected Hadith, his genuine love for Rasul (SAW) and the Ummah, for the sake of Allah. This is why scholars agreed that, his collection provides a NEXT point of reference after the Qur'an.

This material attempts to sketch out the meaning of Sincere Submission in Islam for a believer, whose livelihood must be tied to his constant connection with Allah (SWT). And that this connection SERVES the believers in all-round respects as it is free and equally accessible to all.

This is an attempt to extract guidance from the guidance available for guidance, as much as Allah (SWT) permits.

From the collection of authentic Hadiths, I have attempted to extract the light in respect of the position and roles of a believer along with that of the leader, for a prosperous Ummah. And it will not matter whether the believers are of common faith or with others who are free to keep their faith.

It also attempts to provide an understanding of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) as the leader in the message and guidance that he symbolized.

In Islam, living a double life whereby one is a devoted worshiper in the mosque and a nuisance outside is unacceptable. Man and Jinn are created to worship God (Q 51:56). Thus, the entire life of a believer ought to be in conformity with His rules and regulations. In other words, a believer should be God-conscious at all times whether alone, as head or member of a family, in the neighborhood, during business transactions and even in his relationship with animals.

However, obeying God entails following the Sunnah of Muhammad (SAW) – “He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed God ...” (Q 4:80). As a result, LIVING ISLAM means a believer should acquire the right knowledge of the Qur’an and Sunnah, practice it with discipline and God-consciousness and also teach it. This is the foundation of submission to God and the easiest pathway to creating an ideal society where peace, harmony and mutual respect will thrive among believers and non-believers.

Utmost and the best blessings and peace be upon Muhammad (SAW) his family, companions and all of mankind and Jinn who constantly recited, recite or will recite Fatiha and Submit to it, to their utmost. Praise and gratitude be to Allah (SWT) who

has granted them the path to become a model for all mankind by what is right, that is free.

This is the favour that ties up all favours that we can neither list nor deny.

Muhammad Sa'idu Jimada

CHAPTER 1

LA ILAHA ILLA LLAHU, MUHAMMADU RASULU LLAHI

LA ILAHA ILLA LLAHU, MUHAMMADU RASULU LLAHI

We are not the first generation on this planet earth. There is no one among us who is not from a parent. We are also very much in the know that our parents were begotten by other parents that are our grandparents. We also know of the application of the same to others. Indeed, we know that some people live along with their great grandparents.

We are also not strangers to the word, creator, or the word, worship. The two are intimately related. And we know of people who live accordingly. They may be our parents. People related to us or not. They may be near or far. Indeed, they may be living in our times or have lived in other times.

We are also familiar with the different colours of this beliefs and worships. Some people worship numerous and different gods. Some even have gender forms of gods. This accounts for gods and goddesses. Some identify the god or gods in living things while some, in objects. Some in objects moulded or carved by them or others. Some, in objects that represents or are supposed images of the real person that had lived and died. Some in animals. And there are still others, who deny completely, any reality associated with this. Some still have limited association by holding that the reality does not matter and does not oblige anything, while others hold that it is an encompassing word for everything and everyone as against any independent identity.

The position of Islam is not a guessing one. It is one of clarification against ignorance, confusion or mischief. And it comes from the only and best source for right knowledge and guidance.

Verily, I am Allah:

There is no god but I:

So serve thou Me (only),
And establish regular prayer
For celebrating My praise.
(Qur'an 20: 14)

To make a difference of distinction there is God. This God is Allah. Allah is One. His instruction and entitlement is service, by worship, especially in the form of prayer, which is really, praising Him. This is all He has assigned to us.

The implication of this against what we find around is that, any claims and practices about and relating to worship, are accountable for by the adherents. The specific teaching of Islam is;

Say: He is Allah,
The One and Only.
(Qur'an 112:1)

For the appreciation and understanding of any average person in health, physical, mental and emotional balance, the certificate of a doctor of philosophy in theology is not required to convey this simple and absolute truth. It is not a truth that requires argument to establish and no amount or form of dispute will change this right Truth or knowledge that Allah is One and Only.

To Him belongs the dominion
Of the Heavens and the Earth;
It is He Who gives
Life and Death; and He
Has Power over all things.
(Qur'an 57: 2)

It is a simple logical and sensible evidence that is available to crush any challenge of ignorance and mischief. In history, the king of the time of Ibrahim (AS) and Pharaoh of the time of Musa (AS) were the best examples of doubt, ignorance and mischief. They therefore symbolized arrogance. In the case of Ibrahim (AS), his king could neither claim nor do anything about the rising of the sun or the setting of the sun. His release of a prisoner is not the same as the giving of life by Allah. And sentencing a convict for execution is not a proof of having the power of death. It is not uncommon to watch a beloved dying, under the circumstance of best care by professionals. But Allah made Uzair (AS) an example to himself and was witnessed by his people at a later age. The youth of the cave and their dog is another. By the leave of Allah, Muhammad (SAW) split the moon. By the leave of Allah Isa (AS) raised a dead person to life. In the case of Pharaoh, he asked that a tower be constructed for him to meet the Lord of Musa (AS) in the heavens. This is because he was ignorant and was keen to know and meet. But it was a futile exercise. It was Isa (AS) who was taken to heaven by Allah Who owns, knows and has power to do so, against the appearance of the victim of his enemies. It was Allah (SWT) who favoured Muhammad (SAW) with a journey to Jerusalem and then to the heavens, beyond and witnessing the truthfulness of the real relationship between Islam upon which he stood, history and reality.

Allah, the Eternal, Absolute.

(Qur'an 112: 2)

He is the First

And the Last

The Evident

And the Immanent;

And He has full knowledge

Of all things.

(Qur'an 57: 3)

This exposure of Muhammad (SAW), the leader and seal of right knowledge and discipline is affirmative of the unique attributes of Allah (SWT). This oneness and oneliness of Allah and His attributes is absolutely without any companion.

He begetteth not,

Nor is He begotten.

(Qur'an 112: 3)

It is not even logical and sensible to conceptualize any reality before the first or after the last. This is why we can only give any levels of minuses the meaning of value of debt to real or full numbers or factors. So, how can a healthy and sound person associate any companionship with Him?

Say: "Praise be to Allah

Who begets no son,

And has no partner

In (His) dominion:

Nor (needs) He any

To protect Him from

humiliation:

Yea, magnify Him

For His greatness and glory!"

(Qur'an 17: 111)

This is why the best logic and sense can offer, beyond any last that can be conceptualized, is an open and free infinity.

And there is none
Like unto Him.

(Qur'an 112: 4)

He created every and all creations and is not like any one or all of them. A man reproduces himself through intimacy leading to birth. He cannot possibly produce anything that is absolutely and totally unlike himself. A hardware operates like it is designed to function. A software is not different. In fact, it can have a cultural trait. This is why the inbuilt dictionary in a phone by an unbeliever may not assuredly have the name Allah or Qur'an.

This does not apply to Allah, even though out of His exceeding mercy, He has created us in His image and appointed us to be His vicegerent on earth. This is why when Ibrahim (AS) asked to know how Allah creates life, to strengthen his Iman, he was directed to cut birds into pieces and place their bunches on different rocks and call upon them to come forth by His leave. Ibrahim (AS) did so and they flew to him. Uzair (AS) wondered over recreation and Allah took his life and that of his donkey. When He returned his life and his drink, there was no change in the taste. What his ride was returned and brayed, he recognized it as his. And when he returned home, the generation affirmed that he was of the past. When Musa (AS) sought to see Him, his vision of the mountain that reflected His light and turned into dust got him unconscious.

No vision can grasp Him,
But His grasp is over
All vision: He is
Above all comprehension,
Yet is acquainted with all things.

(Qur'an 6: 103)

Accordingly, Allah can be described with the best names or attributes. And this is from deductions of His image that we may reflect. For example, we can be generous to ourselves and to others. But Allah is most generous. Does He not provide rains and sunlight for our livelihood, irrespective of belief, misbelief and unbelief? What of vegetation? Are mineral resources different? What of skills? What generosity is comparable to this? Man can exercise enormous power both physically and by the application of knowledge. The ship is a good example, but who makes it to float or prevent it from sinking? This does not exempt knowledge. How did it take mankind to realize and admit that the earth is round or that the earth increases? These were easily and freely provided with the revelation of the Qur'an.

Allah! There is no god
But He! To Him belong
The Most Beautiful Names.
(Qur'an 20: 8)

Say: "Call upon Allah, or
Call upon Rahman:
By whatever name he call
Upon Him (it is well):
For to Him belong
The Most Beautiful Names.
(Qur'an 17: 110)

Allah is He, than Whom
There is no other god;
The Sovereign, the Holy One,
The Source of Peace
(and Perfection),

The Guardian of Faith
The Preserver of Safety,
The Exalted in Might,
The Irresistible, the Supreme:
Glory to Allah!
(High is He)
Above the partners
They attribute to Him.
(Qur'an 59: 23)

This is why the ignorant who refuses to seek for knowledge or is benefitted with the right knowledge and turns his back, will have no excuse. As for whoever denies knowledge for mischief, Allah is neither unaware nor unconcerned.

The most beautiful names
Belong to Allah;
So call on Him by them;
But shun such men as
Use profanity in His names;
For what they do, they will
Soon be requited.
(Qur'an 7: 180)

There is no god but He:
That is the witness of Allah,
His angels, and those endured
With knowledge, standing firm
On Justice. There is no god but He,
The Exalted in Power,
The Wise.

(Qur'an 3: 18)

The logical and sensible consequence to follow this right knowledge, this truth, is the discipline of appreciation, gratitude and submission or worship. This is necessarily the peculiar and absolute right of Allah alone. And He has not asked for more.

And they have been commanded
No more than this
To worship Allah,
Offering Him sincere devotion,
Being True (in faith);
To establish regular Prayer;
And to practice regular Charity;
And that is the Religion
Right and Straight.

(Qur'an 98: 5)

To Him belong all (creations)
In the heavens and on earth:
Even those who are in His
(very) Presence are not
Too proud to serve Him,
Nor are they (ever) weary
(Of His Service)
They celebrate His praises
Night and day, nor do they
Ever flag or intermit.

(Qur'an 21: 19 - 20)

Allah out of His profound mercy revealed Himself through His word for the knowledge of what is right against what is wrong. But in addition, He has blessed us with His Messenger who historically defined the path for simply following. And He did this in His unique and incomparable way.

It is He Who has sent
Among the Unlettered
A Messenger from among
Themselves, to rehearse
To them His Signs,
To sanctify them, and
To instruct them in Scripture
And wisdom - although
They had been, before
In manifest error.

(Qur'an 62: 2)

This assignment is a most serious burden and beyond any relationship. This is why the Prophet (SAW) addressed his beloved daughter and his fellow Meccans who cared to know that, he is in no position to protect anyone from Allah (SWT), if he fails in his belief and submission.

Muhammad is not
The father of any
Of your men, but (he is)
The Messenger of Allah,
And the seal of the prophets:
And Allah has full knowledge
Of all things.

(Qur'an 33: 40)

Apart from addressing believers on the status of Muhammad (SAW), Allah has addressed His Messenger too, on this subject. This states, between the lines, that, the affair of the worship of Allah is not that of Muhammad (SAW).

O Prophet! Truly We
Have sent thee as
A Witness, a Bearer
Of Glad Tidings,
And a Warner.

(Qur'an 33: 45)

For the benefit of the doubt or further clarity, the message of Islam that Muhammad (SAW) is sent with is also final and to the whole world. Thus, the right messages or scriptures that were bore by different previous messengers were for their nations and times.

It is He Who has sent
His Messenger with Guidance
And the Religion of Truth,
To proclaim it over
All religions: and enough
Is Allah for a Witness.

(Qur'an 48: 28)

Ye have indeed
In the Messenger of Allah
A beautiful pattern (of conduct)
For anyone whose hope is

In Allah and the Final Day.

And who engages much

In the praise of Allah.

(Qur'an 33: 21)

The right knowledge and discipline of Islam is therefore generously outlined in the Qur'an and the example of the livelihood of Muhammad (SAW). The door, the key and registration in Islam rests firmly on the declaration of total belief in Allah as the only One deserving worship, that Muhammad (SAW) is His Messenger as well as His Slave and submitting according to the teachings and examples of Muhammad (SAW).

That ye believe in Allah

And His Messenger, and that

Ye strive (your utmost)

In the cause of Allah,

With your property

And your persons:

That will be best for you

If ye but knew!

(Qur'an 61: 11)

And Muhammad (SAW), the best model, lived up to this. His beloved wife, to whom reference could be made for half of the religion, submitted that he was angry and loved only for the cause of Allah. Muhammad (SAW) did submit that his health, strength, wealth, worship, life and death were all for Allah. In prayer, he had quickly after leading a prayer, gone home to give out the piece of gold he had, in charity, because he remembered it while in prayer. He had similarly given out a piece of his

dress because the design on it attracted his attention while in prayer. This leadership is consistent with the guidance of Allah (SWT) to Whom worship is due.

Say: If it be that your fathers,
Your sons, your brothers,
Your mates, or kindred;
The wealth that ye have gained;
The commerce in which ye fear
A decline; or the dwellings
In which ye delight –
Are dearer to you than Allah,
Or His Messenger, the striving
In His cause: - then wait
Until Allah brings about
His decision; and Allah
Guides not the rebellious.

(Qur'an 9: 24)

Allah is the head and the essence. Muhammad (SAW) is the leader in this course. The believers are the followers. And Allah has assured all, of safety and His pleasure.

All who obey Allah
And the Messenger
Are in the company
Of those on whom
Is the grace of Allah.

(Qur'an 4: 69)

O Messenger! Sufficient
Unto thee is Allah,

(Unto thee) and unto those
Who follow thee
Among the believers.
(Qur'an 8: 64)

Indeed, Allah is above all possible estimations in His independence. A hadith qudsi narrated by Abu Dharr al-Ghifari reveals this.

From the Prophet (SAW) is that among the sayings he relates from his Lord is that He (SWT) said: "O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another. O My servants, all of you are astray except for those I have guided, so seek guidance of Me and I shall guide you. O My servants, all of you are hungry except for those I have fed, so seek food of Me and I shall feed you. O My servants, all of you are naked except for those I have clothed, so seek clothing of Me and I shall clothe you. O My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness of Me and I shall forgive you. O My servants, you will not attain harming Me so as to harm Me, and will not attain benefitting Me so as to benefit Me. O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as pious as the most pious heart of any one man of you, that would not increase My kingdom in anything. O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as wicked as the most wicked heart of any one man of you, that would not decrease My kingdom in anything. O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to rise up in one place and make a request of Me, and were I to give everyone what he requested, that would not decrease what I have, any more that a needle decreases the sea if put into it. O My servants, it is but your deeds that I reckon up for you and then recompense you

for, so let him who finds good praise Allah and let him who finds other than that blame no one but himself.”

Thus, believers are undoubtedly on the footing that is strongest and assuring because of the absolute truth of the unity of Allah and our submission to Him.

Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of (all) existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is (presently) before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His *Kursi* extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great. (Qur'an 2: 255)

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly (white) star lit from (the oil of) a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things. (Qur'an 24: 35)

CHAPTER 2

THE FOUNDATION FOR SUBMISSION AND THE IDENTITY OF MUHAMMAD (SAW) FOR BELIEVERS

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALLAH AND THOSE WHO SUBMIT

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, "When Allah completed the creation, He wrote in His Book which is with Him on His Throne, 'My Mercy has overcome My Anger.'"

Comment

Allah has the absolute discretion in deciding whatever that will please Him, without competition or consultation because HIS UNITY EXCLUDES ANYTHING IN ORIGIN. And He decided on Mercy over Anger. Indeed, either apply only After creation as there was NO THING and Allah will remain after NOTHING until He fulfils His promise of recreation.

Abu Hurairah (RA) said, The Prophet (SAW) said to me "The pen has dried after writing what you will surely encounter."

Narrated Imran ibn Hussain (RA): A man said, "O Allah's Messenger, can the people of Paradise be known (differentiated) from the people of the Fire?" The Prophet replied "Yes." The man said, "Why do people (try to) do (good) deeds?"

The Prophet (SAW) said, "Everyone will do the deeds for which he has been created to do or he will do those deeds which will be made easy for him to do (i.e. everybody will find easy to do such deeds as will lead him to his destined place for which he has been created). A man may do the deeds of the people of the Fire while in fact he is one of the people of Paradise, and he may do the deeds of the people of Paradise while in fact he belongs to the people of the Fire, and verily (the rewards of) the deeds are decided by the last actions (deeds)."

Comment

The creation of man was therefore, with a limited attribute of exercising free will. Allah is irresistible because His creation cannot but operate, live or perform strictly within the limits of what He has, by the law of its creation, allowed. The consequential responsibility of man is to strive to realise his destiny.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying, "Allah divided Mercy into one hundred parts and He kept its ninety-nine parts with Him and sent down its one part on the earth. And because of that its one single part, His creations are merciful to each other, so that even the mare lifts up its hoofs away from its baby animal, lest it should trample on it".

Comment

Indeed, He has ruled that His Mercy overcomes His Anger. With a part of one hundred reflecting in the livelihood of animals to save and protect the younger ones, the ninety-nine reserved for the Believers, in the Hereafter, can only indicate that falling into His Wrath and Anger will apply only to those who choose to be lost. It doubly means that any minimal commitment will get multiple appreciation, admission and reward, except total objection that will have no certainty or will be destroyed.

Rasul (SAW) informed that ultimately Allah reduced it (salat) to five. "When I came to Moses again he said, 'What have you done?' I said, 'Allah has made it five only.' He repeated the same advice but I said that I surrendered (to Allah's final order)," but (Allah's Apostle was addressed) Allah said "I have decreed my obligation and have reduced the burden on My slaves, and I shall reward a single deed as if it were ten good deeds."

Comment

A typical and the best example. This is because in the bridge of connection between a believer and his Lord, salat is the pillar of the purpose of his creation – to serve Him.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah's Messenger said, "If somebody gives in charity something equal to a date from his honestly earned money – for nothing ascends to Allah except good, then Allah will take it in His Right (Hand) and bring it up for its owner as anyone of you brings up a baby horse, till it becomes like a mountain."

Comment

Unlike salat, that is a required bodily commitment, the sharing of whatever a believer has is also rewarded and serves as an investment.

Narrated Al-Mughira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "There is none who likes that people should repent to Him and beg His pardon than Allah. And for this reason He sent the warners and the givers of good news. And there is none who likes to be praised more than Allah does and for this reason, Allah promised to grant Paradise (to the doers of good)."

The Prophet (SAW) said, "O Mu'adh! Do you know what Allah's Right upon His slaves is?" I said, "Allah and His Apostle know best." The Prophet (SAW) said, "To worship Him (Allah) Alone and to join none in worship with Him (Allah). Do you know what their right upon Him is?" I replied, "Allah and His Apostle know best." The Prophet (SAW) said, "Not to punish them (if they do so)."

Comment

The relationship is therefore understandable. Worship is due to Allah alone. And why will He not reward beyond service? But whoever betrays himself, by refusing or failing to worship, he will be fully entitled to being ignored for mercy, entitled to deserving punishment, not more than his denying Allah, His right.

THE EQUAL STANDING OF BELIEVERS

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, "If a person embraces Islam sincerely, then Allah shall forgive all his past sins and after that, starts the settlement of accounts. The reward of his good deeds will be ten times to seven hundred times for each good deed and an evil deed will be recorded as it is, unless Allah forgives it."

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, "If anyone of you improves (follows strictly) his Islamic religion then his good deeds will be rewarded ten times to seven hundred times for each good deed and a bad deed will be recorded as it is."

Comment

All men are equal before Allah in the opportunity to serve Him. All men are born to worship Allah. But some parents redirect the children. When the child decides to return to his purpose, the platform is not different from the child who is not diverted.

THE FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS OF EVERY BELIEVER

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "Whoever believes in Allah and His Messenger, offers As-Salat and observes fasts of the month of Ramadan, it is incumbent upon Allah to admit him into Paradise, whether he emigrates for Allah's cause or stays in the land he was born."

Comment

The fundamental impositions on anyone who desires to strive for the abundant mercies is First, to Believe in Allah, his originator and absolute decider of all affairs and Believe in His Messenger who serves as the blessed and certified way to Him. This belief is the foundation of accepting to have come from Allah and returning to Allah ultimately. The second is Salat along the Fasting of the entire month of Ramadan that are bodily exertions. One only needs to be alive, sane and healthy to qualify.

Narrated Ibn Umar (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, "Islam is based on (the following) five (principles):

1. To testify that there is no deity (owing the right to be worshipped) but Allah and that Muhammad (SAW) is His Messenger.
2. To offer the (compulsory congressional) prayers dutifully and perfectly.
3. To pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity).
4. To perform Hajj (i.e. pilgrimage to Mecca).
5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan.

Comment

The complete template for submission includes SHARING, for compulsory socialization with fellow humans – believers and others. This makes a believer who is blessed, not a risk, but a favour to humanity. And there is the ultimate visit of the House of Allah, the universal point of sharing in the unity of the Ummah and witnessing the signs of Allah's revelations and unity.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, "Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven."

Comment

The orientation for belief and deeds in Islam is to focus on Allah. Allah is the real goal. This connection with Allah is the required standard for the reward and mercy of Allah. The ultimate Paradise to be lived in forever, in peace and comfort.

Narrated Abu Dhar (RA): I said, "O Allah's Messenger (SAW)! Which mosque was built first?" He replied, "Al-Masjid-ul-Haram." I asked, "Which (was built) next?" He replied, "Al-Masjid-ul-Aqsa (i.e. in Jerusalem)." I asked, "What was the period between them?" He replied, "Forty (years)". He then added "Wherever the time for the prayer comes upon you, perform the prayer, for all the earth is a place of worshipping for you."

Comment

This is the foundation for regular and constant turning and returning to Allah by seeking for forgiveness, repenting and praising Allah (SWT). Men who live in space, have the entire space of the world granted, for worshipping. Movement is therefore not restricted for reason of worship. Residents, travellers and emigrants are not restricted.

Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr (RA): Allah's Messenger said to me, "The most beloved fasting to Allah was the fast of Dawud (AS) who used to observe fast on alternate days. And the most beloved salat to Allah was the salat of Dawud (AS) who used to sleep for the (first) half of the night and offer salat for one-third of it and (again) sleep for a sixth of it."

Comment

What else can be better than this for those who believe? This is knowledge of the standard for worship conveyed and taught by a Warner and Giver of Glad tidings, to be educated on grades of worship? Dawud (AS) was a practical example.

THE SCALE OF MERCIES FOR BELIEVERS

Narrated Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA): I heard Allah's Messenger saying, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So whoever emigrates for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration will be for what he emigrated."

Comment

The grand mercy of Allah to a believer stems from the foundation or root of all conscious actions. Unconscious activities are therefore not to be accounted for. And a believer is required to live consciously, not absent minded. This state of full living is what builds up to AWARENESS. Thus, actions that are really the end result of intentions are the foundation for the evaluation of a believer's actions.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah's Messenger said, "Allah says, 'If My slave intends to do a bad deed then (O Angels) do not write it unless he does it, then write it as it is. But if he refrains from doing it for My sake, then write it as a good deed (in his account). (On the other hand) if he intends to do a good deed, but does not do it, then write a good deed (in his account), and if he does it, then write it for him (in his account) as ten good deeds, up to seven hundred times.'"

Comment

This means that for a complete right livelihood of a believer, intentions must connect to actions. And because a believer needs to be good, because Allah is good, the

intention of initiating an action must be good and if it is evil, withdrawing **MUST** be for goodness, the sake of Allah, which qualifies it for action.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Allah forgives my followers those (evil deeds) their souls may whisper or suggest to them as long as they do not act (on it) or speak.”

Comment

How weighty will it be, if by wilful inclination of man to do evil or the whisper of Satan, a believer is to be held accountable for all? Praise be to Allah for this mercy and blessed be the believer that appreciates and thanks Allah for this.

MERCIFUL AVAILABLE MEANS FOR PIETY

Narrated Humran, the freed slave of Uthman ibn Affan (RA): I saw Uthman ibn Affan asking (for a tumbler of water), he poured water from it over his hands and washed them thrice and then put his right hand in the water container and rinsed his mouth and washed his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out. Then he washed his face thrice and (then) fore-arms up to the elbows thrice, then passed his (wet) hands over his head, and then washed each foot thrice. After that Uthman said: “I saw the Prophet (SAW) performing ablution like this of mine, and he (SAW) said, ‘If anyone performs ablution like that of mine and offers two raka’at prayer during which he does not think of anything else, then his past sins will be forgiven.’”

Comment

Allah is pure and has prescribed cleanliness and purity before approaching Him.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah’s Messenger (SAW) said, “When the Imam, during salat says, ‘Allah hears him who praises Him’ say: ‘O Allah! Our Lord! All

the praises and thanks are for you,’ for if the saying of anyone of you coincides with the saying of the angels, his past sins will be forgiven.”

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “When the Imam says ‘Amin,’ then you should all say ‘Amin,’ for the Angels say ‘Amin’ at that time, and he whose ‘Amin’ coincides with the ‘Amin’ of the Angels, all his past will be forgiven.”

Comment

What special mercy? Allah has allowed that a believer in a state of purity, before Him, has the prospect of getting His forgiveness, when His praise coincides with the praise by Angels that he does not see. One can therefore not possibly know of his state with Allah, merely on account of his practices. And this ignorance is what is very positive for him.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “As long as anyone of you is waiting for salat, he is considered to be offering salat actually, and the Angels say, ‘O Allah! Be Merciful to him and forgive him’ (and go on saying so) unless he leaves his place of offering salat or passes wind (i.e. breaks his ablution).”

Comment

The waiting to connect with Allah in a state of purity is highly beneficial to a believer. Even without glorification of Allah, while waiting, the Angels continue to plead favourably on one’s behalf. And what if the believer glorifies Allah while waiting? That will be benefit on benefit.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah’s Messenger said, “Every night when it is the last third of the night, our Lord, the Superior, the Blessed, descends to the nearest

heaven and says, ‘Is there anyone to invoke Me that I may respond to his invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone asking My forgiveness so that I may forgive him?’”

Comment

Beyond every time of all times, that a believer can beseech Allah for his needs, the last third part of every night before dawn, is revealed as very favourable for glorifying and pleading with Allah.

THE MUCH STRIVE THAT IS REQUIRED OF A BELIEVER

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by offering the salat in the mornings, afternoons and during the last hours of the nights.”

Comment

Religion therefore consists of the totality of livelihood – work, rest, ceremony, studies, family affairs, politics, business, relationships with others, etc. But the middle course is recommended for all and those who can desire can stretch a little above – but not to exhaust themselves. And salat is to rejuvenate. Thus the physical or mundane and spiritual are connected.

Narrated Aisha (RA): Once the Prophet (SAW) came while a woman was sitting with me. He said, “Who is she?” I replied, “She is so and so,” and told him about her (excessive) prayers. He said disapprovingly, “Do (good) deeds which are within your capacity (without being overtaxed) as Allah (SWT) does not get tired (of giving

rewards) but (surely) you will get tired and Ad-Din (good, righteous deed – act of worship) loved most by Allah is that which is done regularly.”

Comment

Doing our best according to our convenient ability is the best standard, which can vary from one person to another. The best cannot be the same for everyone. But the outstanding best is the consistent one with one’s convenient ability.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “Allah (SWT) says: I am just as My slave thinks I am (i.e. I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him) and I am with him if he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group that is better than them; and if he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.”

Comment

Every effort full believer will find Allah according to his effort. And who can exceed his destined limit? Exertion is the sweetness of discovering one’s limit, one’s destiny.

THE LINE OF MERCIES AWAITING BELIEVERS ON RESURRECTION

Narrated Safwan (RA): A man asked Ibn Umar, “What did you hear Allah’s Messenger saying regarding secret talk between Allah and His believing worshiper on the Day of Judgement?” He said: The Prophet (SAW) said, “One of you will come close to his Lord till He will shelter him in His screen and say, “Did you commit such and such sin?” He will say, “Yes.” Then Allah will say, “Did you

commit such and such sin?” He will say, “Yes.” So Allah will make him confess (all his sins) and He will say, “I screened them (your sins) for you in the world, and today I forgive them for you.”

Comment

Exceptional favour reserved for believers, as Allah pleases, after death and return to life, where and when religion is not required But accountability is required.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever said, None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of a barley grain, will be taken out of Hell. And whoever said, None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of a wheat grain will be taken out of Hell. And whoever said, None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) will be taken out of Hell.”

Comment

The absolute mercy of Allah admits the least level of Iman for the EVENTUAL safety of a believer. This is consistent with the acknowledgment of the Unity of Allah as the bedrock for submission to Allah. It is the foundation that generates counting of rewards or sins.

Narrated Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri (RA): We, the companions of the Prophet (SAW) said, “O Allah’s Messenger! What is the bridge?” He said, “It is a slippery (bridge) in which there are clamps and (hooks like) a thorny seed that is wide at one side and narrow at the other and has thorns with bent ends. Some of the believers will cross the bridge as quickly as the wink of an eye, some others as quick as lightening, or as a strong wind, or fast horses or she camels. So, some will be safe without any harm;

some will be safe after receiving some scratches, and some will fall down into Hell (Fire). The last person will cross as if being dragged (over the bridge).”

Comment

Allah (SWT) is All-Knowing, Just and Firm. The crossing of the bridge sieves the free (in degrees) from the captives that will experience a taste of His anger before later admission to safety and mercy.

Narrated Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri (RA): The Prophet (SAW) added, “Then the Prophets, Angels and Believers will intercede, and (last of all) the Almighty (Allah) will say, ‘Now remains My intercession.’ He will then hold a handful of the Fire from which He will take out some people whose bodies have been burnt, and they will be thrown into a river at the entrance of Paradise, called the Water of Life.”

Comment

The believers in trouble will be forgotten or abandoned according to the weight of their evil deeds that took them to Hell Fire.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “The people will be thrown into Hell (Fire) and it will keep saying, ‘Is there any more?’ till the Lord of the worlds puts His Foot over it, whereupon its different sides will come close to each other, and it will say, ‘Enough! Enough!! By Your Honour and Power and Generosity!’ Paradise will remain spacious enough to accommodate more people until Allah will create some more people and let them dwell in the superfluous space of Paradise.”

Comment

The damned and Hell Fire will both be equally and fully served by its content of those who will reside in it forever.

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Allah will say to the people of Paradise, "O the people of Paradise!" They will say, "*Labbaik*, O our Lord and *Sa'daik*, and the good is in Your Hands!" Allah will say, "Are you pleased and satisfied?" They will say, "Why shouldn't we be pleased and satisfied, O our Lord as You have given us what You have not given to any of Your created beings?" He will say, "Shall I not give you something better than that?" They will say, "O our Lord! What else could be better than that?" He will say, "I bestow My Pleasure on you and will never be angry with you after that."

Comment

This completion of the Mercy of Allah on believers has nothing better. To be granted eternal life in comfort with the PLEASURE of Allah.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MERCY OF ALLAH TO BENEFIT BELIEVERS

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "Allah said, 'I have prepared for My righteous slaves (such excellent things) as no eye has ever seen, nor ear has ever heard nor a human heart can ever think of.'"

Narrated Al-Bara ibn Azibar (RA): A piece of silken cloth was given to the Prophet (SAW) as a present and the people handed it over amongst themselves and were astonished at its beauty and softness. Allah's Messenger said, "Are you astonished at it?" They said, "Yes, O Allah's Messenger!" He said, "By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, the handkerchiefs of Sa'ad in Paradise are better than it."

Narrated Sahl ibn Sa'ad (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, "A place in Paradise equal to the size of a lash is better than the whole world and whatever is in it."

Narrated Abdullah ibn Qais (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “A tent (in Paradise) is like a hollow pearl which is thirty miles in height and on every corner of the tent the believer will have a family that cannot be seen by the others.”

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “There is a tree in Paradise (which is so big and huge that) if a rider travels in its shade for one hundred years; he will not be able to cross it.”

Narrated Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “The people of Paradise will look at the dwellers of the lofty mansions (i.e. a superior place in Paradise) in the same way one looks at a brilliant star far away in the east or in the west on the horizon; all that is because of their superiority over one another (in rewards).”

THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION TAUGHT BY RASUL (SAW)

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah’s Messenger (SAW) was asked, “Who is the most honourable amongst the people?” He replied, “The most Allah fearing.”

The Prophet (SAW) said, “However, the truly bankrupt is the one who will be a bankrupt on the Day of Resurrection.”

THE IDENTITY OF MUHAMMAD (SAW) FOR BELIEVERS ON HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH REVELATIONS

Narrated Aisha (RA): The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah’s Messenger was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright day light.

Comment

Rasul (SAW) was neither blind nor blurred in whatever he saw while in sleep. It was as true and real, as what he experienced while awake. Allah protected him against being misled.

Narrated Aisha (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said (to me), "You were shown to me in a dream. An angel brought you to me, wrapped in a piece of silken cloth and said to me, 'This is your wife.' I removed the piece of cloth from your face, and there you were. I said to myself, 'If it is from Allah, then it will surely be.'"

Comment

The affirmation of a believer's dream is in quality or certitude/reliability one-fortieth of that of Rasul. In other words, the certainty or correctness of what a true believer dreams and becomes true is in grade, far below the status of what Rasul experienced.

Narrated Aisha (RA): Al-Harith ibn Hisham asked Allah's Messenger (SAW) "O Allah's Messenger! How is the Divine Inspiration revealed to you?" Allah's Messenger replied, "Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell. This form of inspiration is the hardest of all. And then this state passes off after I have grasped what is inspired. Sometimes the angel comes in the form of a man and talks to me and I grasp what he says." Aisha added: Verily, I saw the Prophet being inspired Divinely on a very cold day and noticed the sweat dropping from his forehead (as the inspiration was over).

Comment

His experience was not secretive but was both new to him and shared with those who cared.

In the cave of Hira. The Angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (SAW) replied, “I do not know how to read.” The Prophet added: Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me and then released me and said, “Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), has created man from a clot”.

Comment

This is his personal admission to the fact that he was not literate or skilled in reading and writing. He was a clean slate.

Narrated Malik ibn Sasaa (RA): The Messenger (SAW) said, “While I was at the House in a state midway between sleep and wakefulness (an angel recognized me) as the man lying between two men. A golden tray full of wisdom and belief was brought to me and my body was cut open from the throat to the lower part of my abdomen. And then my abdomen was washed with zam zam water and (my heart was) filled with wisdom and belief. Al-Buraq was brought to me and I set out with Gabriel. When we reached the first heaven, then I met Adam and greeted him. Then we ascended to the second heaven. Then I met Jesus and Yahya (John). Then we ascended to the third heaven. There I met Joseph. Then we ascended to the fourth heaven. There I met Idris. Then we ascended to the fifth heaven. I met and greeted Aaron. We ascended to the sixth heaven. There I met and greeted Moses. We ascended to the seventh heaven. I met and greeted Abraham. I was shown Al-Bait-al Ma’mur, Sid-ratul-Muntaha.

Comment

This was his higher and utmost experience in his connection with the spiritual truth.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) further said, “(That night) I was given two cups: one full of milk and the other full of wine. I was asked to take either of them which I liked and I took the milk and drank it. On that it was said to me, ‘You have taken the right path (religion). If you had taken the wine, your (Muslim) nation would have gone astray’”.

Comment

This is the favourable guidance of Allah to Rasul and the consequential benefit of his Ummah.

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah (RA) while talking about the period of pause in revelation, reporting the speech of the Prophet (SAW): “While I was walking, all of a sudden I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up and saw same angel who had visited me at the cave of Hira, sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. I got afraid of him and came back home and said, ‘wrap me (in blankets)’ And then Allah revealed – ‘O you (i.e. Muhammad)! Wrapped up in garments! Arise and warn (the people against Allah's Punishment) ... up to ... ‘and desert the idols.’ After this the revelation started coming strongly, frequently and regularly.”

Comment

The invitation and flow of his connection was therefore not his but that of Allah, as He pleases.

Narrated Urwa (RA): I heard Bashir ibn Abi Mas’ud narrating from Ibn Mas’ud who heard Allah’s Messenger saying: “Gabriel descended and led me in prayer; and then prayed with him again, and then prayed with him again, and then prayed with him again, and then prayed with him again, counting with his fingers five prayers.”

Comment

This means that the Teaching along with the Practice were fully guided. Neither the knowledge or instructions nor compliance, was the making of Rasul.

ON HIS REALISATION AND FOLLOW UP ACTION

Narrated Mu'awiya (RA): I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying, "If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion. I am just a distributor, but the grant is from Allah."

Comment

Allah is responsible for granting him the favour of knowledge and guidance. And for Allah, the one that matters is religious knowledge. This is why it is, what is necessary for each and every believer. The knowledge of religion for practice by a believer does not relieve any other believer of the same.

Narrated Anas (RA): Whenever the Messenger of Allah spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him.

Comment

To learn, the teaching must not be a flash. Repetition is most commendable. The Qur'an repeats verses, stories and instructions to enable easy learning.

ON HIS SUBMISSION AND COMPLIANCE

Narrated Al-Mughira (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to pray so much that his feet used to become swollen. And when he was asked as to why he prays so much, he would say, "Shall I not be a thankful slave (to Allah)?"

Comment

This is a true model of a slave to his Master in submission. And Rasul is one favoured with forgiveness for what he had committed and may commit for the time he lived.

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah (RA): I fell ill. Allah's Messenger (SAW) and Abu Bakr came to visit me on foot. I was unconscious. Allah's Apostle performed ablution and poured the remaining water of his ablution over me, whereupon I became conscious and said 'O Allah's Messenger! How should I spend my wealth? Or how should I deal with my wealth?' But the Messenger of Allah did not give me any reply till the verse of the laws of inheritance was revealed.

Comment

The religion of Islam therefore covers required submission and compliance in both spiritual and material, physical or mundane spheres.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "If I had gold equal to the mountain of Uhud, I will love that, before three days had passed, not a single Dinar thereof remained with me if I found somebody to accept it, excluding some amount that I would keep for the payment of my debts."

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The family of Muhammad (SAW) did not eat their fill for three successive days till he died.

Narrated Aisha (RA): The family of Muhammad (SAW) did not eat two meals in one day, but one of the two was dates.

Narrated Aisha (RA): A complete month would pass by during which we would not make fire (for cooking), and our food used to be only dates and water unless we were given a present of some meat.

Comment

As for possessions, this is the definition of his heart's wish. But he never accumulated them. He never found it attractive, as he was a traveller in the world, to return to Allah.

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said "Enjoining all that is good is a sadaqa."

Narrated Abu Musa (RA): They said, "If he does not do it (enjoining what is good)?" He said, "Then he should refrain from doing evil, for that will be considered for him as a sadaqa."

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said "A good, pleasant or friendly word is a sadaqa."

Comment

This means that, in the absence of possessing material wealth that is best used by giving it out in charity, the position of the poor is not less favourable, because a believer can rise in status through non material commission or omission.

Narrated Al-A'rai (RA): Abu Hurairah said, Allah's Messenger said, "By Him in Whose Hand my life is, I would love to fight in Allah's cause and then get martyred and then resurrected (come to life) and then get martyred and then resurrected (come to life) and then get martyred and then resurrected (come to life) and then get martyred and then resurrected (come to life)."

Comment

His readiness to serve Allah with his life was no less. To expire and expire again and again, for Allah.

ON ALL THAT HE REQUIRES FROM BELIEVERS

Narrated Abu Humaid As-Saidi (RA): The people said, “O Allah’s Messenger! How may we send salat on you?” He said, “Say: Allah! Send Your salat on Muhammad and his wives and his offspring as you sent Your salat on the family of Ibrahim; and send Your blessings on Muhammad and his wives and his offspring as You sent Your blessings on the family of Ibrahim. You are indeed the one who deserves praise and glorification.”

Comment

Rasul (SAW) loves for himself the clear example of what his father (in faith) benefited – the Peace and Blessings of Allah.

CHAPTER 3

THE MANNER OF ALLAH'S REVELATION OF HIS REALITY TO HIS CREATIONS AND GUIDANCE TO HIS DESERVED TOTAL SUBMISSION

THE MANNER OF ALLAH'S REVELATION OF HIS REALITY TO HIS CREATIONS AND GUIDANCE TO HIS DESERVED TOTAL SUBMISSION

It is only logical, sensible and natural for Allah to make Himself known to His creation because they are ignorant even though they are in inevitable need of Him. Without this, they are subject to erring. This can be either in the form of unbelief or disbelief. Indeed, there are also those who misbelief. The unbelievers are the primary target of believers who have known Allah. Disbelievers are those who dispute following invitation to the knowledge of the reality of Allah. And the misbelievers are the crooked believers.

There is no doubt that before creation, Allah was a secret. And when he decided to make Himself known, He created creation. And although He created man in His own image, man needs His revelation of Himself to be complete. He therefore choose from among men, Prophets and Messengers whom He inspired for this graceful connection. And He built this up with His Scriptures to support and make a distinction between proper Belief, Misbelief, Disbelief and Unbelief. As a Just Creator, He has freed those in the category of unbelief IF they received no Messenger to guide them and has enjoined others to seek to know Him. This is what makes knowledge a top priority for believers.

Indeed, it is a healthy craving of intelligent man to seek Allah even after the message has reached him because his REALITY rests in his constant connection with Him. That was why Musa (AS) sought to sight Allah who granted him the exceptional privilege of speaking with Him. He educated Musa (AS) that He is ABOVE his sight but will grant him the privilege of looking at His reflection on a rock. The rock failed and Musa (AS) went unconscious. On recovery, he further submitted to the greatness of Allah. Before him, it was Ibrahim (AS) who sought to know how Allah breathes life into creation. And his interest was to increase his faith. Allah instructed him to

get a few birds, cut them into pieces and place them on different spots. He should then call on them to come forward IN THE NAME OF ALLAH. He did so and witnessed their submission. Ezra (AS) was the servant of Allah who wondered how Allah will bring back to life what has died and perished. And he was made to experience it along with his donkey and drink. The young men and their dog that fled and hid away from the influence of unbelief and disbelief became a sign after Allah sustained them for hundreds of years and their return back to a totally changed society.

With Muhammad (SAW), Allah completed His Guidance by laying limits of such wonderings. Miracles that fascinate human senses have become surpassed by knowledge and subtle experience. Man is therefore saved the agony of pursuing what is beyond his total capacity.

And all of mankind and jinn who care now have a reference for reflection, if they choose to be sincere with themselves. But guidance rests with Allah.

Thus, one form of the VEILS from behind which He reached Muhammad (SAW) is a dream.

Narrated Aisha (RA) (mother of the faithful believers): “The commencement of the Devine revelations to Allah’s Messenger (SAW) was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight.”

We will recall the personal report of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) to Aisha (RA) that, he was shown Aisha (RA) by an angel in a dream prior to their marriage. And he submitted that if it is from Allah it will surely come to pass.

But this was not the only form or instance of how Allah revealed Himself or communicated with His Messenger (SAW).

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari (RA): Talking about the period of pause in revelations reporting the speech of the Prophet, “While I was walking, all of a sudden I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up and saw the same angel who had visited me at the cave of *Hira* sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. I got afraid of him and came back home and said, ‘Wrap me (in blankets).’ And then Allah revealed the following holy verses (of Qur’an): O ye (i.e. Muhammad)! Wrapped up in garments!”

The reference here to the earlier meeting connects to when he was asked and pressed to Read. And he replied he couldn’t read, until he repeated after the angel. The encounter was necessarily new and unusual. But that is the way and greatness of Allah. A step towards making the UNLETTERED to convey His Final and Complete Message to the worlds of mankind and jinn.

Beyond having a dream that eventually unfolds EXACTLY in reality and encountering an angel, our Messenger also connected with the reality of Allah in real life situation without seeing any angel.

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah (RA): I proceeded in the company of Allah’s Apostle (SAW) towards Najd to participate in a *Ghazwa* (Holy battle). When Allah’s Apostle (SAW) returned, he too returned with him. Midday came upon them while they were in a valley having many thorny trees. Allah’s Apostle (SAW) and the people dismounted and dispersed to rest in the shade of the trees. Allah’s Apostle (SAW) rested under a tree and hung his sword on it. We all took a nap and suddenly we heard Allah’s Apostle (SAW) calling us. (We woke up) to see a Bedouin with him. The Prophet said, “This Bedouin took out my sword while I was sleeping and when I woke up, I found the unsheathed sword in his hand and he challenged me saying, “Who will save you from me?” I said thrice, “Allah.” The Prophet (SAW) did not punish him but he sat down.

Angel Jibril (AS) actually hit the Bedouin on the hand and let fall the sword which was picked up by Allah's Apostle (SAW). Allah's Apostle (SAW) forgave the Bedouin although he could have killed him on the spot if he had wished.

The Will of Allah does not get revealed just through a message or an incident involving the Prophet (SAW) directly. The reported experience of Aisha (RA) was an example.

Narrated Aisha (RA) (the wife of the Prophet): "We set out with Allah's Apostle (SAW) on one of his journeys till we reached Al-Baida or Dhatul-Jaish, a necklace of mine was broken (and lost). Allah's Apostle (SAW) stayed there to search for it, and so did the people along with him. There was no water at that place, so the people went to Abu Bakr As-Siddiq and said, "Don't you see what Aisha has done? She has made Allah's Apostle (SAW) and the people stay where there is no water and they have no water with them." Abu Bakr came while Allah's Apostle (SAW) was sleeping with his head on my thigh. He said to me "You have detained Allah's Messenger (SAW) and the people where there is no water and they have no water with them."

So he admonished me and said what Allah wished him to say and hit me on my flank with his hand. Nothing prevented me from moving (because of pain) but the position of Allah's Apostle (SAW) on my thigh. Allah's Apostle (SAW) got up when dawn broke and there was no water. So Allah revealed the Devine verses of Tayammum. So they all performed tayammum. Usaid ibn Hudair (RA) said, "O the family of Abu Bakr! This is not the first blessing of yours." Then the camel on which I was riding was caused to move from its place and the necklace was found beneath it."

In this circumstance the loss and searching for the necklace was the causative veil for the law of convenience in cleansing by believers, when water is not available, to be revealed. What a veil upon veil?

But Allah (SWT) does not do this only within the family of His beloved Messenger (SAW). The personal admission of Umar (RA) of his realization is a typical example.

Narrated Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA): My Lord agreed with me in three things:

1. I said, “O Allah’s Messenger, I wish we took the station of Abraham (AS) as our praying place (for some of our prayers).” So came the Divine Inspiration: And take you (people) the station of Abraham as a place of prayer i.e. two raka’ats performed after the Tawaf of Ka’aba (Qur’an 2:125).
2. And as regards the (verse of) veiling of the women, I said, “O Allah’s Apostle! I wish you ordered your wives to cover themselves from the men because good and bad ones talk to them.” So the verse of the veiling of the women was revealed.
3. Once the wives of the Prophet made a united front against the Prophet and I said to them, “It may be if he (the Prophet) divorced you (all) that his Lord (Allah) will give him instead of you wives better than you.” So this verse (the same as I had said) was revealed (Qur’an 66:5).

Allah did not restrict his connection only to the leaders.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): Two of the companions of the Prophet (SAW) departed from him on a dark night and were led by two lights like lamps (going in front of them from Allah as a miracle) lighting the way in front of them, and when they parted, each of them was accompanied by one of these lights till they reached their (respective) houses.

Certainly, this gives the stratification of society then, not only free men had connection with Allah (SAW).

Narrated Aisha (RA): There was a black slave girl belonging to an Arab tribe and they manumitted her but she remained with them. The slave girl said “Once one of their girls (of the tribe) came out wearing a red leather scarf decorated with precious stones. It fell from her or she placed it somewhere. A kite passed by that place, saw it lying there and mistaking it for a piece of meat, flew away with it. Those people searched for it but they did not find it. So they accused me of stealing it and started searching me and even searched my private parts.” The slave girl further said, “By Allah! While I was standing (in that state) with those people, the same kite passed by them and dropped the red scarf and it fell amongst them. I told them: “This is what you accused me of and I was innocent and now this is it.” Aisha (RA) added: That slave girl came to Allah’s Messenger (SAW) and embraced Islam. She had a tent or a small room with a low roof in the mosque. Whenever she called on me, she had a talk with me and whenever she sat with me, she will recite the following: “The day of the scarf (band) was one of the wonders of our Lord, verily He rescued me from the disbelievers’ town.” Aisha (RA) added: Once I asked her, “What is the matter with you? Whenever you sit with me, you always recite these poetic verses?” On that she told me the whole story.

And that is not all about whatsoever Allah Wills by His Power. It is Allah who comes between His creations and their affairs as He wishes, from behind a veil or by a veil.

Narrated Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri (RA): Allah’s Messenger said, “When the funeral is ready and the men carry it on their shoulders, if the deceased was righteous it will say ‘Present me (hurriedly)’ and if it was not righteous, it will say ‘Woe unto it (me)! Where are they taking it (me)?’ Its voice is heard by everything except man and if he heard it, he will fall unconscious.”

All of these go to indicate that Allah (SWT) is always with us, aware of our state and intervene as He pleases. His reality is therefore not the preserve of anyone. Allah (SWT) is NOT like an idol that can be reached.

HIS DESERVING OF TOTAL SUBMISSION

Accordingly, for believers, when connected with Allah it need be in purity of submission by non-comparison to anyone and anything. And a case in the life of man is when he chooses to make an absolute submission of a fact. We have the guidance from the Messenger of Allah (SAW).

Narrated Ibn Umar (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Do not swear by your fathers and whoever wants to swear should swear by Allah (SWT).”

The implication of this is that Allah (SWT), the final authority who is All-Knowing is called upon as the witness of the believer. And who in his right senses will call upon his Lord to what is doubtful or false? Only a fool will endanger such a thing because of the consequences as Allah is Just. And because absolute truth is the foundation for righteous proceeding, when a couple disagree over the legality of their prospective child, the marriage becomes null and void IF BOTH SWEAR BY ALLAH AND CURSE SELF SHOULD THE SUBMISSION BE FALSE.

In consequence, the best setting for this guidance relates to whenever a believer will connect with Allah (SWT) directly in salat. And a good sample breakdown has been provided in the tradition of the Messenger (SAW).

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “When you hear the *Iqama*, proceed to offer the prayer with calmness and solemnity and do not make haste. And pray whatever you are able to pray and complete whatever you have missed.”

By implication, a believer needs to arrive in full comportment. Thus, he should proceed to prayer before the prayer is announced to be ready to start. This is the respect that Allah (SWT) deserves from His slave. This is utmost civility.

This is followed by when a believer is in the state of prayer.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whenever anyone of you stands for prayer, he is speaking in private to his Lord or the Lord is between him and his Qibla. So, none of you should spit in the direction of the Qibla.”

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “If anyone of you stands for prayer, he should not spit in front of him because in prayer he is speaking in private to Allah (SWT) and he should not spit on his right as there is an angel.”

Beyond the commitment of a believer physically when before his creator, his thoughts should as much as possible not roam. And the Prophet (SAW) himself pointed at this in practice.

Narrated Aisha (RA): The Prophet (SAW) prayed in a *khamisa* (a square garment) having marks. During the prayer he looked at its marks. So when he finished the prayer he said, “Take this *khamisa* of mine to Abu Jahm and get me his *inbijaniya* (a woollen garment without marks) as it (the *khamisa*) has diverted my attention from the prayer.”

Narrated Uqba (RA): I offered the Asr prayer behind the Prophet (SAW) at Madina. When he had finished the prayer with Taslim, he got up hurriedly and went out by crossing the rows of the people to one of the dwellings of his wives. The people got scared at his speed. The Prophet (SAW) came back and found the people surprised at his haste and said to them, “I remembered a piece of gold lying in my house and

I did not like it to divert my attention from Allah’s worship, so I have ordered it to be distributed (in charity).”

And this example is further followed by caution guidance.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Isn’t he who raises his head before the Imam afraid that Allah (SWT) may transform his head into that of a donkey or his figure (face) into that of a donkey?”

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “What is wrong with those people who look towards the sky during the prayer? They should stop otherwise their eyesight would be taken away.”

Narrated Aisha (RA): I asked Allah’s Apostle (SAW) about looking hither and thither in prayer. He replied, “It is a way of stealing by which Satan takes away (a portion) from the prayer of a person.”

This is understandable because prayer has ten portions and believers may end up with passing only as far as their attentiveness.

While all of these instances apply in individual and congressional prayers, there is another aspect that applies specifically to congressional prayer.

Narrated Abu Juha'im (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “If the person who passes in front of another person in prayer knows the magnitude of his sin, he would prefer to wait for 40 (days, months or years) rather than to pass in front of him.”

In another hadith, the praying person is encouraged to obstruct the negligent person.

This definition of *ihsan* in the context of the salat is the best opportunity for developing a believer’s conscious submission to Allah (SWT). It is the stepping stone for applying it to other aspects of ordinary life.

For example, because all actions are backed by expressed or unexpressed intentions – the basis for reward, a believer precedes his actions of positive activities IN THE NAME OF ALLAH. Therefore, if he knows Allah the activity to follow will logically flow to be to the best of his physical and mental abilities and with utmost sincerity. The outcome will then include a space for the support of Allah (SWT) and will be optimal. If in relation to another person, it will be safe. And for self it will be harmless because the platform will be permissible. It cannot be a thing or include what Allah (SWT) has prohibited. It must either be enjoined or encouraged. In consequence, this spirit and orientation is what distinguishes a believer.

As a result, in Islam there is no zone of God or Religion in isolation of the zone of man. Islam is not just praying after declaration of submission, fasting, giving of charity and performing pilgrimage. *Ihsan* is required to be the vehicle of all the others. This is why they attract rewards only if they are performed FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH (SWT). And logically, those who excel in these either with their knowledge, public authority or wealth FOR THEMSELVES OR OTHERS TO ADMIRE, will be ahead to be judged and hosted by Hellfire on the Day of Accounting.

It is therefore valueless of the belief in Allah (SWT) where, when and if the connection between a believer and his creator does not positively influence his sayings and actions, outside the canonical prayers. This principle and logic is what will deteriorate as in our generation, where, in the Ummah, honest people are difficult to come by. On the contrary, in the first generation, once you find and meet a believer, you are completely safe from any harm. This is why if a believer is an evil doer, especially of major sins, his prayer, his connection with his Lord has not benefited him.

For optimal results, the believer is enjoined to remember Allah (SWT) constantly even after or outside prayer. This is where glorification of Allah connects with our inevitable and never ending needs, wants and fancies, which we can plead for from our Lord. This is the basis of likening a believer who constantly remembers Allah to a living person while the one who does not is likened to a dead person because light is the opposite of darkness. Only believers who optimize their connection with Allah (SWT) within and outside canonical prayers stand the chance of having a taste of the sweetness of Iman.

And this orientation is Not possible without knowledge. Here lies the danger for the Ummah, where its leaders who are believers have no knowledge, talkless of the required basic discipline of *ihsan* in their lives. And the key sign of the approach of the end is the disappearing of knowledge through the death of the learned, the scholars, the successors of the Prophet (SAW). This is Not people with certificates or awards BUT those who Believe, are Knowledgeable and live by it TO THE BENEFIT OF HUMANITY. This is why the learned believer's sleep is superior to the worship of the ignorant. The former will either be able to avoid wrongs and mistakes in his worship or has a great chance of correcting it as soon as he discovers it or his attention is drawn to it – if Allah wills. However, on the part of the ignorant, prospect of self-correction, earliest correction is less probable. Indeed, he may even resist correction because of sticking to ignorance.

And the greatest misfortune that can befall or envelope a believer, is to be granted long life and continue to be distant from the essence of Iman by characteristics like sponsoring gangsterism, murder, hypocrisy, even asking that Allah (SWT) punishes fellow humans, causing confusion in the society, giving contradictory guidance, opposing what is right, sticking to what is wrong, hesitating to help or to be committed to doing right etc. or direct participation IN ORDER TO SAVE

THEMSELVES FROM WORLDLY EMBARRASSMENT OR DISGRACE. Such inordinate misguidance at the age of fifty and above is a viral infection in the Ummah. Their return to Allah (SWT) is describable as a relief to the wellbeing of the Ummah.

AMONG THE FREE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING *IHSAN*

For everything, there is a foundation, and the foundation for this, is the declaration of faith. Those not born to believing families or parents are therefore welcome without loss.

Narrated Hakim ibn Hizam (RA): I said to Allah's Apostle (SAW), "Before embracing Islam I used to do good deeds like giving in charity, slave manumitting and keeping of good relations with kith and kin. Shall I be rewarded for those deeds?" The Prophet (SAW) replied, "You become a Muslim with all those good deeds (without losing their rewards)."

It is worth adding that such a convert does not also bear the burden of his previous negative deeds, as they are forgiven by Allah (SWT).

Narrated Hudhaifa (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "The afflictions caused for a man by his wife, money, children and neighbours are expiated by his prayers, fasting, charity and enjoining (what is good) and forbidding (what is evil)."

It is also worth adding here that, whatever pain (not self-inflicted) a believer is exposed to that falls within his legal worship activities expiate his sins. This can be an ailment.

Narrated Abu Mas'ud (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "If a man spends on his family (with the intention of having a reward from Allah (SWT) sincerely for Allah's sake then it is a (kind of) arms – giving in reward for him."

Narrated Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "You will be rewarded for whatever you spend for Allah's sake even if it were a morsel which you put in your wife's mouth."

Kindness in immediate family relationships is therefore both part of worship and investments with Allah (SWT) for oneself. And the rewards can be given in the form of convenience against obstacles or preserved for safety from Fire.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "If anyone of you improve (follows strictly) his Islamic religion, then his good deeds will be rewarded ten times to seven hundred times for each good deed and a bad deed will be recorded as it is."

This is the immeasurable generous standard of Allah (SWT) for consistent believers. And this covers all daily ordinary activities like the example of putting a morsel of food in the mouth of a legal partner. For men in physical form who are vulnerable to measuring things easier in their like form, beyond quantity an example of quantity in a particular case is refreshing.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "(A believer) who accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's reward and remains with it till the funeral prayer is offered and the burial ceremonies are over, he will return with a reward of two *Qirats*. Each *Qirat* is like the size of the (Mountain) Uhud. He who offers the funeral prayer only and returns before the burial, will return with the reward of one *Qirat* only."

Thus, even the last respect we pay to our fellow believers who return to Allah is a source of rewards for the living who care.

Narrated Abu Humran (freed slave of Uthman ibn Affan) (RA): I saw Uthman ibn Affan asking (for a tumbler of water) to perform ablution (and when it was brought)

he poured the water from it over his hands and washed them thrice and then put his right hand in the water container and rinsed his mouth and washed his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out. Then he washed his face thrice and (then) forearms up to the elbows thrice, then passed his wet hands over his head and then washed each foot thrice. After that Uthman said, “I saw the Prophet (SAW) performing ablution like this of mine, and he said, ‘If anyone performs ablution like that of mine and offers a two raka’at prayer during which he does not think of anything else (not related to the present prayer) then his past sins will be forgiven.’”

No doubt cleanliness/purity is the basis and path to godliness because Allah is Pure. And this opportunity is severally open in a day. Here lies the preference of repeating ablution for every prayer even if it has not voided, since the previous ablution. This is the benefit of ablution as distinct from the prayer.

Narrated Salman Al-Farsi (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever takes a bath on Friday, purifies himself as much as he can then uses his (hair) oil or perfumes himself with the scent of his house, then proceeds (for the Jumu’a prayer) and does not separate two persons sitting together (in the mosque), then he prays as much as (Allah has) written for him and then remains silent while the Imam is delivering the khutbah, his sins in-between the present and last Friday would be forgiven.”

This is the opportunity in the preparation for the weekly congregational prayer and there are fifty-two openings in a calendar year for every believer.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “Any person who takes a bath on Friday like the bath of Janaba and then goes for the prayer (in the first hour i.e. early) it is as if he has sacrificed a camel (in Allah’s cause); whoever goes in the second hour, it is as if he has sacrificed a cow; whoever goes in the third hour, then it is as if he had sacrificed a horned ram; if one goes in the fourth hour, then it is as

if he had sacrificed a hen; and whoever goes in the fifth hour, then it is as if he had offered an egg. When the Imam comes out (i.e. starts delivering the khutbah) the angels (close the registers) and present themselves to listen to the khutbah.”

Thus, there are enormous differential benefits between the attendance sequences of believers in responding to the call on Friday, to connect with Allah (SWT).

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Say ‘*Amin*’ when the Imam says it and if the *Amin* of anyone of you coincides with that of the angels then all his past sins will be forgiven.”

This is the window of attentive following of the Imam, for more purity and in consequence, closeness to Allah (SWT).

Narrated Abu Musa (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “The people who get tremendous rewards for the prayer are those who are farthest away (from the mosque) and then those who are next farthest away and so on. Similarly, one who waits to pray with the Imam has greater reward than the one who prays and goes to bed.”

One cannot just appreciate but can now imagine the loss a believer would have incurred if and when he misses the Friday congressional prayer completely or attends it with negligence.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): I heard Allah’s Apostle (SAW) saying, “If there was a river at the door of anyone of you and he took bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt on him?” They said, “Not a trace of dirt will be left.” The Prophet (SAW) added, “That is the example of the five prayers with which Allah (SWT) blots out (annuls) evil deeds.”

Then what other access, opportunity or freedom does a believer need more, to connect with Allah (SWT)?

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "Whoever establishes the prayers on the night of *Qadar* out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not to show off), then all his past sins will be forgiven."

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "Whoever establishes prayers during the nights of Ramadan faithfully out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not for showing off), all his past sins will be forgiven."

The month of Ramadan is therefore a clear special opportunity for believers as a whole in addition to the weekly special openings every Friday.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "A person who gives in charity something secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given, he will be under the shade of Allah's Throne on the Day of Resurrection."

This has been defined in a wide range of scope, the essential difference being the charity given that is not followed by its publicity. And the highest grade of this is the Timely charity given to a genuinely Needy person who has Not Asked for support.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "If one gives in charity what equals one date fruit from the honestly earned money, Allah (SWT) takes it in His right hand and then enlarges its reward (for that person who has given it) as anyone of you brings up his baby horse, so much as it becomes as big as a mountain."

The best offers to Allah or for the sake of Allah can become LIVING with Allah (SWT).

Narrated Ibn Abbas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “No good deeds done on other days are superior to those done on these (first ten days of Dhul Hijja).” Then some companions of the Prophet said, “Not even Jihad?” He replied, “Not even Jihad, except that of a man who does it by putting himself and his property in danger (for Allah’s sake) and does not return with any of those things.”

The first week of the month of Hajj is another bonus opening for the believers.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever performs Hajj for Allah’s pleasure and does not have sexual relations with his wife and does not do evil or sins, then he will return (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born anew.”

Therefore, for every believer, the opportunities are freely available through the five pillars within the life activities of our history, to optimally access and get the real positive benefits of our way of life, by forgiveness for our errors and rewards for our conscious commitment to our connection with Allah (SWT). Our differences in status like being a Declarant, a Believer, a Sincere believer etc. is related to our *Ihsan* in our practical obedience or submission to Allah (SWT).

The prosperity or otherwise of the Ummah is therefore hinged upon our submission as citizens or leaders. This is the bedrock upon which HISTORY must be rested on by believers. Efforts are Not Enough because Allah (SWT) is ALL-SURROUNDING to respond to believers against unbelievers. It will for that reason be foolhardy of a believer to HOLD THAT HIS BEST HAS BEEN ATTAINED WITH SINS OR CARELESS CONNECTION WITH ALLAH (SWT). The connection is certainly the sure path for breaking the jinx of the challenges that will always confront the Ummah.

This is the life-wire of Islamic belief, Submission and Culture as revealed and exemplified by our best model Muhammad (SAW). This is the setting of the tracks for racing in this world for the good in this life, the good in the hereafter and safety from the Fire. Then which of the favours of Allah (SWT) shall mankind and jinn deny, after the best message and the best example have been provided?

CHAPTER 4

THE STRAIGHT PATH IS THE MIDDLE PATH AND THE GUIDANCE

THE STRAIGHT PATH IS THE MIDDLE PATH AND THE GUIDANCE

It is certainly not enough to know how to practice the religion of Islam, it is even more important to know the basic standard because; men differ in their capacities for engagement. And the standard is the primary focus in everything AND NOT THE EXCEPTION. As a way of life for humanity, it will be misleading to assess and rate people beyond their fitting into the baseline standard. This is a critical take off point because only Allah (SWT) can rate His slaves or servants and His chosen model is the best to instruct and guide. The orientation of Islamic religion and culture is not to make prophets out of its followers. It is not even aimed at making saints out of the believers. While Prophets and Messengers are at the absolute discretion of Allah (SWT), believers can strive according to their abilities BUT WITHIN THE STANDARD.

Any mix up between these can conveniently create wrong understanding of Islam. And there are two historical grounds for this. The first is that in the generation of Muhammad (SAW), who nursed the religion to maturity and certified completion, there were believers of different capacities. And between them, two classes are of superior interest. One of these was made up of *Ahlu-Suffa*. They were like a band of believers who cared and focused with total commitment to the tenets of the religion. They were poor and depended on whatever the Prophet (SAW) was able to provide them. The mosque was their home and worship was their calling. The other category is the close companions of the Prophet (SAW) like the first BUT who attained the recognition of being the rightly guided successors of the Messenger of Allah (SAW). These were Abu Bakr (RA), Umar (RA), Uthman (RA) and Ali (RA). The second historical ground is the warning by the Prophet (SAW) that after him, there will arise developments and generation of believers who will be seen to practice so well that some believers will view themselves as inferior, whereas the former may be on the

wrong path. And he categorically provided that his generation of companions were safe along with three further generations.

And today we are the true witnesses to this pointer. At the world level, there are those that have been identified as Traditionalists, there are Fundamentalists and there are Modernists beginning to carve an identity. Across these, there are Sunnis and the Shi'a and even Ibadi. And except for the modernists that are totally materially inclined, the other two have attachments of Sufi Orders.

In Nigeria, the exposure of those that are in the forefront of religious education and even movements have their roots of influence in the Sunni and Shi'a except a few miscreants that lack any sound scholarly basis for guidance. And the measure is in the interpretation of the Qur'an, Hadiths, life history of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and rulings on judicial matters. This is why for instance those who claim to be Salafis could be found with leaders that are not in the tracks of Izala which claims to be the Sunni fold. And both the Tariqas of Tijjaniyya and Qadiriyya that are Sufi orders are often at disagreement or even verbal war with the Izala that shares the same ideological trappings with them. The Ahmadis that can also be associated with the main stream Sunni or Traditional Islam has the colourings of its Asian leadership guide. At a time, they were even restrained from participating in Hajj. In Nigeria, while the missionary effort cut across the country, it has found a comfort sitting in the tolerant cultural admission of south west Nigeria. This is regardless of the several names Muslim organizations bear. And the umbrella of NASFAT with its Fountain University is the ultimate structural development of this group. Generally, strict adherence to the tenets of Islam differs between the different groups.

But what is the foundation yardstick that must not be deviated from by any of the groups? And this must apply either at the world level or in Nigeria, as the basic education for the ordinary believer to get a safe bearing.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshiping in the mornings and at nights.”

The middle path is therefore the standard that every average believer can bear. The straight path is not for specialists in the religion of Islam. And because Islam covers, necessary consistency in compliance between spiritual and worldly matters, it will amount to difficulty or even abuse, to rate concordance outside what is bearable, from what is BASIC. An example of this guide is defined by the hadith from the mother of the believers.

Narrated Aisha (RA): Once the Prophet (SAW) came while a woman was sitting with me. He said, “Who is she?” I replied, “She is so and so” and told him about her (excessive) praying. He said disapprovingly, “Do (good) deeds which is within your capacity (without overtaxing yourself) as Allah (SWT) does not get tired (of giving rewards) but (surely) you will get tired; the best deed (act of worship) in the sight of Allah (SWT) is that which is done regularly.”

The level or weight need not be exhausting, which provides room for the accommodation of different capacities. But, NOT outside or beyond a given prescribed standard. The report from Humran (RA) spells an example.

Narrated Humran (RA) (the freed slave of Uthman ibn Affan): I saw Uthman ibn Affan asking (for a tumbler of water) to perform ablution (and when it was brought) he poured water from it over his hands and washed them thrice and then put his hand in the water container and rinsed his mouth and washed his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out. Then he washed his face thrice and (then) forearms up to

the elbows thrice, then passed his wet hands over his head and then washed each foot thrice. After that Uthman (RA) said, “I saw the Prophet (SAW) performing ablution like this of mine, and he said, ‘If anyone performs ablution like that of mine and offers a two-raka’at prayer during which he does not think of anything else (not related to the present prayer) then his past sins will be forgiven.’”

In this guidance, using an ablution that has not gotten voided will not stop one from undertaking another prayer even though another fresh ablution will be perfect. It can therefore not be a basis for disagreement. And washing the parts four or more times as against three and two times as against once in some levels will not make the ablution better. By deduction, the amount of water useable by a believer for his ablution can differ between people but does not give it any quality difference, provided the ablution has been properly performed. This foundation for interacting with Allah (SWT) is completely defined.

Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar (RA): I saw that whenever Allah’s Apostle (SAW) stood for the prayer, he used to raise his hands up to the shoulders and used to do the same on saying Takbir for bowing and on raising his head from it and used to say *Sami’a l-lahu liman hamidah*. But he did not do that (i.e. raising his hands) in prostration.

This also defines the limits of raising hands in salat that can be admitted as proper and for the teaching and practice of adherents. Thus, the rule of the necessity of the very first one in opening the prayer with the very first takbir is admissible provided there is no skipping between the others or adding to the full standard.

Because of the critical status of salat, that is the best platform for a believer to relate with Allah (SWT), a further definition of limits is found in the practice of the Messenger of Allah (SAW).

Narrated Ibn Abbas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) was ordered (by Allah (SWT)) to prostrate on seven parts and not to tuck up the clothes or hair (while praying). Those parts are: the forehead (along with the tip of nose), both hands, both knees and (toes of) both feet.

That, this practice is based on ablution, intention for the prayer and possible facing of the Qibla, it will amount to difficulty to rate this as the same with the deteriorating style of Yoruba respect for elders as worship, that is reserved for Allah (SWT). It will amount to extremism to define the greeting culture as worship, even when it does not require the specific distinctions for interacting with Allah (SWT).

Because the religion is not for isolation and congressional prayer is of top value, the principle or guide for the standard is also given.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "If anyone of you leads the people in the prayer, he should shorten it for amongst them are the weak, the sick and the old; and if anyone among you prays alone then he may prolong (the prayer) as much as he wishes."

This is commonly so. Those who know what the practice of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was, knew that in the dawn and night prayers, he stood longer than in the afternoon prayers. And he could recite short or medium surahs or a combination of them. But he specifically remained long in standing, bowing and prostration in his personal night prayers or eclipse prayer. And whenever it was short, it was calm, beautiful and consuming.

In the area of sacrifice, believers have not been left without a full guidance on the basic standard.

Narrated Al-Bara (RA): The Prophet (SAW) on the day of *Idul-Adha* faced us and said, “On this day of ours, our first act of worship is the offering of prayer and then we will return and slaughter the sacrifice, and whoever does this concord with the sunnah; and whoever slaughtered his sacrifice before that (i.e. before the prayer) then that was a thing which he prepared earlier for his family and it will not be considered as a *nusuk* (sacrifice).” A man stood up and said, “O Allah’s Messenger (SAW)! I slaughtered (the animal before the prayer) but I have a young she-goat which is better than an older sheep.” The Prophet (SAW) said to him, “Slaughter it. But a similar sacrifice will not be sufficient for anybody else after you.”

It will thus amount to assuming the position of the discretionary guidance of Muhammad (SAW) for any believer or leader to adjust the definition of what is suitable for sacrifice. The basic standard for camels, cows, rams and sheep have been fully defined. It is either you meet it or fail to do so.

The middle path also requires the leader to carry along followers, with clear clarity in matters of guidance or example.

Narrated Anas (RA): Whenever the Prophet (SAW) spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him and whenever he asked permission to enter, (he knocked the door) thrice with greeting.

Leadership in Islam is to carry as many believers along, without difficulty of understanding. Therefore, there must be no mix up or controversy over whatever is within as against what is without. It will then be contradictory and outrageous to entertain what is improper or illegal. Pork cannot be used for sacrifice and intrusion into privacy has to be with consent.

Narrated An-Nu'man ibn Bashir (RA): I heard Allah's Apostle (SAW) saying, "Both legal and illegal things are evident but in-between them there are doubtful (suspicious) things and most of the people have no knowledge about them. So whoever saves himself from these suspicious things saves his religion and his honour. And whoever indulges in these suspicious things is like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near the *Hima* (private pasture) of someone else and at any moment he is liable to get in it. (O people) Beware! Every king has a *Hima* and the *Hima* of Allah (SWT) on this earth is His illegal (forbidden) things. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart."

This is the standard for caution against clear encroachment beyond defined limits. An example will be family planning accessories, artificial insemination, etc. Those who decide to go beyond the obvious definitions do so on volition. Those who follow them must know that the safety is risky as it is uncertain. Keeping within the limits is not only more convenient but the basic standard that gives assurance.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): A Bedouin came to the Prophet (SAW) and said, "Tell me such a deed as will make me enter Paradise, if I do it." The Prophet (SAW) said, "Worship Allah (SWT), and worship none along with Him, offer the (five) prescribed compulsory prayers perfectly, pay the compulsory Zakat, and fast the month of Ramadan." The Bedouin said, "By Him, in whose Hands my life is, I will not do more than this." When he (the Bedouin) left, the Prophet (SAW) said, "Whoever likes to see a man of Paradise, then he may look at this man."

This standard points at the fact that extras or overtime are not the standard except on personal volition, and institutionalizing such will amount to over stretching. It will boarder on introducing a new qualitative standard in respect of an indisputably admitted right. And the basic standard is required to be a living culture.

Narrated Anas (RA): I was informed that the Prophet (SAW) had said to Mu'adh, "Whoever will meet Allah (SWT) without associating anything in worship with Him will go to Paradise." Mu'adh asked the Prophet (SAW), "Should I not inform the people of this good news?" The Prophet (SAW) replied, "No, I am afraid, lest they should depend on it (absolutely)."

This is because all men are born believers until the parents colour them. No one will cross over his *Qadr*. Declaration of faith is a SURE license for Jannah except again if he abandons it by burning in the form of apostasy. But the share in the fire will be according to overweight of evil records. Safety from fire will be according to the degree of good deeds. And none will have been possible without the mercy of Allah (SWT) which outweighs His anger. This guiding principle amounts to the practical doing of a believer's best in the religion. And Allah (SWT) loves those who strive – on the defined terms.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "None of you should say, 'O Allah! Forgive me if You wish' or 'Bestow Your mercy on me if You wish' or 'Provide me with means of subsistence if You wish' but he should be firm in his request, for Allah (SWT) does what He wills and nobody can force Him (to do anything). The middle path that is the straight path is not free from trials. But this does not call for excesses to be used as the standard."

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "Leave me as I leave you for the people who were before you were ruined because of their questions and their differences over their Prophets. So, if I forbid you to do something, then keep away from it. And if I order you to do something, then do of it as much as you can."

These will cover obligatory and voluntary actions.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "People will not stop asking questions till they say, 'This is Allah (SWT), the Creator of everything, then who created Allah?'"

This is a cautionary guidance against exceeding limits defined. Going beyond is inconsequential and risky apart from the likely difficulty, no matter how straight, solid and impressive it may appear. Thus, we have a practical clarification report.

Narrated Aisha (RA): Whenever Allah's Messenger (SAW) ordered the Muslims to do something, he used to order them deeds which were easy for them to do, (according to their strength and endurance). They said, "O Allah's Apostle (SAW)! We are not like you. Allah has forgiven your past and future sins." So Allah's Apostle (SAW) became angry and it was apparent on his face. He said, "I am the most Allah fearing and know Allah better than all of you do."

Moderation within convenient ability is not only right but absolutely safe. Ambition can be very risky. This is a most worthy caution against the spirit of practicing for ego show or racing against another person. The case is not different, when some adjustments are applied trickishly by a believer.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): A group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (SAW) asking how the Prophet (SAW) worshipped Allah (SWT), and when they were informed about that, they considered their worship insufficient and said, "Where are we from the Prophet (SAW) as his past and future sins have been forgiven." Then one of them said, "I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever." The other said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said, "I will keep away from the women and will not marry forever." Allah's Apostle (SAW) came to them and said, "Are you the same people who said so and so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah (SWT) and more afraid

of Him than you, yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers).”

So, exceptional performance is not the standard or the invitation. And the safety guard is knowledge.

Narrated Mu’awiya ibn Abi Sufyan (RA): During a sermon I heard the Prophet (SAW) saying, “If Allah (SWT) wants to do a favour to somebody, He bestows on him the gift of understanding the Qur’an and Sunnah.”

Knowledge of the religion is compulsory. It must be sought by each and every one. Thus, the torch bearers for guidance are the learned, the scholars who keep to the limits, by instruction and practice. As Leaders among leaders in other areas of livelihood, if they are non-existent, the ignorant will take their place. If they hesitate to guide (not abusing or merely criticizing) they will face severe punishment. If they guide wrongly, they will sweep a lot away along to the displeasure of Allah (SWT). Those in authority and those endowed with riches depend on the foundation of guidance they provide.

And by the mercy of Allah (SWT) we have been blessed with a historical example, in Abu Huraira (RA).

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): People say that I have narrated many Hadiths. Had it not been for two verses in the Qur’an, I would not have narrated a single hadith, and the verses are: Verily those who conceal the clear sign and the guidance which We have sent down ... (up to) ... Most Merciful. (Qur’an 2:159-160)

This was the spirit and orientation of a close companion of the Prophet (SAW). The challenge of keeping within the boundaries was burdensome enough because of the

fear of exceeding or being the excuse for exceeding. And both Imams Bukhari and his student Muslim followed in these footsteps. That is why the collection of Bukhari is accorded the superior status of the first best reference after the Qur'an.

And Abu Huraira (RA) was not only cautious but very much so, in order not to either mislead or divide the believers.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): I have memorized two kinds of knowledge from Allah's Apostle (SAW). I have propagated one of them to you and if I propagated the second, then my pharynx (throat) would be cut (i.e. killed).

What have been propagated is known, like the difference between Wajib and Haram. What have not been are not known and they are difficult to bear to the point of attracting opposition to him. It is uncommon. Of course it will be attractive BUT what is the certainty of its safety (when it is commonly available) for whatever is deduced or assumed to be rightly belonging to the knowledge? This was a close companion who neither traded in the market nor worked on farmland but was contented with whatever the Messenger of Allah (SAW) could provide him. And when he complained of having forgotten some things he had learnt, Rasul (SAW) with the grace of Allah (SWT) recovered him fully.

This leads us to WARNINGS against excesses or transgressions that were the fears that guarded Abu Huraira (RA), Imams Bukhari and Muslim, as examples.

Narrated Ali (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "Do not tell a lie against me for whoever tells a lie against me (intentionally) then he will surely enter the Hellfire."

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) does not need further assistance after him, beyond what he had completely set down. This is followed by another security guide.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “None of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind.”

It will as a result be misleading if not straying, to even equally love any other person like the Rasul (SAW). The experience of Umar (RA) was a good pointer. When he expressed half of his love and more to the Messenger of Allah (SAW), it was not enough for his faith until Rasul (SAW) came above all.

This burden for the knowledgeable leads to logical challenges, to keep within the standard limits of guidance.

Narrated Hudhaifa ibn Al-Yaman (RA): I said, “O Allah’s Apostle (SAW)! We were living in ignorance and in an extremely worst atmosphere, then Allah (SWT) brought us this good (i.e. Islam), will there be any evil after this good?” He said, “Yes.” I said, “Will there be any good after that evil?” He replied, “Yes, but it will be tainted (not pure).” I asked, “What will be its taint?” He replied, “(There will be) some people who will guide others not according to my tradition. You will approve of some of their deeds and disapprove of some others.”

Thus, it is not only a personal challenge to every believer but more or especially so for the religious leaders, to distinguish. It will be sheepish for a believer to simply find comfort in leaving all the burden of what is appropriate guidance in the hands of a leader. The standard has been set and everybody is questionable on and for what is not clear. Rasul (SAW) is not to be replaced by any believer.

Another challenge, relates to not breaking the Ummah.

Narrated Abu Dharr (RA): I heard the Prophet (SAW) saying, “If somebody accuses another of *Fusuq* (by calling him *Fasiq* i.e. a wicked person) or accuses him of *Kufr*

(i.e. disbelieve), such an accusation will revert to him (i.e. the accuser) if his companion (the accused) is innocent.”

Narrated Thabit ibn Ad-Dahhak (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “... and cursing a believer is like murdering him, and whoever accuses a believer of disbelief then it is as if he had killed him.”

The caution cannot be greater especially against our common experience by some exuberant religious teachers/leaders in this country. And the eventual gravity of erring from the middle path that is the straight path is not hidden.

Narrated Abdullah (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “I am your predecessor at the lake – Fount (*Kauthar*) – and some men amongst you will be brought to me when I will try to hand them some water, they will be pulled away from me by force whereupon I will say, ‘O Lord, my companions!’ Then the Almighty will say, ‘You do not know what they did after you left, they introduced new things into the religion after you.’”

Inescapably, the knowledgeable, the learned, the scholars are the only hanger for keeping within the limits, for remaining on the middle path that is the straight path. And while every believer has the personal duty and responsibility to acquire religious knowledge, the leaders in this respect have an enormous duty and responsibility for the proper guidance of the Ummah. And because religion in Islam is the basis for entire livelihood, it will be insufficient to provide the Ummah only on religious rites.

This foundation poses related critical challenges to the *Ulama* of Nigeria. The first is that, what is right and clearly defined is agreeable upon by all parties, irrespective of whatever differences any party may associate with another party. Declaration for admission into the fold of Islam is the same. The requirements, structure and

procedure of salat cannot be mixed up. The portions for charity are not for adjustments. The fasting in the month of Ramadan will remain compulsory. And for whoever is able to perform the Pilgrimage, the rites and procedures are the same. The bases of these and for these are the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (SAW). Therefore, whatever differences may arise in OTHER AREAS are EXPLAINABLE by the bearers and leaders of such differences TO WHOEVER IS INTERESTED.

For the Ummah of Nigeria, every believer is entitled to this clarity of identity. The present situation where the followers of the different leaders that at times even openly criticize one another is not worthy of the duty and responsibility of seeking for knowledge to establish the truth on each believer and especially the leaders. The scholars will need to champion this clarity to the followers and others. This will earn admissible difference deserving respect. And it will free unsatisfied followers from the train, blindly. In consequence, the spirit of animalism driving ignorant believers will be drastically reduced. This is because Islam is not for fools or thugs. And it is the basis of making the personal search for and knowing Allah (SWT) compulsory. The Qur'an goes further to challenge disputers IF THEY HAVE TRIED LIVING ISLAM AND FOUND IT TO BE UNTRUE.

For example, an Ahmadi Muslim should clearly know, appreciate his differences with an Izala or Tariqa believer. Even a Shi'ite that is more politically oriented than religious, should know and be known for what he is. The necessary beneficial fallout will be that miscreants who can only mobilize ignorant followership and are equally ignorant of the Qur'an and Sunnah can be easily weeded out. The Ummah will be saved of this avoidable hazard. And this is a NECESSARY duty or obligation resting on all. Such ambitious miscreants can easily be discovered and avoided at will by individual believers. And the real scholars will soundly disprove them.

This cannot be sustained with the common fashion of religious enlightenment only in the month of Ramadan. Indeed, intermittent public lectures will need to be structured or ordered towards realizing an improved clarification of the total perspective of Islam from the standpoint of the scholars or respective leaders. This was what led to the foundation TAFSIRS we now use today. The Tariqa of Tijjaniyya is for instance blessed with a Tafsir of one of its leaders. But how many members and even seniors are conversant with it? How many use it? How many have or are using it, to brighten or relive the experience of the leader of their differences? The Izala have closely gotten the Tafsir by late Qadi Mahmoud Gumi. But what is its level of availability and use among the members? It is inconsequential and backward to be drumming that the Qadi did it when it is in no use or reference. The NECESSITY for this rests in the historical responsibility for scholars to establish the continuous relevance of Islam to changing times – **ALONG WITH THE NON NEGOTIABLE PROVISIONS.**

It is this action and response that will check the **IRRESPONSIBLE DIVISION OF THE UMMAH.** And in our case, safety from much worse tendencies, because of our general ignorance and carelessness.

This will be the most responsible way for living the best model for mankind, who enjoin good and forbid evil. And as fellow Nigerians, with Christians the respectable window of respect, association and collaboration will be built. A priest will not be suggesting what is in the forbidden region to be adopted or hesitate to support what is common to both. Indeed, our leaders in politics and business will have the necessary bearing for building a better and stronger society for the prosperity of all.

The limits that we must keep have been well defined and we need not generate creations or innovations within the limits.

And in this course, the leaderships in structured institutions like Islamic universities, Centres, Schools or Courses have no less duty or responsibilities compared to Imams of mosques, Missionaries or Ramadan month Teachers. The much larger and influential class of Teachers in the informal sector like Almajiri schools etc. are to equally bear the burden of this CONTINUOUS CLEARING FOR THE STRAIGHT PATH THAT IS THE MIDDLE PATH.

CHAPTER 5

THE FOUNDATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND LEADERSHIP IN ISLAM

THE FOUNDATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND LEADERSHIP IN ISLAM

Before leaders there must be followers. It is the prosperity of followership that warrants or justifies leadership. A following that lacks leadership is worse than a pack of cards. And a leadership that does not connect to the common essence of the collectivity can at best be selfish and dictatorial. And with time it will fail to be sustained and collapse because the ingredients of uncommonness that oppress the ingredients that are common will consistently be resisted until they have to give up.

In every community or large society of identity, the elements, ingredients or principles of citizenship or membership and the attending leadership are: being grown and as a result not clearly established; they are established but unknown; they are established, known but not imbibed or lived on; or they are established, known and lived on. Indeed, even when the last case is the situation, it will need to be sustained. But the worst states are either where the terms are not established or unknown. The people will simply be living a helpless history. However, for those who have and do not live it out of ignorance or carelessness, it is foolish of them to complain of difficulties that are justifiable. You cannot have tools for serving your needs and expect that the skills for using them will not be required. And it amounts to irresponsibility for those who have it, know it and ignore living it. All communities and societies strive towards knowledge and living the identity principles established for themselves.

In Islam, the terms focus on believers only but also serve or are safe for non-Muslims because there is no compulsion in the religion of Islam and every individual shall account for himself at the end of the day.

THE CITIZENSHIP BASIS FOR A BELIEVER

Narrated Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA): I heard Allah's Apostle (SAW) saying, "Deeds (their correctness and rewards) depend upon intentions, and every person gets but what he has intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly benefits, or for a woman to marry his emigration is for what he emigrated for."

It is part of religion, to court a woman for marriage, to do business or attend meetings or carry out an assignment, that are legal. Each attracts rewards according to its status. For instance, the person who is on worldly visit to Makkah and goes to perform the *tawaf* is not the same with the person who went to perform Umrah or Hajj. The intention and even detail content of the procedures and activities differ. This is within the degree of permissible things. Therefore, in the relationship of a believer to what activities he engages in, when, where, how and with whom, the established standards of the straight path that is the middle path must not be compromised BECAUSE HIS BEINGNESS IS COVERED BY HIS FAITH AND RELIGION.

Narrated Abdullah ibn 'Amr (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a *Muhajir* (emigrant) is the one who gives up (abandons) all what Allah (SWT) has forbidden."

So, a believer must as a rule, not be a threat to fellow believers. It is for that reason part of worship to serve effectively as a safety valve in his political, social and economic relationships with fellow believers. One can only imagine where ignorance drives the believer. He will become a negative factor instead of a positive one in the life and history of the Ummah. And if he accidentally occupies a position of leadership, the consequences of igniting confusion and conflicts will be possible. And if it gets the ladder of self-serving ego massage, that will be an innovative

foundation for sustaining what is questionably evil, because it contradicts the middle path that is the straight path.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.”

In apt summary, jealousy and envy between believers are unwelcome and destructive of the attainment of Iman. Who will be in a business and prefer to lose? So why should that apply to another? Who will be in authority and enjoy being pulled down or denied minimum support when and where he is right? So, why will one adopt such for another fellow believer? That will be contrary to the tenets of Islam. Who will welcome or enjoy the abuse of his marital relationship by another party or dishonourable relationship with his mother, sister and another? So, why engage in such with those of others? This principle has the benefit of not just strengthening the Ummah in terms of purity and culture, it provides a standard cultural basis for non-Muslims to recognize black sheep among members because *Zina* is prohibited in Islam. And for those who care, express provisions are available for sanctioning all forms of *Zina*.

Narrated Abdullah ibn ‘Amr (RA): A man asked the Prophet (SAW), “What sort of deeds or (what qualities of) Islam are good?” The Prophet (SAW) replied, “To feed (the poor) and greet those you know and those you do not know.”

A believer must therefore know that the base or minimum requirement of him as GOOD as against Better or Best is that, he has an obligation towards the weak in the society, regardless of religious identity and courtesy for all, those known, those not known, those below in rank, equals and superiors. This economic and social relationship principle automatically provides security of support for the personal sustenance of all members of the society in the hands of Muslims even when they

live with non-Muslims. This is a pro-mankind principle. Thus, it is clearly unIslamic to have a believer or a group of believers against the basic survival of fellow human beings by denying them the courtesy of greetings or physical (food and drink) needs. Moreover, they are prohibited against giving them what they must not give themselves.

Narrated Abu Dharr (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “The rich are in fact the poor (little rewarded) on the Day of Resurrection except him whom Allah (SWT) gives wealth which he gives (in charity) to his right, left, front and back, and does good deeds with it.”

Given, the critical role of material conditions for the prosperity of society and mankind, resources are not to be hoarded by believers against the need of mankind. Those who are blessed are keeping the beautiful trust of Allah (SWT) because all things belong to Him. And since all mankind are available for the compassion of Allah (SWT) like we get sunlight or rains or breast milk without restrictions based on belief, believers are enjoined to promote this compassion. The distinction of the role of believers will be that, the resources are legally acquired and disbursed on legal things. That makes the Blessings of Allah (SWT) ignite in the society **IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT UNBELIEVERS MAY PREFER.**

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person is like a warrior fighting for Allah’s cause.”

This is a window of Jihad for believers. The Prophet (SAW) who was specifically ordered to carry out some holy wars is no more. Those who joined him in that faced great trials of opportunity for martyrdom. These were believers who benefited from the crusades if they survived and if they were slayed, they were happily with Allah

(SWT). The Prophet (SAW) established that although the living wished them to be alive, they preferred to be with Allah. And Allah (SWT) revealed that they were not dead but alive in pleasant livelihood close to His Throne. Rasul (SAW) wished he could be martyred over and over again.

For us, in the following generations, the window is not absolutely closed. It involves commitment of our properly earned resources for the care of the weak among mankind, the widows and the poor. This logically admits the orphans.

The principles that compel exertion of physical and mental abilities to create wealth and the purposeful circulation of these goodly, for the general benefits of humanity go to define further, the concrete basis of citizenship duties to meet such universal rights and privileges of others.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "There is a (compulsory) sadaqa (charity) to be given for every joint of the human body (as a sign of gratitude to Allah (SWT)) every day the sun rises. To judge justly between two persons is regarded as sadaqa and to help a man concerning his riding animal by helping him to ride it or by lifting his baggage on to it, is also regarded as sadaqa, and (saying) a good word is also sadaqa, and every step taken on one's way to offer the compulsory prayers (in the mosque) is also sadaqa and to remove a harmful thing from the way is also sadaqa."

This scope of definition is fundamental and not excusable because it engages the raw all-free or all-available basic physical and mental capacities of the believers for the good of themselves, fellow believers and all others. Everybody can greet a fellow human being or reconcile disagreeing parties or help a road user etc. Children can do these, adolescents can do these, adults and the elderly can equally do these, regardless of whether they are rich or not, men or women. This foundation fabric for

the sociological wellbeing of any society in which Muslims live is undoubtedly a positive necessity for peace and prosperity.

From this purely sociological foundation connects the economic calling on believers for citizenship roles.

Narrated the grandfather of Abu Burda (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Every Muslim has to give in charity.” The people asked, “O Allah’s Apostle! If someone has nothing to give, what will he do?” He said, “He should work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity (from what he earns).” The people further asked, “If he cannot find even that?” He replied, “He should help the needy who appeal for help.” Then the people asked, “If he cannot do that?” He replied, “Then he should perform good deeds and keep away from evil deeds and this will be regarded as charitable deeds.”

Narrated Az-Zubair ibn Al-Awwan (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “It is better for anyone of you to take a rope (and cut) and bring a bundle of wood (from the forest) over his back and sell it and Allah (SWT) will save his face (from the Hellfire) because of that, rather than to ask the people who may give him or not.”

These set of guidance establishes the fundamental duty of engaging in economic activities for the benefit of oneself and others **FOR ALL OF THOSE WHO ARE CAPABLE OF DOING SO**. This critical connection between this worldly affair and the spiritual is what defines living Islam.

And to finally ensure that believers are not only properly hooked up to this but consistently too, a religious obligation seals it, irrespective of the cardinal obligation of Zakat for those who are well endowed with surpluses.

Narrated Ibn Umar (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) has made Sadaqat-ul-Fitr obligatory (and it is), either one Sa' of barley or one Sa' of dates (and its payment is obligatory) on young and old people and on free men as well as slaves.

This definition compels catering for the weak under your immediate responsibility and eliminates carelessness or irresponsibility. Moreover, it is ordinarily expected that the beneficiaries of this giving or charity will be non-members of the immediate family. But this does not have to be so, in the case of other charity.

Zainab, the wife of Ibn Mas'ud (RA) said, "O Prophet of Allah! Today you ordered people to give alms and I had an ornament and intended to give it as alms but Ibn Mas'ud said that he and his children deserved it more than anybody else." The Prophet (SAW) replied, "Ibn Mas'ud had spoken the truth. Your husband and your children have more right to it than anybody else."

The principle and practice of sadaqa in Islam is not necessarily to the exclusion of the immediate members of the family who are equally in need of support. But economic role and value of a believer's citizenship does not stop with those who are able to acquire materials of economic value for the wellbeing of themselves and the general society.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "If any Muslim plants any plant and a human being or an animal eats of it, he will be rewarded as if he had given that much in charity."

Thus if a believer has not amassed resources for the common application of Jihad definition as explained above, the planting of non-poisonous trees is another opening. These are to be for the free availability of their fruits to mankind and even lucky animals. It is therefore logically and sensibly most embarrassing and contradictory, to find believers being hesitant or failing to plant trees EVEN WHEN

FACING THE THREAT OF DESERT ENCROACHMENT. It is not a national, global challenge to plant trees but a most rewarding worship especially for those who are not rich. This world is provided for the safety of all of mankind without compulsion of belief identity AFTER THE COMPLETE REVELATIONS OF THE STANDARD AND THE EXAMPLE BY THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (SAW).

Narrated Aisha (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Gabriel continued to recommend me about treating the neighbours kindly and politely so much that I thought he would order me to make them as my heirs.”

This definition amounts to recognizing and supporting the neighbour to every extent, provided the believer remains within the permissible degrees of what is legal. The neighbour comes next to the immediate family. The neighbour on the right hand comes before the one on the left hand. The closest in physical proximity comes before the next. And persons or households up to forty in each cardinal direction are the constituents of a believer’s neighbours. Why and how or on what basis will a believer justifiably become a socio-economic burden or threat to a fellow human being who is not a Muslim? The only basis will be the ignorance of the Muslim, the non-Muslim or both parties.

This does not mean that the believer should be foolish or fail to evaluate things properly. The direction is that; this relationship is the standard. And there is no room for the suspicion of being misunderstood by those who do not share the same faith. This positive orientation is the platform of granting the benefit of whatever doubt may exist. It is only AFTER this attempt that a redefinition may be entertained. This is because prospective beneficiaries may be rightly or wrongly suspicious. And humans who are ruled by ignorance are subject to acting like animals.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “A believer is not stung twice (by something) out of one and the same hole.”

A believer is required to have knowledge and act positively but not foolishly. Thus, if every Muslim were to know these and live by these orientation, how better shall the Ummah be and positively impact on non-Muslims in this country Allah (SWT) has destined for all of us?

LEADERSHIP BASIS FOR A BELIEVER

The summary of the citizenship requirements above provides the very necessary platform for leadership because in Islam the leaders are not subject to a different kind of rules from the followers.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith:

1. The one to whom Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) become dearer than anything else.
2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah’s sake.
3. Who hates to revert to disbelief after Allah (SWT) has saved him from it and he hates to be thrown into (Hell) fire.”

The leader will become one, only if the foundation is as a Muslim, he has learnt, knows, and strives to make Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) FIRST. And this means referring all matters to what they have decided on. It will amount to non-negotiation on what they make obligatory and preference for what they encourage. Ignorance covered by dressing or association or name-calling alone are therefore not sufficient. This is why basic knowledge of the religion is compulsory, continual

learning is encouraged and association or consultation with the learned is the best, except for leaders who will become foolish and wicked.

The leader is accordingly required to attend to the followers in the name of Allah and for the sake of Allah (SWT), even as the followers are required to attend to him for the sake of Allah (SWT). There is no obligation between them over illegal things that are clearly defined. Thus, personal, regional or sectional prejudices are cancelled. He is enjoined to be just and they are enjoined to be obedient. And Allah (SWT) Who is the uniting point and Commander in all affairs intervenes (permits) as He wills. But no one will be free at the end, from justice. If the leader is unjust the followers will not be cheated. If they are unjust, the leader will not be cheated. A typical example was the case or experience of Musa (AS). He was alleged to be of unhealthy body. Then when he undressed to take a bath, Allah (SWT) rolled his clothes away (with the piece of rock he had placed on them) to the presence of witnesses among his enemies. He followed it to recover his clothes and his goodly body became evident.

Both parties are required to stick or hold firmly for certainty of safety and fear of loss. These will make them or either party taste the power and love of Allah (SWT). And leadership in Islam is not an imposture. The leader is only the first by the role or duty of taking others along, to the same goal or destination. And the best example was set by the Messenger of Allah (SAW).

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): When Allah (SWT) revealed the verse: Warn your nearest kinsmen. Allah's Apostle (SAW) got up and said, "O people of Quraish! Buy (i.e. save) yourselves (from the Hellfire) as I cannot save you from Allah's punishment. O Bani Abd Manaf! I cannot save you from Allah's punishment. O Safiya, (the aunt of Allah's Apostle (SAW))! I cannot save you from Allah's

punishment. O Fatima bint Muhammad! Ask me anything from my wealth, but I cannot save you from Allah's punishment."

Hence, the leader is to lead to success like himself is committed to. He has no power whatsoever to protect a wrong doing person who is so by unbelief. Before Allah (SWT) all creatures stand in need. And only those who accept faith and work accordingly can expect appropriate rewards. There is no room for doing other than what I do. When that happens, the leader will fully bear his burden.

The logical and sensible deduction from this principle is the moral challenge for anybody to be in leadership. It is smelly in Islamic tradition to have someone who had been a cheat to others either by physical violence, theft etc. to become a champion critique of another person or leader. This may be understandable in another culture or society but not appreciable in Islam. This is because SHYNESS is part of Iman and it is the head of the over seventy branches of Iman. The positive benefit of this restraint is that the person is available for support, given previous experience. And it does not even sound sensible for the thief of yesterday to make a good judge today. To judge requires the combination of the attributes of knowledge and freedom from similar wrong. But in a setting where shyness is inconsequential it will only take more time for shame NOT TO BE EMBARRASSING.

The guide posts for livelihood are therefore the same for both the leader and the followers or citizens.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "Avoid the seven great destructive sins." The people enquired, "O Allah's Apostle! What are they?" He said, "To join others in worship along with Allah (SWT), to practice sorcery, to kill the life which Allah (SWT) has forbidden except for a just cause (according to Islamic law), to eat up *Riba* (usury), to eat up an orphan's wealth, to give (your) back

to the enemy and fleeing from the battlefield at the time of fighting, and to accuse chaste women who never even think of anything touching chastity and are good believers.”

This set of manifesto for both the leaders and citizens captures the nerves of the great sins in Islam. These are either so expressly identified in the Qur'an or Hadiths, are so, by the prescription of specific sanctions or are so connected. Thus, it does not matter, whether believers live amongst themselves or among others, their individual orientation and leadership are required to stick to the doing of good deeds and avoiding evil and encouraging others to do so. They have no justification whatsoever to support or do the contrary. Doing so blots their identity as believers in the Oneness of Allah (SWT) and the perfect guidance by Muhammad (SAW).

So, the citizenship and leadership of or by believers goes to develop and project goodness for the general benefits of humanity. The Ummah can only achieve this by uniform orientation.

Narrated Abu Musa (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “A faithful believer to a faithful believer is like the bricks of a wall, enforcing each other.” While (saying that) the Prophet (SAW) clasped his hands, by interlocking his fingers.

The methodology is that every believer helps another – making it easier for the leader to move the Ummah forward.

Thus, the statement of the Prophet (SAW): Religion is to be sincere and true to Allah (SWT) (i.e. obeying Him, attributing to Him what He deserves and doing Jihad for His sake); to Allah's Apostle (SAW) (i.e. to respect him greatly and to fight on his behalf both in his life and after his death and to follow his traditions); to the rulers of the Muslims (i.e. to help them in their job of leading Muslims to the right and alarm them if they are heedless); and to the Muslim commons (i.e. to be merciful to

them). The positions or roles of leadership and citizenship in Islam are therefore self-enforcing FOR ALLAH (SWT). This is why leadership is more of guardianship.

Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Every one of you is a guardian and every one of you is responsible (for his wards). A ruler is a guardian and is responsible (for his subjects); a man is a guardian of his family and responsible (for them); a wife is a guardian of her husband’s house and she is responsible (for it); a slave is a guardian of his master’s property and is responsible (for that). Beware! All of you are guardians and are responsible (for your wards).”

This setting will not allow for arrogance in the Ummah except for the misguided. Where the leader knows that his burden is being lessened by the consistent following of other believers based on knowledge and can be corrected, the followers cannot afford to be blocks and stones. The followership will be living and not dead, where anything that comes from the leader is considered sacrosanct. This is because the basis of the religion is the same for all. Every and all leaders, whether in the rites of religion, in society, in politics or economy must know that their strength and rightness relate to the right support they get.

Narrated Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Allah never sends a Prophet or gives the caliphate to a Caliph but he (the Prophet or Caliph) has two groups of advisers: a group advising to do good and exhorts him to do it, and the other group advising to do evil and exhorts him to do it. But the protected person (against such evil) is the one protected by Allah (SWT).”

This is only possible if the foundation is right knowledge and discipline which attracts similar right knowledge and discipline for strengthening the truth and guidance for the Ummah. If the leader is ignorant and the followers are equally ignorant, they cannot help building what is wrong. The blind leading the blind. The

interaction between the leader and the followers is not that of drumming support for whatever the leader produces.

In the lifetime or history of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), Umar (RA) was a good example of such support. Allah (SWT) for instance agreed by a follow up instructional revelation after Umar (RA) suggested the use of hijab by the wives of the Prophet (SAW), for decency and chastity. On another occasion, Allah (SWT) instructed on prayer at the spot where Prophet Ibrahim (AS) prayed in Ka'aba. This was after the suggestion of Umar (RA) to Muhammad (SAW). In the case of Uthman (RA), he performed a perfect ablution and strengthened the rite for believers along with educating them, as the Messenger of Allah (SAW) had done.

Narrated Sa'd (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "O Ibn Al-Khattab! By Him in Whose Hands my life is, whenever Satan sees you taking a way, he follows a way other than yours!"

This is an excellent witness for the righteousness of Umar (RA). The same Umar (RA) had often wondered over the exceptional recognition of the righteousness of Abu Bakr (RA). Then Allah (SWT) offered an opportunity. The Prophet (SAW) asked for support to execute a jihad. Umar (RA) offered half of all he had and kept half to sustain his family. The Prophet (SAW) congratulated him. Then Abu Bakr As-Siddiq appeared with a wrapping with blanket as his contribution. The Prophet (SAW) asked him about it. He submitted that it was all he had. When Rasul (SAW) further enquired over what he had left for the sustenance of his family, he said they will make do with Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW). Umar (RA) then submitted that indeed Abu Bakr (RA) was far ahead of him.

And the basis of this support and guidance is knowledge. Not ignorance. Not tradition. Not title. Not arrogance. Not brute force. Not manipulation.

Narrated Mu'awiya (RA): I heard Allah's Apostle (SAW) saying, "If Allah (SWT) wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion. I am just a distributor, but the grant is from Allah (SWT). (And remember) that this nation (true Muslims) will keep following Allah's teachings strictly and they will not be harmed by anyone going on a different path till Allah's order (Day of Judgement) is established."

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "Listen and obey (your Chief) even if an Ethiopian whose head is like a raisin were made your Chief."

Narrated Ibn Umar (RA): When the earliest emigrants came to Al-Usba, a place in Quba, before the arrival of the Prophet (SAW), Salim, the slave of Abu Hudhaifa (RA) who knew the Qur'an more than the others used to lead them in prayer.

The leader must therefore be knowledgeable even if he is not the most knowledgeable. In our circumstance as Nigerians, any leader from among the Ummah need be knowledgeable in the Qur'an, Hadith and secular life, to protect the interest of the Ummah and those who are not part of the Ummah. Leaders to be supported should not be ignorant people. Whatever they possess must be in addition to religious knowledge. How then can they not be in the forefront of promoting whatever will enhance religious knowledge? This is because imparting knowledge is a primary duty. But where even the bearer of the head of believers is ignorant, a traditionist and even a criminal is in leadership position, believers can only get losses.

Steering the affairs of the Ummah must also not be on difficult or discouraging terms. The objective is for the average person to conveniently pass through.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Facilitate things to people (concerning religious matters) and do not make it hard for them and give them good tidings and do not make them run away (from Islam).”

Leaders are not to be overbearing by themselves or the path they pass people through. The Prophet (SAW) was of the practice of repeating a statement thrice to enable proper understanding. Clarity and emphasis is the sound basis for learning. For instance, in Kaduna State, when the government was to introduce a new outfit to manage safety and sanitation, it started by sensitizing the public for some months. The government of Saudi Arabia considered a law amendment to permit women to drive cars in 2017 against implementing it in 2018. Whatever is right, beneficial should be learnt to last fulfillingly. It was characteristic of Aisha (RA) to ask the Prophet (SAW) again on an unclear matter until she understood it.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “If I had not found it hard for my followers or the people, I would have ordered them to clean their teeth with *Siwak* for every prayer.”

The leader should strive to make following easy for the followers. The Straight Path is also the Middle Path and not the extreme. This is because consistency builds a tradition, a culture. And a standard of what is right begins from what is within the ability of everyone.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) used to pray a short prayer (in congregation) but used to offer it in a perfect manner.

This does not mean that good things have no expansive scope, for those who can, where it exists.

Narrated Abdullah ibn Mughaffal Al-Muzani (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, thrice, "There is a prayer between the two Adhans (Adhan and Iqama)," and added, "For the one who wants to pray."

A leader must therefore make a clear distinction between what is regular and what is not. What is regular is what gets institutionalized. What is also permissible need not be institutionalized as it will become a super-structure. And it will amount to adjusting the standard.

The trial of authority trust with the leader is not for whimsical employment to his prejudices or even weaknesses.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger."

This was typically demonstrated by the best model for guidance, the Messenger of Allah (SAW).

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): A Bedouin stood up and started making water in the mosque (urinating). The people caught him but the Prophet (SAW) ordered them to leave him and to pour a bucket of water over the place where he passed the urine. The Prophet (SAW) then said, "You have been sent to make things easy and not to make them difficult."

The leader will always consider many options and give preference to what is right and convenient for the followers, not destructive. He must act mercifully. The mosque was then just growing in history. It was not even built as today but demarcated and covered with palm leaves. The sacredness was not impressive on strangers. It will be insane to do so today by anyone in a mosque, a church,

synagogue or temple. This level of patience followed by proper evaluation before a decision is what distinguishes a leader who is a believer. Instigating followers to resist another appointee to lead prayer will amount to excesses.

Therefore, Allah (SWT) remains and must continue to be the standard for directing affairs and being directed.

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA): Somebody asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Who is the best among the people?" Allah's Apostle (SAW) replied, "A believer who strives his utmost in Allah's cause with his life and property." They asked, "Who is next?" He replied, "A believer who stays in one of the mountain paths worshipping Allah (SWT) and leaving the people secure from his mischief."

In a different narration, it is the person who mixes with people and endures their mischief. Either way, the leader must avoid reproducing himself when he guards on the straight path that is the middle path.

And from the close companions of the Prophet (SAW), we have starling examples of leadership in different spheres.

Narrated Al-Ma'rur (RA): At Al-Rabadha, I met Abu Dharr who was wearing a cloak and his slave too, was wearing a similar one. I asked about the reason for it. He replied, "I abused a person by calling his mother with bad names, the Prophet (SAW) said to me, 'O Abu Dharr! Did you abuse him by calling his mother with bad names? You still have some characteristics of Ignorance. Your slaves are your brothers and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has his brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them to do things beyond their capacity and if you do so help them.'"

Leadership should not be overbearing on the followers. The difference is by responsibility and not appearances. A leader is not so or more by making the follower look different. Looks or appearances can be safely sacrificed. Eating, drinking and dressing are not the required differences. It is rather the order of their relationship. The leader can join public transport, wear common clothes, etc.

Another example is in the economic sphere.

Abu Talha (RA) said to Allah's Apostle (SAW), "O Allah's Apostle! Allah the Blessed, the Superior says: By no means shall you attain righteousness, unless you spend (in charity) of that which you love. And no doubt, Bairuha garden is the most beloved of all my property to me. So I want to give it in charity in Allah's cause. I expect its reward from Allah. O Allah's Apostle! Spend it where Allah (SWT) makes you think is feasible!" On that Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "Bravo! It is useful property. I have heard what you have said (O Abu Talha), and I think it would be proper if you give it to your kith and kin." Abu Talha said, "I will do so, O Allah's Apostle!" Then Abu Talha distributed that garden amongst his relatives and his cousins.

Narrated Ibn Umar (RA): When Umar got a piece of land in Khaibar, he came to the Prophet (SAW) saying, "I have got a piece of land better than which I have never got. So what do you advise me regarding it?" The Prophet (SAW) said, "If you wish you can keep it as an endowment to be used for charitable purposes." So Umar (RA) gave the land in charity (i.e. as an endowment on the condition that the land would neither be sold nor given out as present, nor bequeathed) and its yield would be used for the poor, the kinsmen, the emancipation of slaves, Jihad and for guests and travellers. And its administrator could eat in a reasonable just manner, and he also could feed his friends without intending to be wealthy (store anything for himself) by its means.

These two cases reveal the rubbing between a leader, his followers who are also his supporters in righteousness, in practical economic life, for the benefit of themselves and the Ummah FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH (SWT). This redefines riches or to be wealthy. You are more by giving as against accumulating.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Riches does not mean having a great amount of property but riches is self-contentment.”

In the same vein, there can be dignity in poverty.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “The poor person is not the one who asks for a morsel or two (of meals) from the others, but the poor is the one who has nothing and is ashamed to beg from others.”

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “The poor person is not the one who goes round the people and ask them for a mouthful or two (of meals) or a date or two but the poor is that who has not enough (money) to satisfy his needs and whose condition is not known to others, that others may give him something in charity, and who does not beg of people.”

This special categorical definition of the poor has a distinct possible benefit that the leaders and other believers can take advantage of. A common one is that, charity to them attracts a special scale of reward. Another has to do with their pleading with Allah (SWT) for the Ummah and especially the leaders.

Narrated Mus’ab ibn Sa’ad (RA): Once Sa’ad (ibn Abi Waqqas) thought that he was superior to those who were below him in rank. On that the Prophet (SAW) said, “You gain no victory or livelihood except through the (blessings and invocations of) the poor amongst you.”

Leaders in particular must as a result heed specific warnings over and above the burdens of cautions highlighted above.

Narrated Abu Bakr (RA): A man was mentioned before the Prophet (SAW) and another man praised him greatly. The Prophet (SAW) said, “May Allah’s Mercy be on you! You have cut the neck of your friend.” The Prophet repeated this sentence many times and said, “If it is indispensable for anyone of you to praise someone, then he should say, ‘I think that he is so and so’ if he really thinks that he is such. Allah (SWT) is the One Who will take his accounts (as He knows his reality) and no one can sanctify anybody before Allah.”

The praising or flattering of leaders in their faces is therefore an abomination. Those who enjoy it live in deceit. It is harmful to the recipients and those who offer it. Ego massaging is not part of responsible leadership in Islam. A leader who does not welcome correction is liable to straying. And if it is for the sake of Allah criticisms are made, the affair is of Allah and should not attract personal grudge. Where the leader resists criticism or correction, he is on the path of extremism, personalizing an affair that is not his. You cannot submit to Allah (SWT) and keep a stake.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “The worst people in the sight of Allah (SWT) on the Day of Resurrection will be the double faced people who appear to some people with one face and to another people with another face.”

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “The signs of a hypocrite are these: whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays (proves to be dishonest).”

These are certainly not fitting attributes for an individual believer or for any leader among believers.

Consequently, it is illogical, senseless and undefendable to have dependable leadership from a believer enmeshed in the crises of moral identity. Allah (SWT) is pure and connects only with the clean. This quality of moral uprightness must flow along with *Ihsan*, which is not achievable without the combination of knowledge and discipline, within the permissible limits of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger, Muhammad (SAW). Where such is found, the leader is not only an embarrassment to the Ummah but those who so appoint or recognize him are gamblers. They are in a trade that will neither benefit their worldly life nor an investment with Allah (SWT). This will be without consequence of regular Hajj performance or fasting. A murderer, a thief and a cultist cannot have sitting place for the identity of a leader of believers. Those who look up to such for leadership and guidance are engaged in an affair that has no rooting in Islam.

Accordingly, such a defiant cannot be suitable for even advising on what is right and beneficial to the Ummah. Their choices and recommendations will inevitably be selfish and a disservice to the Ummah. They will always incline towards family members, relations and those with whom they share the security of their identity. And where such continue to have their way in leadership, only their death will open a window of relief to the society. They will be masters of intrigues, whereas *Ihsan* should be the revolving point for decisions and movement.

Thus, the challenges before the Ummah in our circumstance of Nigeria, is NOT whatever misunderstanding Muslims may suffer in the hands of other Nigerians BUT the commitment to the acquisition of basic or foundation knowledge and the discipline or orientation of *Ihsan*. Then, those who genuinely misunderstand will correct or adjust their understanding. Those who do so out of ignorance will be assisted by fellow objective non-Muslims to clarify and Allah (SWT) will personally take care of the wicked. This challenge is not ideologically and practically different

in respect of our Christian brothers and sisters who share the same foundation doctrines with Muslims. The individual faithfuls need to study and learn the scripture for themselves and connect with any leaders at the level of discipline or actions. Then, we will discover our harmless differences and prosper OUTSIDE THE TRAPPINGS OF INORDINATE AMBITIOUS PREJUDICIAL IMPOSTERS among us Nigerians, either as Muslim or Christian leaders. It is for instance inconceivable to place the conflicts, disagreements and even opposition between Muslims and Christians who believe in one God, have sex outside marriage promoted idol worshipping or cultism promoted, murder promoted, usury promoted as against constant praise and glorification of the Lord. The root is not in the scriptures. The leaders cannot alone on their own become the solution. Every believer, every Christian, will need to learn and know the basics. And they are NOT CONTROVERSIAL. However, because the citizens or followers do not care to know and live the principles two related inevitable consequences are our takings. The first is that leaders cannot insist on the discipline of the followers because they will not want to lose the size of the following they enjoy. It is therefore not for the sake of God but to serve themselves. On the part of the followers, they will not mind even if the leadership indulges like them – beyond the expressly defined limits in the scriptures. This is for instance the logical and sensible explanation of having women already pregnant and admitted for marriage, with followers. And leaders get found to be involved with single and married women among the followers. Indeed, we are beginning to experience the acceptance of same sex relationship in our folds. The leaders cannot resist the temptation of setting us aflame as they enjoy fame and influence, fed by our ignorance and carelessness. No leader can be more religious or holy by destroying peace and understanding. No leader has the mandate to compel others to do what is in variant of the BASIC TENETS OF THE SCRIPTURES. If

we are so alert, we should benefit the leaders with guidance support and be able to JOIN HANDS TO DEAL WITH MISCREANTS across the two religions.

Democracy is what we make of it because it is only a formless name for historical experiences. Those who have nothing to keep swallow whatever is given to them. Those who have, protect themselves against losing what they already have. Those who believe and have the scriptures will either have abandoned them or ignored them for 'pure' democracy. And the inevitable consequence is dissatisfaction and frustration sustained by confusion.

CHAPTER 6

THE STANDARD EXAMPLE OF MUHAMMAD (SAW) THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (SWT)

THE STANDARD EXAMPLE OF MUHAMMAD (SAW) THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (SWT)

The religion of Islam which is submission to Allah (SWT) takes off from salat, after declaration of faith with the mouth. It is the beginning, the most critical and continues to be uppermost in the life of a believer because, it is the best means of connecting with Allah (SWT). And in salat, the position of prostration is the closest. This is why Muhammad (SAW) encourages believers to plea and plea for their legal needs, wants and fancies to Allah (SWT) at all times and in all circumstances. When they do so in a state of cleanliness, it is better. When they do so in salat, it is best. When they do so in prostration, it is closest. And Allah (SWT) accepts all.

And the engagement in salat is FREELY AVAILABLE TO EVERY AND ALL BELIEVERS every second of every twenty-four hours of every day without restrictions. All that is required is that one is alive and sane. Moreover, no intermediary is required for the interaction and efficacy of the relationship between a believer and Allah (SWT). Over and above these, the message of Muhammad (SAW) is to all of mankind and jinn. And the entire length and breadth of the earth is approved for believers to worship. Thus, we neither have any excuse nor inhibitions against worship.

In consequence, believers enjoy a two-fold blessed foundation that double as guidance, for all the success required in this life and in the hereafter. The first part is that Allah (SWT) does not ask or require us to feed Him, give Him money or kill ourselves for Him. Even when He instructs us to give charity or make sacrifice, they do not reach Him for benefit but are for our own benefits. The second is that, His Messenger and our best model STOOD on Salat as the highest platform for our connection with Allah (SWT). All the miracles that are often narrated are not

magical because the source from which they were caused is the real owner and controller of all affairs.

And, WHAT IS THE ONLY FACILITY FOR THIS SUBMISSION, THIS RELATIONSHIP? It is the use of WORDS.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) used to keep silent between the Takbir and the recitation of the Qur'an and that interval of silence used to be a short one. I said to the Prophet (SAW), "May my parents be sacrificed for you! What do you say in the pause between takbir and recitation?" The Prophet (SAW) said, "I say, 'O Allah! Set me apart from my sins (faults) as the east and west are set apart from each other and clean me from sins as a white garment is cleaned of dirt (after thorough washing). O Allah! Wash off my sins with water, snow and hail.'"

This submission points at the guidance that a believer is required to be constantly within permissible degrees of thoughts and actions. Everything about the believer matters in his submission to Allah (SWT) because Allah is clean and does not deserve impurities. This can arise by or when, where and how a believer breaks the standard rules. It is therefore a sin not only to eat pork but to commit suicide. Both are illegal for contemplating or action. This is asking for forgiveness by the sincere slave. And if the Messenger of Allah (SAW) will be so humble as to be so inadequate and plea for cleansing, what will be deserving of followers?

But, it is not only in the pre-opening of the prayer that the Messenger submits.

Narrated Aisha (RA): The Prophet (SAW) used to say in his bowing and prostrations, "Exalted (from unbecoming attributes) are You O Allah our Lord, and by Your praise (do I exalt You) O Allah! Forgive me."

This is what Allah (SWT) asks of believers, to submit and ask for forgiveness. And He will endow them with His Blessings. He is forgiving and compassionate. Then we shall have rains, riches and multiply ourselves with comfort.

Narrated Aisha (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) used to invoke Allah in prayer saying, "O Allah I seek refuge with You from the punishment of the grave, from the afflictions of the imposter – Messiah and from the afflictions of life and death. O Allah I seek refuge with You from my sins and from debt."

Salat and interaction with Allah (SWT) is an opportunity for the believer to reaffirm his faith. In the example above, belief in the safety or punishment in the grave is reaffirmed. The risks and misfortune of sharing the same history with the imposter – Messier is admitted. And the trials of this life, to test the faith of believers, are part of faith.

Narrated Warrad (the clerk of Al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba): Once Al-Mughira dictated to me in a letter addressed to Mu'awiya that the Prophet (SAW) used to say after every compulsory prayer, "There is no deity but Allah, Alone, no partner to Him. His is the Kingdom and all Praise, and Omnipotent is He. O Allah! Nobody can hold back what you gave, nobody can give what you held back, and no struggler's effort can benefit against You."

This reveals that praising Allah by definition of His attributes is part of submission and should be the commitment of a believer. In another tradition a believer who has memorized and acts according to the dictates of the ninety-nine attributes of Allah (SWT) has been promised paradise. This consistency is a necessary one because the attributes of Allah (SWT) are the BEST. And Allah loves what is good, how more of what is better, compared to the things that are best?

While this orientation is required, like in the example and leadership of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) to apply in compulsory contacts with Allah (SWT), it is not different, in recommended prayers.

Narrated Ibn Abbas (RA): When the Prophet (SAW) got up at night to offer the Tahajjud prayer, he used to say (after much praising of Allah (SWT)), “(O Allah) Please forgive me my previous and future sins, and whatever I concealed or revealed and You are the One who make (some people) forward and (some people) backward. There is none to be worshipped but You.”

Thus, whether in obligatory or non-obligatory prayer, what Allah (SWT) deserves, has asked for and are required of a believer for his own benefits include asking for FORGIVENESS, reaffirming his Iman, Praising or Glorification of Allah (SWT) and making WHATEVER personal requests, for his good, within permissible degrees. Then, what else does a believer need, want or will fancy, that this gracious window will not admit?

But the life or livelihood of a believer, in his connection with Allah must not be restricted to the times of praying. Does not the believer really NEED Allah all the time? The prayer is not a resort for escape. It is only the best opportunity.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): Whenever the Prophet (SAW) went to the lavatory, he used to say, “O Allah! I seek refuge with You from the bad and evil things.”

Are filthy surroundings not the habitat of evil jinns? Is filthy environment not the domain of disease bearing creatures? Are they not the creations of Allah (SWT) or can they harm a believer protected by Allah (SWT)?

Narrated Hudhaifa (RA): When the Prophet (SAW) went to bed, he would say, “With Your name I die and live” and when he got up he would say, “All thanks and

praises to Allah who has given us life after causing us to die (i.e. sleep) and unto Him is the resurrection.”

Narrated Aisha (RA): Whenever Allah’s Apostle (SAW) went to bed, he used to blow on his hands while reciting the *Mu’auwidhat* (i.e. Suratul Falaq and Suratul Nas) and then pass his hands (rub) over his body.

The clear additional teaching here is that the protection of a believer is best in the hands of Allah (SWT) – after our best efforts. A believer will find a safe place to lie down and then submit to Allah with utmost faith. He will not pray for safety and protection and then proceed to lie down inside a furnace or go into the den of a beast. That is not Islam.

NORMALLY AND ON REGULAR BASIS

A believer is required to necessarily consult privately with Allah (SWT) at five different times every day. For the person who sticks to this genuinely and strictly, he has the hope of honour and success with Allah (SWT) at the end of the day, by His Mercy. Thus, believers who choose, can commit more time and opportunities. And at the end, the majority of men spend most of their time in activities outside salat times. What did the Messenger of Allah do as a guide to believers?

Narrated Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari (RA): The Prophet (SAW) used to invoke Allah saying, “O Allah! Forgive my mistakes and (acts done due to) my ignorance and my exceeding the limits (boundaries) of righteousness in my deeds, and forgive whatever You know better than I. O Allah! Forgive the wrong I have done jokingly or seriously and forgive my accidental and intentional errors, all that is present in me.”

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): The Prophet (SAW) used to say, “O Allah! I seek refuge with You from helplessness, laziness, cowardice and feeble old age; I seek refuge with You from afflictions of life and death and seek refuge with You from the punishment of the grave.”

Narrated Ibn Abbas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) used to say at the time of difficulty, “None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, the Knower, the Most Forbearing. None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, the Lord of the Tremendous Throne. None has the right to be worshipped but Allah the Lord of the Heavens and the Lord of the Earth and Lord of the Honourable Throne.”

Narrated Anas (RA): The most frequent invocation of the Prophet (SAW) was, “O Allah! Give us in the world that which is good and in the hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the fire.”

Therefore, there is no essential difference in the orientation, focus and commitment of a believer in his connection to Allah (SWT), between when he is in a state of canonical worship and when he is out. It is Allah, Allah, Allah. He is asking for forgiveness. He is praising Allah (SWT) as much as He deserves. He is asking for all that are legal. He is asking for protection against everything and everyone that are evil. A conscious believer is so by recognizing and holding firmly unto Allah (SWT) because it is both inevitable and rewarding, for his safety and prosperity. This is the believer in a state of peace or crisis, in comfort or difficulty.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF GUIDANCE TO BELIEVERS

Narrated Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (RA): I asked Allah’s Apostle (SAW) to teach me an invocation so that I may invoke Allah (SWT) with it in my prayer. He told me to say, “O Allah! I have done great injustice to myself and none except You forgives

sins, so bestow on me a forgiveness from You and have Mercy on me. You are the Forgiver, the Merciful!”

May the blessings of Allah (SWT) be rained on Abu Bakr (RA). This is getting the best plea from the best model for every best opportunity between a believer and his Creator. Asking for forgiveness is not only a critical foundation in the livelihood of a believer, but keying it in the best opportunity of interacting with He that is Able and Gives without exhaustion.

Narrated Ali (RA): Following the request by Fatima (RA) for a slave to assist her, the Prophet (SAW) called upon them and said, “Shall I not tell you of a thing which is better for you than a servant? When you (both) go to your beds, say, ‘Allahu Akbar’ thirty-four times and ‘Subhana Lah’ thirty-three times, ‘Al-hamdu liLah’ thirty-three times, for that is better for you than a servant.”

This is the guidance to his daughter and cousin who doubles as his in-law and a close companion that is one of those rightly guarded. The principle here is that all things belong to Allah (SWT). So, let believers ask of the owner of all things and submit that whatever He decides is superior to immediate personal choices or preferences.

This principle is the consistent basis and value of the advice he gave to a group of believers who called upon him for clarification, assurance and guidance.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Some poor people came to the Prophet (SAW) and said, “The wealthy people will get higher grades and will have permanent enjoyment and they pray like us and fast as we do. They have more money by which they perform the Hajj and Umrah; fight and struggle in Allah’s cause and give charity.” The Prophet (SAW) said, “Shall I not tell you a thing upon which if you acted you would catch up with those who have surpassed you? Nobody would overtake you and you would be better than the people amongst whom you live except those who would do

the same? Say, ‘Subhana Lah’, ‘Al-hamdu liLah’ and ‘Allahu Akbar’ thirty-three times each after every (compulsory) prayer.”

We can deduce from the advices that, all believers are equal before Allah (SWT) and the difference rests with our closeness and sticking to Him.

Narrated Ubada ibn As-Samit (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever gets up at night and says, ‘None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, He is the only One and has no partners, For Him is the Kingdom and all the praises are due for Him, He is Omnipotent. All the praises are for Allah, All the glories are for Allah, And none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Allah is Great and there is neither Might nor Power except with Allah’ and then says, ‘O Allah! Forgive me!’ or invokes (Allah), he will be responded to and if he performs ablution and prays, his prayer will be accepted.”

Here is a simple formula for prayer acceptance, over and above forgiveness. Forgiveness is cleanliness. Declaration is like registration. Cleanliness is the ticket for admission. So, the believer has everything and all things at his disposal on these two terms. The final condition is the CHOICE of Allah (SWT) to oblige the believer in whatever details. And this is also not unfavourable because Allah always decides on the ultimate best for the believers.

Narrated Shaddad ibn Aus (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “The most superior way of asking for forgiveness from Allah is, ‘O Allah you are my Lord! None has the right to be worshipped but You, You created me and I am Your slave and I am faithful to my covenant and my promise (to You) as much as I can; I seek refuge with You from all the evil I have done, I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins, So I implore You to forgive my sins for nobody can forgive sins except You.’ The Prophet (SAW) added,

“If somebody recites it during the day with firm faith in it and dies on the same day before evening, he will be among the people of Paradise; and if somebody recites it at night with firm faith in it and dies before the morning, he will be among the people of Paradise.”

But how many of us as parents, children or students and leaders make this simple commitment part of our daily lives? Is it that we do not know? Is it that we do not believe? Is it that we are careless? Is it that we have something better? Whichever of these or a combination of them IS WRONG AND UNSATISFACTORY. Then how can we be bright with the light of Allah (SWT) when our preferred light is that of Rechargeable lamps or Power Holding Company?

TO PLEASE THE CRAVING INCLINATION OF A BELIEVER

As we submit and serve Allah, we are often unmindful that on all counts, we are the beneficiaries because it is Allah (SWT) meeting our Needs, Wants and Fancies, again and again, over and over because He is the free provider without limits. We therefore still want grades of benefits. And the Messenger of Allah (SAW) has encouraged us to ask for the highest grade of Paradise. Allah (SWT) who is Just has offered us the ladder or track for racing according to our ability WITHOUT LOSING TO ANY OTHER PERSON.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “Whoever says, ‘None has the right to be worshipped but Allah (Alone) who has no partner; to Him belongs the Kingdom (of the universe) and for Him are all the praises and He has the Power to do everything (Omnipotent)’ one hundred times, will get the same rewards as given for manumitting ten slaves; and one hundred good deeds will be written in his accounts, and one hundred sins will be deducted from his accounts, and it (his

saying) will be a shield for him from Satan on that day till night, and nobody will be able to do a better deed except the one who does more than he.”

And only the lips and tongue of a believer are the instruments to be engaged. How blessed is the spirit and faith of a believer? Only Allah (SWT) can grant such honour and status freely to ACCESS all the benefits that creations can offer.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “Whoever says, ‘I deem Allah free of any resemblance to anything whatsoever, in any respect and I celebrate His praises’ one hundred times a day, will be forgiven all his sins even if they were as much as the foam of a sea.”

And this tablet can be expressed as many times as a believer is able. It also has no time restrictions. But how many of us are cultured with this practice?

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “There are two expressions which are easy for the tongue to say, but they are very heavy in the balance and are very dear to The Beneficent (Allah) and they are: ‘I deem Allah free of any resemblance to anything whatsoever in any respect, and I celebrate His praises’”

These are openings for freedom from down weighing sins, closeness to Allah (SWT) and rising on the ladder of real honour and success that lasts.

THE RESPONSIBLE PRICE FOR A BELIEVER’S SUCCESS

Allah (SWT) has enjoined believers to ask for peace and blessings, like Himself and the Angels, for Muhammad (SAW). This is one indicator of the love of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), which makes faith complete. This third essential leg of required constant practice adds up to the Praises or Glorification of Allah (SWT) on the foundation of asking for forgiveness. A believer would therefore not be striving to complete and sustain his faith without regular and consistent practice and

commitment to these three essentials. And the Prophet (SAW) has given guidance on this.

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "Whoever after listening to the Adhan says, 'O Allah! Lord of this perfect call (perfect by not ascribing partners to You) and of the regular prayer which is going to be established, give Muhammad the right of intercession and illustriousness, and resurrect him to the best and highest place in Paradise that You promised him (of),' then my intercession for him will be allowed on the Day of Resurrection."

Narrated Abdur-Rahman ibn Abi Baila (RA): Ka'ab ibn Ujra met me and said, "Shall I give you a present? Once the Prophet (SAW) came to us and we said, 'O Allah's Apostle! We know how to greet you, but how to send '*salat*' upon you?' He said, "O Allah! Send Your *salat* (Grace and Honour) on Muhammad and on Muhammad's family as You sent your *salat* (Grace and Honour) on Ibrahim's family. O Allah! Send Your blessings on Muhammad and on Muhammad's family as You sent Your blessings on Ibrahim's family. You are indeed worthy of all praise, full of glory."

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA): We said, "O Allah's Apostle (SAW), this is (i.e. we know) the greeting to you, will you tell us how to send *salat* on you?" He said, 'O Allah! Send Your *salat* (Grace and Honour) on Muhammad, Your slave and Your Apostle, as You sent Your *salat* (Grace and Honour) on Ibrahim and send Your blessings on Muhammad and his family as You sent Your blessings on Ibrahim and Ibrahim's family."

Narrated Abu Humaid As-Saidi (RA): The people said, "O Allah's Apostle! How may we send *salat* on you?" He said, "Say, 'O Allah! Send Your *salat* on Muhammad and his wives and his offspring as You sent Your *salat* on the family of

Ibrahim; and also send Your blessings on Muhammad and his wives and his offspring as You sent Your blessings on the family of Ibrahim. You are the One who deserves praises and glorification.”

THE ABUNDANT SOURCE AND REFERENCE EXAMPLE

The Qur'an, the word and message of Allah (SWT) is the FIRST reference and the FINAL reference explained by itself and the Sunnah. The praises and glorification of Allah that are best by Himself are in Qur'an.

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA): A man heard another man reciting (in the prayers), “Say (O Muhammad): He is Allah, the One ... (Q 112)” and he recited it repeatedly. When it was morning, he went to the Prophet and informed him about that as if he considered that recitation of that surah by itself was not enough. Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, “By Him in Whose Hand my life is, it is equal to one-third of the Qur'an.”

Believers therefore have the Qur'an for Knowing Allah (SWT) and serving Him. This easy and safe provision saves us from making efforts that can be outside what is right, except for those who are given of knowledge and guidance.

Indeed, whoever holds firmly and restrictively to the basics of the Qur'an and Sunnah is hopeful to be on the straight path that is the middle path to success.

CHAPTER 7

LIVING ISLAM: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF SUBMISSION FOR MERCIES

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In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the all-Knowing, the Light, the Guardian, the Protector of Faith. Perfect Peace, Blessings and Nearness to Allah be upon the total, best and complete model for the safety and prosperity of believers, Muhammad (SAW), his household, his companions and all that strive sincerely in submission.

WHAT SUBMITTING ENTAILS

The submission to Allah in accordance with the merciful example of *Rasul* begins with Beliefs that hang on the unity of Allah. This is because He is the true and only reality, whereas all other seeming realities are by His grace. This means that on their own, they are not real. For example, how can man be real when he was not and came into being by association? Can he cease or resist to expire, when he neither has knowledge nor control of his origin? Not even ill health or aging. Can man attempt avoiding space and time and succeed? Will that not be most crucial for independence than all the babbling claims of realizations and advancements?

Narrated Abu Huraira: One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked, “What is faith?” Allah’s Apostle replied, “Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection.” Then he further asked, “What is Islam?” Allah's Apostle replied, “To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan.” Then he further asked, “What is *Ihsan* (perfection)?” Allah’s Apostle replied, “To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you.” Then he further

asked, “When will the Hour be established?” Allah’s Apostle replied, “The answerer has no better knowledge than the questioner. But I will inform you about its portents: when a slave (lady) gives birth to her master; when the shepherds of black camels start boasting and competing with others in the construction of higher buildings; and the Hour is one of five things which nobody knows except Allah.” The Prophet then recited: *Verily, with Allah (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour...* (Q 31:34). Then that man (Gabriel) left and the Prophet asked his companions to call him back, but they could not see him. Then the Prophet said, “That was Gabriel who came to teach the people their religion.” Abu Abdullah said: He (the Prophet) considered all that as a part of faith. (Bukhari)

How can man ever come to know beyond guessing, without the gift of this knowledge? This is the beginning. Whoever is born into the community of believers continues to declare it just as a non-Muslim joins the community by the same declaration.

Those who believe that submission excludes or is independent of utmost following in the footsteps of Muhammad (SAW) are therefore in grave misbelief. The best example is not separable from the principle, the rule, the injunctions or the guidance.

This is the basis for the status of associating whatever thing with Allah in His unity. It is the root of qualifying for eternal damnation in the Hell Fire. And it is the minimum qualification for attaining eternal safety even if one is to be initially hosted in the Hell Fire for some time. It is the basis for qualifying for execution by a believer who turns apostate. It is the basis for retaining all good deeds and forgiveness of all previous sins by a non-believer who submits. It is the basis of a double reward for a believer in the revealed messages before the Qur’an, who accepts Muhammad (SAW) and the Qur’an for guidance. The recognition of this absolute truth and reality is the only path to the widest Compassion and Mercies of Allah. This is the

difference between the Prophets, the Sincere, the Believers, those with a grain weight to an atom weight of beliefs.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “Allah Almighty says: I am as my servant expects me and I am with him as he remembers me. If he remembers me in himself, I will remember him in myself. If he mentions me in a gathering, I will mention him in a greater gathering. When he draws near me by the span of his hand, I draw near him by the length of a cubit. When he draws near me by the length of a cubit, I draw near him by the length of a fathom. When he comes to me walking, I come to him running.” (Bukhari)

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Allah the Almighty has said: Whoever has mutual animosity with a friend (wali) of Mine, I declare war upon him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than the religious duties that I have imposed upon him; and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I love him. And when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks. Were he to ask of Me, I would surely give him; and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.” (Bukhari)

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Allah (SWT) said: I am so self-sufficient that I am in no need of having an associate. Thus, he who does an action for someone else’s sake as well as Mine will have that action renounced by Me to him whom he associated with Me.” (Muslim and Ibn Majah)

Narrated Abu Dharr: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “Allah Almighty said: O my servants, I have forbidden injustice for myself and I have forbidden it among you, so do not oppress one another. O my servants, all of you are astray except for

those I have guided, so seek guidance from me and I shall guide you. O my servants, all of you are hungry except for those I have fed, so seek food from Me and I shall feed you. O my servants, all of you are naked except for those I have clothed, so seek clothing from me and I shall clothe you. O my servants, you sin by night and day and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from me and I shall forgive you. O my servants, you will not be able to bring harm to me and you will not be able to bring benefit to me. O my servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you, to be as pious as the most pious heart of anyone of you, that would not increase my dominion at all. O my servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you, to be as wicked as the most wicked heart of anyone of you, that would not decrease my dominion at all. O my servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you, to rise up in one place and make a request of me, and were I to give everyone what he requested, that would not diminish what I have any more than a needle would diminish the sea if put into it. O my servants, it is only your deeds that I record for you and then recompense for you. Let he who finds good praise Allah, and let he who finds something else blame no one but himself.” (Muslim)

This reality and truth of the unique and absolute unity of Allah is reflected by the inevitability of returning to Him by all creations, all affairs and all of mankind.

As a result, the first action that is necessary for a believer to climb towards the mercies of Allah is to seek to know Him. To acquire the knowledge of what is right and true for guidance. Knowledge and discipline are therefore intertwined. And Allah has used Muhammad (SAW) as the pathway.

Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a messenger from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allah,

sanctifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and Wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error. (Q 3:164)

High above all is Allah, the King, the Truth! Be not in haste with the Qur'an before its revelation to thee is completed, but say, "O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge." (Q 20:114)

Narrated Abu Umamah: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The virtue of the scholar over the worshiper is like my virtue over the least of you. Verily, Allah, his angels, the inhabitants of the heavens and earth, even the ant in his hole and the fish, send blessings upon the one who teaches people what is good." (Tirmidhi)

Thus in Islam, learning needs to be topped up with teaching. This is what gives life to knowledge. Believers live to share as against keeping. And it cannot be of evil. The knowledge of Allah and His commandments are for actioning, for practice, for living. Those who know Him are those who obey Him. And they are characterized by the love and fear of Him in all their dealings, to their utmost. This is why and how Salat, Dhikr and Du'a are the best connectors of a believer to Allah (SWT). In these best and highest forms of relationship, the believer certifies and submits to the absolute reality of Allah in the state of humility of enjoying or gratitude for his granted identity. This is between the believer and Allah. Another comprehensive form is in the form of fasting in the month of Ramadan.

For, Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His signs rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord. (Q 8:2)

These are the people among mankind who believe, who know and enjoy deliberate livelihood in compliance with for example, the following provisions in the guidance of Allah and His Messenger:

a) Revile not ye those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus have We made alluring to each people its own doings. In the end will they return to their Lord, and We shall then tell them the truth of all that they did. (Q 6:108)

b) Nor call on any, other than Allah; such will neither profit thee nor hurt thee: if thou dost, behold! thou shalt certainly be of those who do wrong. (Q 10:106)

So call not on any other god with Allah, or thou wilt be among those under the Penalty. (Q 26:213)

c) Narrated Anas: The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith: 1. The one to whom Allah and His Apostle become dearer than anything else. 2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah’s sake. 3. Who hates to revert to disbelief (Atheism) after Allah has brought (saved) him out from it, as he hates to be thrown in fire.” (Bukhari)

d) And as for those who malign believing men and believing women without their having done any wrong, they surely burden themselves with the guilt of calumny, and (thus) with a flagrant sin! (Q 33:58)

For clarity, believers cover all persons who believe in the revealed scriptures. And this is informed by:

The Messenger has believed in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and the believers as well. All have believed in Allah, and His angels and His Books, and His Messengers. “We make no division between any of His Messengers,” and they have said: “We have listened, and obeyed. Our Lord, Your pardon! And to You is the return.” (Q 2:285)

Accordingly, it will be contradictory to have a believer associating himself with sorcery, fortune telling, reviewing any law of Allah, casting aspersions on any member of the household of Muhammad (SAW) or his companions, setting aside the guidance of *Rasul* and feeling secure from Allah's devising.

THE FIRST LEVEL OF LIVING IN SUBMISSION

To be a believer means to live right in consciousness of Allah and to live according to the guidance of Allah and His Messenger (SAW). This will affirm Allah as independent and the believer as godly.

The first arena for this is the family. A believer was born and may by companionship reproduce. This brings in the provisions of the institution of marriage and the family. The relational rights, duties and privileges between spouses, parents and children etc. come into play. The setting up of a family and living a family life will logically and sensibly generate livelihood without abusing the laws, rules and guidance or discipline including the following as examples:

a) Prohibited to you (for marriage) are your mothers, daughters, sisters, your maternal and paternal aunts, the daughters of your brothers and sisters, your mothers who have suckled you and your sisters through fosterage, the mothers of your wives, your step-daughters raised under you born of your wives with whom you have lain – no offence if you have not lain with their mothers, and the wives of your begotten sons, and two sisters in wedlock at the same time, except for what has already happened. God indeed is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Also (prohibited are) women already married, except those whom your right hands possess; this is a written obligation upon you from God ... (Q 4:23-24)

A believer will consequently not set out wrongly in the partnership for marriage. Doing so will be evil and ungodly. It will not attract the favours of blessings.

b) And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way. (Q 17:32)

Hence the believer will not be unconscious of the implication of breaking this law by either fornicating or committing adultery. It does not matter whether it is before marriage or after getting married. And it covers both men and women believers.

c) Do you approach males among the worlds, and leave what your Lord has created for you as mates? But you are a people transgressing. (Q 26:165-166)

And how can a believer measure the displeasure of Allah over sodomy?

So when Our command came, We made the highest part (of the city) its lowest and rained upon them stones of layered hard clay, (which were) marked from your Lord. And Allah's punishment is not from the wrongdoers (very) far. (Q 11:82-83)

This was the example made with the people of Prophet Lut.

d) Narrated Ibn Abbas: The Prophet (SAW) cursed men who imitate women and women who imitate men. In another narration, Ibn Abbas said: The Prophet cursed men who copy women and women who copy men. (Bukhari)

e) And We have enjoined upon man (care) for his parents. His mother carried him, (increasing her) in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the (final) destination. (Q 31:14)

And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up (when I was) small." (Q 17:24)

f) Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (SAW) said, "No child is born but that he is upon natural instinct. His parents make him a Jew, or a Christian, or Magian. As an animal delivers a child with limbs intact, do you detect any flaw?" Then, Abu

Huraira recited the verse, *The nature of Allah upon which he has set people* (Q 30:30).

Thus, the Teaching of children and the example of right guidance hangs on the parents.

g) Allah has not made for a man two hearts in his interior. And He has not made your wives whom you declare unlawful your mothers. And he has not made your adopted sons your (true) sons. That is (merely) your saying by your mouths, but Allah says the truth, and He guides to the (right) way. Call them by (the names of) their fathers; it is more just in the sight of Allah. But if you do not know their fathers, then they are (still) your brothers in religion and those entrusted to you. And there is no blame upon you for that in which you have erred but (only for) what your hearts intended. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful. (Q 33:4-5)

Orphanage is therefore a highly protected status, as products of the Ummah. They can arise by death or some calamity.

h) And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin. (Q 17:31)

Say, “Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. (He commands) that you not associate anything with Him, and to parents, good treatment, and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them. And do not approach immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden (to be killed) except by (legal) right. This has He instructed you that you may use reason.” (Q 6:151)

Thus, a believer accepts that children are gifts and indeed trusts of Allah to whoever He chooses. There is no room for desperation and worse so, for a particular gender.

i) And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of (other) women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then (marry only) one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline (to injustice). (Q 4:3)

The establishment and maintenance of justice is the primary invitation to polygyny. How can avoidance or fear of this role be more praiseworthy, when it is the tie for dealing with orphans and for free women, it commences with two?

Let us then ask ourselves and evaluate – how many of us are believers? How far have we cared about seeking knowledge and living the discipline of guidance for ourselves and in our relationship with others? How many of us are successful across this stage? What is the gap between our level and amount of compliance and non-compliance? What favours of Allah can we deny?

For each one are successive (angels) before and behind him who protect him by the decree of Allah. Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron. (Q 13:11)

The window of forgiveness is still open for entry and changing for our own good.

THE SECOND LEVEL THAT AUGHT TO ARISE FROM THE FIRST

With a sound establishment of the institution of marriage and the family, the attributes or characteristics of the personalities can easily grow and develop. With Allah-consciousness as the driver of the members from this family background, the following obediences can flow:

a) Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever purposely throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in the (Hell) Fire falling down

into it and abiding therein perpetually forever; and whoever drinks poison and kills himself with it, he will be carrying his poison in his hand and drinking it in the (Hell) Fire wherein he will abide eternally forever; and whoever kills himself with an iron weapon, will be carrying that weapon in his hand and stabbing his abdomen with it in the (Hell) Fire wherein he will abide eternally forever.” (Bukhari)

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (SAW) said, “He who commits suicide by throttling shall keep on throttling himself in the Hell Fire (forever) and he who commits suicide by stabbing himself shall keep on stabbing himself in the Hell-Fire.” (Bukhari)

A believer in recognition of the sacredness of life will not take his own life. This is consistent with the commandment of prohibiting parents from taking the life of their children. It is only Allah who gives life that has the right and authority to decide on taking it.

b) After the securing of personal life for Allah and oneself, which will make a believer available to benefit himself and others, he is required to discipline all aspects of his personal physical and spiritual identity.

O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, (sacrificing on) stone alters (to other than Allah), and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. (Q 5:90)

Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and (those animals) killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you (are able to) slaughter (before its death), and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and (prohibited is) that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. (Q 5:3)

Then he (SAW) mentioned (the case) of a man who, having journeyed far, is dishevelled and dusty, and who spreads out his hands to the sky saying “O Lord! O Lord!” while his food is haram (unlawful), his drink is haram, his clothing is haram, and he has been nourished with haram, so how can (his supplication) be answered? (Muslim).

Allah is clean and does not accept what is unclean. This is why there is the common saying that, cleanliness is next to godliness. In Islam it means keeping away from Haram and not merely scrubbing dirt away.

Tell the believing men to reduce (some) of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to reduce (some) of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which (necessarily) appears thereof and to wrap (a portion of) their head covers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed. (Q 24:30-31)

The looks of a believer must be guarded, to keep connected to Allah. Not just what he eats and drinks.

Narrated Ibn ‘Abbaas: The Prophet (SAW) went to one of the gardens of Madina, and he heard the sounds of two people who were being tormented in their graves. He said, “They are being punished, not for something that was difficult to avoid, but

it is nevertheless a major sin. One of them did not protect himself from urine (i.e. take measures to avoid contaminating himself or his clothes) and the other used to walk about spreading *nameemah*.” (Bukhari and Muslim).

Narrated Abu Hurairah the Prophet (SAW) said: “Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the falsest of speech. Do not eavesdrop; do not spy on one another; do not envy one another; do not forsake one another; do not hate one another. Be, Oh slaves of Allah, brothers.” (Bukhari and Muslim) (Q 2:563)

O you who have believed, avoid much (negative) assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful. (Q 49:12) The deliberate hearings of a believer must not be as free as the air, to whatever pleases one. Indeed, music is considered controversial or doubtful.

How can a believer who as a human being enjoys personal physical, psychological and emotional health and is required to cleanse himself by ablution or ritual bath before approaching Salat in a clean place, consider it proper to have disobedient senses as regardless? Are his parents not forbidden to approach zina in order that his coming was consistent with obedience? Why and how will his livelihood be within context by abuse?

THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP STATUS OF A BELIEVER

This third level of connection relates to his relationship with others. This is possibly the platform with the widest scope. It relates to what or how a believer connects with all others. At this level, the parents and the children have become of equal status in roles and responsibilities. Each one is accountable for what he does or commit. The personal identities of both have attained maturity. They are expected to be of the

adornments of the characteristics introduced as the first level of living in submission and more. For this level, the following are examples of the highlights for guidance:

a) O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only (in lawful) business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves (or one another). Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful. And whoever does that in aggression and injustice, then We will drive him into a Fire. And that, for Allah, is (always) easy. (Q 4:29-30)

This commandment secures the life of any and all others, like his life from being taken by the parents or by himself. This equality is the foundation for humanity and prosperity or civilization.

b) O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer. (Q 4:1)

So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your (ties of) relationship? Those (who do so) are the ones that Allah has cursed, so He deafened them and blinded their vision. (Q 47:22-23)

Narrated Aisha: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The bond of relationship is suspending from the Throne, and says: 'He who keeps good relations with me, Allah will keep connection with him, but whosoever severs relations with me, Allah will sever connection with him.'" (Bukhari and Muslim).

Narrated Ibn Umar: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The person who perfectly maintains the ties of kinship is not the one who does it because he gets recompensed by his relatives (for being kind and good to them), but the one who truly maintains

the bonds of kinship is the one who persists in doing so even though the latter has severed the ties of kinship with him”. (Bukhari)

Thus the life of a believer and others are not only protected but severance from relatives is not Islamic.

c) Narrated Abu Shurayh: The Prophet (SAW) said three times, “By Allah, he does not have faith!” It was said, “Who is it, O Messenger of Allah?” The Prophet said, “He whose neighbour is not safe from his harm.” (Bukhari)

Narrated Mujahid reported: We were with Abdullah ibn Amr and his servant was preparing a roasted sheep. Abdullah said, “Young man, when you are finished, then begin with our Jewish neighbour.” A man said, “Jewish? May Allah rectify you!” Abdullah said, “I heard the Prophet (SAW) enjoining good treatment of our neighbours so often that we thought he would make them our heirs.” (*Al-Adab al-Mufrad* 105).

Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbour, the neighbour farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful. (Q 4:36)

This standard of Islam creates a positive bond between not only believers but secures the rights of others. This is because there is no compulsion in religion and the goodness of believers should attract non-believers into the fold of right knowledge and discipline.

d) O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule (another) people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule (other) women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by

(offensive) nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after (one's) faith. And whoever does not repent, then it is those who are the wrongdoers. (Q 49:11)

And they who turn away from ill speech. (Q 23:3)

Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr: The Prophet (SAW) never used bad language neither a *fahish* nor a *mutafahish*. He used to say "The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character." (Bukhari)

And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel (evil) by that (deed) which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity (will become) as though he was a devoted friend. (Q 41:34)

There cannot be a better fabric for social relationships.

e) It cannot be abusive when it comes to economic relationships. Those who consume interest cannot stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, "Trade is (just) like interest." But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns to (dealing in interest or usury), those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein. (Q 2:275)

O you who have believed, do not consume usury, doubled and multiplied, but fear Allah that you may be successful. (Q 3:130)

(As for) the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands in recompense for what they committed as a deterrent (punishment) from Allah. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise. (Q 5:38)

Woe to those who give less (than due), who, when they take a measure from people, take in full. But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss. (Q 83:1-3)

And the camels and cattle We have appointed for you as among the symbols of Allah; for you therein is good. So mention the name of Allah upon them when lined up (for sacrifice); and when they are (lifeless) on their sides, then eat from them and feed the needy and the beggar. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may be grateful. (Q 22:36)

What is missed for the personal, social and economic security in this structure of relationships? How can a believer be a risk to live with? And what provisions can be better to secure all of mankind irrespective of beliefs?

THE OVERRIDING PROVISIONS FOR COMPLIANCE

With men kept alive, the society bubbling with social and economic security and prosperity, the differences including what are understandable and what are destructive cannot be ruled out. These may be out of naivety or deliberate mischief. In between will be neither of these but are excesses that will impact negative consequences and values on members of the society. For example, believers have no right to impose their faith on others. But unbelievers must keep to their unbelief without luring believers away into their folds. The castigation of their idols is prohibited to believers and unbelievers must accept the consequences of mocking the God and Messengers He sent for guidance. And although competition in growing our individual or group prosperity is welcome, it must not develop into denying others of similar opportunities. This is why and where the unique superiority of leadership comes in. The best capture of this by scholars of free democracy is that, politics is the Master of all Sciences.

In Islam, what makes these class of provisions for compliance peculiar is that, it is only ESPECIALLY REQUIRED of public leaders. This is because leadership applies at different levels, indeed, all levels. And the take-off point is submission supported with right knowledge and discipline of what is right. This is what is meant by final personal accountability.

Nor can a bearer of burdens bear another's burdens if one heavily laden should call another to (bear) his load. Not the least portion of it can be carried (by the other). Even though he be nearly related. Thou canst but admonish such as fear their Lord unseen and establish regular Prayer. And whoever purifies himself does so for the benefit of his own soul; and the destination (of all) is to Allah. (Q 35:18)

Thus, if a believer games with the keeping in touch with Allah, by Ignorance or the requirements in the first level of personal purity or in his social and economic disposition to fellow humans, he will account for them Alone. This is the first stepping stone of leadership – of your personal self. At a higher level the provision is consistent, where the family or couple is involved.

Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend (for maintenance) from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. (Q 4:34)

Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the guardian of his family and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband's home and his children and she is responsible for them. The servant of a man is a guardian of the

property of his master and he is responsible for it. No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Where the relationship is as brief as traveling together, it is a commendable tradition to appoint a leader between the persons. Today, with so many organizations, movements, associations, institutions, the critical need and role of leadership does not require much explanation or justification. In Nigeria, the scarcity of the right leadership cuts across all strata and indeed all formations –formal and informal.

In Islam, a believer is required to be guided by the provisions that include the following:

a) Who spend (in the cause of Allah) during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people; and Allah loves the doers of good. (Q 3:134)

Narrated Abu Huraira: A man came to the Prophet (SAW) and he said, “Advise me.” The Prophet (SAW) said, “Do not be angry.” The man repeated his request and the Prophet said, “Do not be angry.” (Bukhari)

Narrated Abu Darda: I said, “O Messenger of Allah, tell me about a deed that will admit me into Paradise.” The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “Do not be angry and you will enter Paradise.” (*Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat* 2411).

Narrated Anas: The Prophet (SAW) passed by people wrestling and he said, “What is this?” They said, “O Messenger of Allah, this is a wrestler and no one can wrestle like him!” The Prophet said, “Shall I not tell you who is even stronger than him? It is a man wronged by another man, yet he suppresses his rage and thus he defeats it. He defeats his devil, and he defeats the devil of his companion.” (*Musnad al-Bazzār* 7272).

Thus, any leader who cannot control his anger is not a suitable person to either take correction when he is wrong or to understand what he does not understand to be right or to make a wrong person understand that he is wrong. This form of discipline is required in matters that are strictly between you and Allah; between you and family members, peers, with others, and especially so to those you lead.

b) On top of humility, a leader is required to be honest and sincere. The first involves not telling lies either against Allah and His Messenger, himself or others. It is noteworthy that even criminals do not tolerate dispensing with this attribute of godliness. Thieves crush partners who cheat. The second is between a believer and Allah, that whatever he is committed to is to his best. In modern times, we have developed the concept and processes or machinery of transparency. But it falls short of what human mind can devise. This is why smart people can be transparent and cheat and a few get caught later in time. A believer who knows that Allah is all-knowing of what is hidden and open will do the right or his best from the onset. Telling lies is akin to cutting down or robbing oneself of any, many or all of the attributes or compliances that will make a believer godly. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: “You must be truthful, for truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man will keep speaking the truth and striving to speak the truth until he will be recorded with Allah as a *siddeeq* (speaker of the truth). Beware of telling lies, for lying leads to immorality and immorality leads to Hellfire. A man will keep telling lies and striving to tell lies until he is recorded with Allah as a liar.” (Muslim)

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Among the signs of a hypocrite are three, even if he fasts and prays and claims to be a Muslim: when he speaks he lies, when he gives a promise he breaks it, and when he is trusted he betrays.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know (it). (Q 2:42)

O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true. (Q 9:119)

As a result, the company of those who are not truthful, not honest and sincere is evil. And avoiding the association of the truthful is hypocrisy.

c) A believer is accordingly strictly required to be most consistent and committed to keeping his words or promises in relationships to others, especially, the leaders. And they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive. (Q 23:8)

This can also take the more serious form of oaths.

Indeed, those who exchange the covenant of Allah and their (own) oaths for a small price will have no share in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them or look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them; and they will have a painful punishment. (Q 3:77)

Indeed, between a believer and any other persons, the words that need to be kept with actions must be so done with honour.

O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders or injury as does one who spends his wealth (only) to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day. His example is like that of a (large) smooth stone upon which is dust and is hit by a downpour that leaves it bare. They are unable (to keep) anything of what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. (Q 2:264)

This is because if it is between the believer and another person or people, its godly only if it is for the sake of Allah. Moreover, whatever advantages he may have and

is sharing is REALLY a trust of Allah that must not be abused, by usage after it has been rightly acquired and it is not prohibited.

d) The connection between a leader, especially a public one, with Allah, his oaths, promises or covenants and the led, is collective trusts. These can be in the form of physical facilities, resources or authority. Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing. (Q 4:58)

O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know (the consequence). (Q 8:27)

e) Accordingly, tricks or schemes that tamper with the word or trust are out of question for a believer to approach, less get involved in committing it.

And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it (in bribery) to the rulers in order that (they might aid) you (to) consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know (it is unlawful). (Q 2:188)

Assuredly, Allah knows what they conceal and what they declare. Indeed, He does not like the arrogant. (Q 16:23)

f) And an open example of a believer who is a leader that is on the worst path of colliding with Allah and His Messenger is one that distant himself or is hypocritical in his relationship or dealings with servants of Allah. If he does not know them he is at fault for not being able to recognize them. If he knows them and disrespects them or humiliates them, he is worse.

And keep yourself patient (by being) with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance. And let not your eyes pass

beyond them, desiring adornments of the worldly life, and do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever (in) neglect. (Q 18:28)

And those who harm believing men and believing women for (something) other than what they have earned have certainly born upon themselves a slander and manifest sin. (Q 33:58)

Thus, only a foolish person who is a believer and a leader will venture into this. How can you be negative to the heirs of Rasul and dream of succeeding?

In the summary of it all, every leader and especially public leaders, must not approach oppression in any form. The supplication of the oppressed is answered, even if he is wicked for his wickedness is only against himself. (*Musnad Ahmad* 8577)

The supplications of three persons are never turned away: a fasting person until he breaks his fast, a just ruler, and the supplication of the oppressed which is raised by Allah above the clouds, the gates of heaven are opened for it, and the Lord says: “By my might, I will help you in due time.” (Tirmidhi)

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do. (Q 5:8)

This is the average believer in Islam, for himself and for whoever cares to know. This is a fair and ordinary compliances attributes, cares and commitments of a believer or group of those who are believers or a community or nation. And the better are so in related injunctions. This is the foundation for walking towards Allah that

attracts the grace of Allah running to the believers. It is based on alienation from Haram, commitment to *fard*, sunnah, on Oneself, in relation to Others and especially to those under One's care.