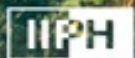


THE TREE OF FAITH

In Terms of its
Meaning, Basis, Scope,
and the Justification
of its Virtues and Essence

التوضيح والبيان لشجرة الإيمان

Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di



الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي



IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH

THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



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- Author: Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa‘di
- Commentary: Abu Muhammad Ashraf ibn ‘Abdul-Maqsood
- Translator: Abu ‘Aaisha Murtadha Salahuddeen al-Iwoowee
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Commentary by

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Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated form
أ	short 'a', as in <i>cat</i>	a
آ — إ	longer 'a', as in <i>cab</i> (not as in <i>cake</i>)	â
ب	/b/ as in <i>bell, rubber</i> and <i>tab</i>	b
ت	/t/ as in <i>tap, mustard</i> and <i>sit</i>	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when uninterrupted	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in <i>thing, maths</i> and <i>wealth</i>	th
ج	/j/ as in <i>jam, ajar</i> and <i>age</i>	j

ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	ħ
خ	as in <i>Bach</i> (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh
د	/d/ as in <i>do</i> , <i>muddy</i> and <i>red</i>	d
ذ	as in <i>this</i> , <i>father</i> and <i>smooth</i>	dh
ر	/r/ as in <i>raw</i> , <i>arid</i> and <i>war</i> ; may also be a rolled 'r', as pronounced in Spanish	r
ز	/z/ as in <i>zoo</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>gaze</i>	z
س	/s/ as in <i>so</i> , <i>messy</i> and <i>grass</i>	s
ش	as in <i>ship</i> , <i>ashes</i> and <i>rush</i>	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ʃ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /d/ farther back in the mouth	ɖ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /t/ farther back in the mouth	ʈ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther	<u>dh</u>

back in the mouth

ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	‘
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /r/ in ‘rouge’	gh
ف	/f/ as in <i>fill</i> , <i>effort</i> and <i>muff</i>	f
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in <i>king</i> , <i>buckle</i> and <i>tack</i>	k
ل	/l/ as in <i>lap</i> , <i>halo</i> ; in the word Allah, it becomes velarized as in <i>ball</i>	l
م	/m/ as in <i>men</i> , <i>simple</i> and <i>ram</i>	m
ن	/n/ as in <i>net</i> , <i>ant</i> and <i>can</i>	n
هـ - ه - هـ	/h/ as in <i>hat</i> ; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in <i>wet</i> and <i>away</i>	w
و	long ‘u’, as in <i>boot</i> and <i>too</i>	oo
ي	as in <i>yard</i> and <i>mayo</i>	y

ي

long 'e', as in *eat*, *beef* and *see*

ee

ء

glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of *butter*: *bu'er*, or the stop sound in *uh-oh!*

'
(omitted in initial position)

sukoon

Arabic honorific symbols

- (□) *Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* The 8 xalted
- (ﷺ) *şalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa* Blessings and peace be upon him
sallam
- (□) *'alayhi as-salâm* May peace be upon him
- (□) *rađiya Allâhu 'anhu* May Allah be pleased with him
- (□) *rađiya Allâhu 'anhâ* May Allah be pleased with her
- (□) *rađiya Allâhu 'anhumâ* May Allah be pleased with both of them
- (□) *rađiya Allâhu 'anhum* May Allah be pleased with all of them
- (□) *rađiya Allâhu 'anhunna* May Allah be pleased with all of them
(females only)

Hadith grade terms in this book

Sound: *ṣaḥeeḥ*

Reliable: *ḥasan*

Weak: *ḍa'eef*

Odd: *ghareeb*

Authentic: includes sound, reliable, or any grade in between

Acceptable: *sakat 'anhu*; the grader of the hadith did not comment on it, meaning that he found nothing unacceptable in it

About the Word *Lord*

The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is ‘master’ or ‘ruler’, and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: ‘the lord of the mansion’ or ‘Lord So-and-So’ (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God — Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah — not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor

Publisher's Note

All praise and thanks belong to Allah alone, the One, the Almighty and All-Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, the last of His messengers and prophets, and upon his family, his Companions, and all those who follow in his footsteps until the end of time.

In this book, appropriately titled *The Tree of Faith*, Shaykh ‘Abdur-Raḥmân Nâsir as-Sa‘di discusses faith as an amazing tree; he describes its roots and branches and explains how to nourish and feed it for excellent growth. He goes into detail regarding the definition of faith, how it increases and decreases in each of us, and its amazing benefits.

Relying entirely upon the Qur’an and Sunnah, Shaykh as-Sa‘di provides a comprehensive explanation of the fundamentals of faith. This work is written in such a way that it is applicable to all types of audiences, from beginners to experts. Each section accurately and concisely covers the subject at hand, leaving nothing out, and the original commentator and translator have both provided explanatory footnotes throughout the book.

May Allah accept the efforts of all those who contributed to the production of this book, and may it be acceptable to Him, *âmeen*.

Muhammad Abdul Mohsin Al-Tuwaijri
Managing Director
International Islamic Publishing House
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Translator's Dedication

This work is dedicated to my brother Dr. Gbenga Salawu, and his family, for his support of me on this path of knowledge. May Allah increase him in guidance and reward him abundantly.

﴿ وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ
مَشْكُورًا ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٩)

﴿But whoever desires the hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer – it is those whose effort is ever appreciated [by Allah].﴾ (Qur'an 17: 19)

Translator's Foreword

All praises and adorations are due to Allah (*Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* – Glorified and Exalted is He), the Most Beneficent and the Most Merciful. I bear witness that there is no one to whom sincere worship is due except Allah alone, without any partner. I also bear witness that Prophet Muhammad (*ṣalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* – blessings and peace be upon him) is His servant and His messenger.

Verily, the best speech is that of Allah, and the best guidance is that of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The worst matters (in worship) are those innovated by people, for every innovated matter is prohibited, and every prohibited innovation is an act of misguidance, leading whoever initiated and practiced it to reside in the hellfire.

Allah – in His great wisdom, abundant blessings and perfect justice in the creation of humankind – shows the believers His beloved straight path. He attaches the believer's success, in both this life and the hereafter, to faith. He makes it the only key to paradise, the greatest goal of the believer. Without it, one cannot see His favours in this world or the hereafter.

He mentions:

﴿... وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ
وَالْعِصْيَانَ...﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ٧)

﴿...but Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience...﴾
(Qur'an 49: 7)¹

He describes the people who truly follow the path of faith:

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١)

﴿Certainly, the believers are successful.﴾ (Qur'an 23: 1)

﴿الْآيَاتِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ (٦٢) ﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ﴾ (٦٣) ﴿لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ لَا يَبْدِيلُ
لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾ (سورة يونس: ٦٢-٦٤)

﴿Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah, there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve – those who believed and feared Allah. For them are good tidings in the worldly life and in the hereafter. No change is there in the words of Allah. That is the great attainment.﴾ (Qur'an 10: 62-64)

Abu Hurayrah (*raḍiya Allāhu ‘anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him) narrated about the Prophet (ﷺ), whom Allah sent with this message of faith:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked: Which is the best of deeds?

He answered: Faith in Allah.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

It is therefore compulsory that Muslims – the people of faith – pay a great deal of attention to this matter of faith. Unfortunately, many Muslims are completely ignorant of the fundamentals of this concept, while others feel that they are acquainted with it, when in fact they actually have only a distorted knowledge of it. Accordingly, Shaykh ‘Abdur-Raḥmān Nāsir as-

Sa‘di (may Allah have mercy on him) has written this book, making a great contribution to the efforts to fill this vacuum.

It is enough praise for this book to say that it is written by *Imam at-Tawḥeed* (the great scholar of Islamic monotheism). The author chose a title, *The Tree of Faith*, which is not only suitable for this wonderful and beautiful discussion but also indicative of its great scope. He explains:

In order to present a thorough discussion, such that nothing further must be added, we depend on the gracious Book of Allah, the book that guarantees success in this life and the hereafter. We also depend on the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ)...

So there is no doubt that this book is an excellent discussion that is suitable for all categories of Muslims: the beginners, the students of knowledge, and the scholars.

Since this book covers so many important topics, I felt the need to translate it into English in order to serve the interests of all those who might read and understand it, particularly those who cannot read or understand Arabic.

Moreover, I have added some footnotes, by way of further verification, moderation, and explanation, in order to add to the benefits of this book. I thank Allah, the Most High, Who made this translation possible. I beseech Him to make it greatly beneficial to whoever reads it or acquires its message through any possible means. I also thank and appreciate my dear and respected friend, Abu Abdullah Ustadh Abdul-Fataah Yusuf, whom Allah used as the cause for this work. May Allah reward him abundantly.

I pray for Allah to accept this and all my other works as humble and sincere efforts for His sake. I ask Allah to make my efforts beneficial to me on the day when neither wealth nor children shall be of benefit to anyone

except the one who comes to Him with a clean heart. May Allah's blessings be upon the Prophet (ﷺ) and all of his Companions.

Abu 'Aaisha Murtadha
Salahudden al-Iwoowee
Nigeria

Brief Biography of the Author³

His birth and lineage

The author is Abu ‘Abdullâh ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Nâṣir ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn Nâṣir ibn Ḥamd as-Sa‘di, from the tribe of Banu Taym. He was born in ‘Unayzah in al-Qaseem, in what is now the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the year 1307 AH/1887 C8. He grew up as an orphan under the care of his brother Ḥamd.

His knowledge and worship

Shaykh as-Sa‘di lived an exceptional life of knowledge, piety, and renunciation of worldly matters. He was one of the renowned and pre-eminent scholars of the twentieth century. Learned in different fields and fond of acquiring knowledge, he was a notable scholar of Islamic jurisprudence and its fundamentals, Qur’anic exegesis, and other fields of knowledge such as *tawḥeed* (the Oneness of Allah).⁴

His character

He was a very kind, generous, humble, and tolerant person. He never held a grudge or harboured ill-feelings towards anyone, and he was never seen to be angry. He was decent, honest and determined in his work, and he had a strong aversion to fame.

His teachers and students

Imam as-Sa‘di studied various sciences of knowledge with a number of teachers. Among them was the renowned and prominent scholar Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shinqeeti (1289–1351 AH), from whom he learnt Qur’anic exegesis, Hadith sciences,⁵ and the Arabic language.

He also had a number of prominent and notable students. Among them was ‘the great jurist of this century’, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Şâlih ibn al-‘Uthaymeen (1347-1421 AH), who took after his teacher in his methodology of teaching, preaching, and delivering sermons.

His books

Shaykh ‘Abdur-Rahmân as-Sa‘di wrote a number of books in various fields of knowledge, at least sixteen of which have been published. The most popular one, which is highly praised among scholars and students of knowledge, is *Tayseer al-Kareem al-Mannân fee Tafseer Kalâm ar-Rahmân*, an exegesis of the Qur’an popularly known as *Tafseer as-Sa‘di*.

His books are precise, concise, valuable, greatly beneficial, and free from controversies and alien opinions. His methodology in writing is simple and fascinating, and it relies on the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the understanding of our pious predecessors.

His death

He died on Thursday morning, 22 Jumâdâ II 1376 AH/ 1956 C8, after an illness. May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all the Muslims, both living and dead. May Allah accept his efforts.

Commentator's Introduction

All praise is due to Allah; we praise Him, seek His help, and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our souls and our evil acts. The one whom Allah guides, none can misguide, and the one from whom He withdraws His guidance, none can guide.

I bear witness that there is no one to whom sincere worship is due except Allah alone, without any partners, and I bear witness that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is His servant and messenger.

The loftiness of a building depends on the strength of its foundation and its supports, so anyone who wants to build a tall house must make its foundation and supports very strong and firm. Allah (ﷻ) asks (rhetorically):

﴿أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنَ أَسَّسَ
بُيُوتَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرْفٍ هَاكِ فَانْتَهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

﴿سورة التوبة: ١٠٩﴾

﴿Then is one who laid the foundation of his building on righteousness [with fear] from Allah and [seeking] His approval better, or one who laid the foundation of his building on the edge of a bank about to collapse, so it

collapsed with him into the hellfire? And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people. ﴿Qur'an 9: 109﴾

This implies that the basis of every acceptable deed in Islam is sound belief; a deed rests on belief just as a building is supported by its pillars. Al-Afwah al-Awdi states:

*And a house is not built without pillars
And there is no pillar if it does not provide support.*⁶

Therefore, Muslims have a pressing duty to always strengthen their beliefs, especially in these days when weakness of faith prevails outwardly.

It is thus even more important for Muslims to give preference to learning and teaching the matters of faith and its pillars, as well as trying to actualize sound knowledge and good practices from it.

This book comprises Shaykh ‘Abdur-Rahmân as-Sa‘di’s pleasant and beautiful discussion about this subject matter; he describes to us the ‘tree of faith’, the most pleasant tree, and he explains with utmost clarity its essential roots, branches, and fruits.

For this translation, I relied upon an edition with commentary by Shaykh ‘Abdul-Ghaniy ‘Abdul-Khâliq (may Allah have mercy on him), and I benefited from some of the corrections and necessary notes he made. I then tried to make some required rectifications to it. I also worked on this book’s arrangement, the verification of Qur’anic verses, and the Prophet’s narrations contained in it, and I tried to add necessary and useful details where appropriate.

We ask our Lord, Allah, to endear faith to us and to beautify our souls with it. Allah (ﷻ) is able to do all things.

Abu Muhammad Ashraf ibn ‘Abdul-Maqsood

Author's Introduction

*P*raise be to Allah, Who implanted the tree of faith in the hearts of His noble servants; watered and nourished it with sound and beneficial knowledge; blessed their hearts with the grace to appreciate the truth; taught them perfect attachment to the remembrance of their Lord, both during the day and at night; and made the tree one, giving its fruit and its other benefits at all times, and making it full of fortunes, blessings, and exuberance.

I bear witness that there is none to whom sincere worship is due except Allah alone, without any partner, the Only One Lord, the Conqueror, the Most Gracious, the Most Compassionate, the Oft-Forgiving. I bear witness that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is His servant and messenger, the noblest and the chosen prophet.

This book discusses faith, which is the most significant matter of religion and the greatest hub for truth and certainty. In order to present a thorough discussion, such that nothing further must be added, we depend on the gracious Book of Allah, the book that guarantees success in this life and the hereafter. We also depend on the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ), which gives rulings corresponding to those contained in the Qur'an,¹ further explains its messages, clarifies most of its supposed obscurities, and

restricts most of its absolutes (according to the wishes and commands of Allah).

The topics will be discussed in the following sequence:

1. The definition of faith
2. Its sources, fundamentals, and basis
3. Its virtues and essences, along with some other relevant topics

Allah, the Most High, asks:

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾ (سورة إبراهيم: ٢٤-٢٥)

﴿Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky? It produces its fruit all the time, by permission of its Lord. And Allah presents examples for the people that perhaps they will be reminded.﴾

(*Qur'an 14: 24-25*)

Allah compared faith (the most beautiful word) to a tree (the most pleasant word), which has these beautiful and praiseworthy characteristics: it has firm and steady roots; it is strong; and it is continually growing, always offering the benefits of its products to its owner and to others.

The growth of this tree in the heart varies greatly from one believer to another, depending on their personal states and in accordance with the way Allah has made them.

8 very fortunate servant of Allah must strive to understand this tree – its descriptions, benefits, basis, and branches – and to actualize the knowledge and wisdom in practice, because a believer's portion of the

fortune, success, and happiness in this life, and that of the hereafter, depends only on his or her portion of this tree.

CHAPTER ONE

The Scope and Meaning of Faith

To start with, it should be known that the scope and meaning of something are the two phenomena that distinguish it from any other thing. Therefore, these phenomena should always be considered when passing a ruling on any matter, because the ruling regarding any matter is a branch of what its whole concept implies.

Therefore, whoever rules on any matter without having a broad understanding of its meaning and a critical analysis of its scope, to the extent that he or she is able to distinguish it from other matters of the same kind, has committed a grievous mistake.

The scope and meaning of faith refer to absolute sincerity and a complete understanding and acceptance of all that Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) commanded, along with total submission to Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ), both openly and secretly.

This otherwise refers to the sincerity of the heart and its belief, together with the actions of the heart and the body,⁸ with which one has possessed a complete responsibility to uphold and discharge all the religious duties.

This is why the people of knowledge and our pious predecessors define faith as “the true testimony of the heart and the tongue, as well as the actions of the heart, of the tongue and of the physical body.” Hence, faith is all about declaration, practice and belief; the level of faith rises with an increase in obedience to Allah and decreases with disobedience of Him. It also encompasses matters of ideology, manners and practices.

Some of the fundamentals of faith are:

- Conceding and believing in all that belongs to Allah (ﷻ) regarding His beautiful names, His perfect and magnificent attributes, and His actions that are established from His names and attributes.
- Recognizing what belongs to Allah in terms of His specific rights. That means to spare no effort in worshipping Him and in serving Him with utmost sincerity; this in itself is regarded as deification and servitude to Him, both openly and secretly.
- Believing in what Allah conveyed to us regarding His angels, His hosts,⁹ His creations, the past and the present, and the events of the Day of Resurrection.
- Believing in all the messengers and all their beautiful qualities as described in both the Qur’an and Sunnah.

All these matters are considered fundamental, and the following are regarded as the greatest forms of faith:

- Believing in the Oneness of Allah in His Uniqueness and Lordship
- Worshipping Him alone, without any partners
- Devoting all matters of religion to Him alone
- Establishing all Islamic laws, both explicit and implicit

All of these are regarded as fundamentals of faith, and this is why Allah rewards true belief with:

- Entrance into paradise
- Being saved from the hellfire¹⁰
- Attaining His pleasure
- Having success and happiness in this life and the hereafter

None of these can be achieved unless the servant satisfies all the conditions that are required of faith and is also sincere in belief, actions of the heart and righteous physical practices. When any of these is missing, the person experiences a decrease in belief, thus losing the reward that is attached to such acts; this in turn attracts punishment according to the degree of the sin that was committed.

Allah, the Most High, promises that the reward for believing sincerely in Him is attainment of the best positions in the life of this world and in the hereafter:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّٰدِقُونَ...﴾ (سورة الحديد: ١٩)

﴿And those who have believed in Allah and His messengers – those are [in the ranks of] the supporters of truth...﴾ (Qur'an 57: 19)

The supporters of truth mentioned in this verse are the people who are closest – in terms of their virtues – to the prophets, both in this world and the hereafter. As Allah implies in the verse, this position is open to all, so anyone who strives to perfect his or her belief in Him and in His prophets can achieve it, by Allah's will.

A narration from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (ؓ) corroborates this:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: The people of paradise will look (upwards) in admiration at the people inhabiting the uppermost rooms in paradise, in the same way that one looks in the sky for a star in the east and west, because of the preference and virtues of these people over them.

In this verse, Allah commands His servants to believe in these important principles: His revealed books, His messengers, and total submission to Him alone. At the end of the same chapter, He praises His believing servants for holding firmly to this injunction:

﴿ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ ۚ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ ۚ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨٥)

﴿The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah, His angels, His books and His messengers [saying]: We make no distinction between any of His messengers. And they say: We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 285)

Here, Allah mentions that both the Messenger (ﷺ) and the believers around him believed in these fundamentals, and that the believers did not discriminate among the messengers; rather, they believed in all of them and in the message they all brought from their Lord.

They also followed the guidance of their Lord, saying, “We hear and we obey.” They sought assistance from Him to bring their obedience to fruition, and they asked forgiveness for any shortcomings in their belief.

Allah explains that everyone will return to Him. He will reward the believers for maintaining their faith, and He will punish the disbelievers for rejecting faith. He informed us about the followers of some of the past prophets, including Prophet Jesus (‘*alayhi as-salâm* – peace be upon him) and some others, and their supplications asking Allah to count them among the believers, hoping for their rewards. The disciples of Jesus said:

﴿رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا بِمَا أَنزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٥٣)

﴿Our Lord, we have believed in what You revealed, and we have followed the messenger [Jesus], so register us among the witnesses [to truth].﴾ (Qur'an 3: 53)

These people believed sincerely with their hearts, and they genuinely adhered to this belief and submitted to it in practice. They asked Allah to record them as people who truly exhibit their perfect belief in Him, and to guard them from anything that would shake the belief in their hearts, the statements of their tongues, and their physical practice.

Allah describes the features of the believers:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٢-٤)

﴿The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely – the ones who establish prayer, and from what We have provided them, they spend. Those are the true believers. For them are degrees [of high position] with their Lord and forgiveness and noble provision.﴾ (Qur'an 8: 2-4)

Here, Allah uses descriptions that express their sincere establishment of all religious duties – whether obligatory or recommended, open or hidden – because He describes them as having complete belief. This belief manifests itself in their hearts, their statements, and their actions, both open and hidden. The belief in their hearts increases whenever the verses of

Allah are recited to them, and whenever He is mentioned, their fear of Him increases. Within their hearts, they put their trust in Him; they put all their hopes in Him alone and commit themselves totally to Him.

They establish their prayers, both the compulsory and the voluntary ones, in public and in private.

They also give *zakâh* from their wealth,¹² and they spend in the cause of Allah, not only what is required but also extra amounts that they choose to give.

Whoever possesses these qualities has fulfilled all the conditions for attaining a sound state of belief, having performed all required deeds and having totally abstained from all evil. That is why Allah said about them, “Those are the true believers.” These are the people who actually deserve this description, and they uphold the belief both openly and secretly.

Allah then mentions their abundant rewards:

- Forgiveness from their Lord, which guarantees salvation from all forms of evil;¹³
- Being placed in a high position in the sight of their Lord;
- Being favoured with bounties from their Lord, including blessings that no eye has seen, no ear has heard about, and no mind has thought of.

While describing the features of these believers and their enormous rewards from Him, Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِقُرُوبِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ﴾

﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ
 يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١-١١)

﴿Certainly, the believers are successful. They who are during their prayer humbly submissive, and they who turn away from ill speech, and they who are observant of zakâh, and they who guard their private parts except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed – but whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors – and they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive, and they who carefully maintain their prayers. Those are the inheritors who will inherit Firdaws.¹⁴ They will abide therein eternally.﴾ (Qur'an 23: 1-11)

In these verses, Allah describes faith in terms of many great virtues. He starts by describing the believers (those who possess faith) as achieving success, particularly in the hereafter, and then as maintaining solemnity and submissiveness in their prayers. These descriptions are all about upholding religious duties, both the open and the hidden, and refraining from unlawful and detested acts.

Those who are able to observe these deeds of faith completely are deserving of Firdaws,¹⁵ for they have done the best of works. This is a clear indication that faith encompasses:

- matters of ideology,
- manners and character, and
- both open and hidden actions.

It also follows that a believer's faith increases and decreases in relation to the strength or weakness of these phenomena. The level of these qualities varies among individuals, who fall into three categories:

1. **The closest servants of Allah:** people who practice and uphold all the obligatory and recommended acts of the religion, refrain from all the

prohibited and detested acts, and even abstain from a great number of permissible acts.¹⁶

2. **The people of the middle path:** people who perform the obligatory acts of religion only, while refraining from prohibited acts.
3. **The people who wrong themselves:** people who neglect some of the obligatory acts of religion and engage in some of the prohibited acts.¹⁷

This is as Allah mentions in the Qur'an:

﴿ ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴾
(سورة فاطر: ٣٢)

﴿Then we caused to inherit the Book those We have chosen of Our servants; among them is the one who wrongs himself, and among them is the one who is moderate, and among them is the one who is foremost in good deeds, by the permission of Allah. That [inheritance] is the great bounty.﴾ (Qur'an 35: 32)

Allah sometimes relates faith to good deeds such as piety or patience, in order to teach us that faith is not merely belief in the heart. He links faith to good deeds in a number of verses, such as this one:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ... ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٧٧)

﴿Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 277)¹⁸

He then mentions other righteous things that they do.

So good deeds are part of faith. In fact, they make up a compulsory aspect of it; the lack of good deeds makes faith incomplete. Whoever claims to be a believer but does not practice what Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) made

obligatory, and does not refrain from what they prohibited, is not truthful in that belief.

In a number of verses, Allah relates belief to piety. For instance:

﴿الْآيَاتِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة يونس: ٦٢-٦٣)

﴿Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah, there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve – those who believed and feared Allah.﴾ (Qur'an 10: 62-63)

Allah describes complete faith as consisting of all that the heart bears regarding matters of creed and good wishes, in addition to the practice of good deeds. This complete belief cannot be achieved until the servant of Allah fears the consequences of engaging in all that displeases Him, such as acts of disbelief, wickedness and disobedience. Allah affirms this when He mentions: ﴿and feared Allah﴾. ¹⁹

He also explains:

﴿...وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ
وَالْعَصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّشِيدُونَ ﴿٧﴾ فَضَلًّا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ
﴿٨﴾﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ٧-٨)

﴿...but Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] a bounty and favour from Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.﴾ (Qur'an 49: 7-8)

It is a great favour from Allah that He endeared faith to His servants, beautified their hearts with it, made them taste its sweetness, prepared their bodies for His commands, and made hateful to them all prohibited acts.

This favour is not given to all of His servants, though; He knows best who among them deserves it, for He is All-Wise in putting things in their proper and perfect places.

Anas ibn Mâlik (ؓ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Anyone who possesses these three virtues will taste the sweetness of faith: that Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) are more beloved to that person than anything else, that one loves another only for the sake of Allah, and that one hates returning to disbelief just as one hates being thrown into the hellfire.» (Bukhari and Muslim)²⁰

Here, the Prophet (ﷺ) mentions a very significant, fundamental aspect of faith, which is the love for Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ). It is not enough that a believer loves them; that love must take precedence over love for everyone else.

He then mentions the branches of that aspect of faith: love and hate for the sake of Allah. A believer must love all the prophets of Allah (peace be upon them all) and their companions, the martyrs, and all the righteous servants of Allah, because they also upheld the love of Allah, and they are His chosen servants.

Next, the Prophet (ﷺ) mentions that the believers should hate to turn back from their religion, just as they would hate to be thrown into the hellfire.

In this hadith (a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad [ﷺ] that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers), the Prophet (ﷺ) also informs us about the sweetness of faith in the hearts of the true servants of Allah. When they are able to achieve this, it prevents them from being enthusiastic about the lovely attractions of this world, and it helps them resist their desires, leading them to have blessed lives. Since those who love Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) will definitely be thorough and methodical in the remembrance of Allah, they will strive to obey the

Prophet (ﷺ) to the point where they place obedience to the Prophet (ﷺ) above anyone else's opinion and even above their own self-interests and desires.

Those who achieve this will have souls that are serene and ready to obey their Lord, with hearts opened wide to comply with all religious injunctions; they will be upon the light of their Lord. Yet many Muslims may not achieve this noble position. Allah mentions:

﴿وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا...﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٣٢)

﴿And for all are degrees from what they have done...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 132)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Faith has more than seventy (or sixty) branches; the highest one is the statement: There is none worthy of worship other than Allah, and the lowest is the removal of harmful objects from the road. And modesty is a branch of faith.» (Bukhari and Muslim)²¹

This narration provides clear evidence that faith encompasses:

- statements of the tongue,
- actions of the limbs,
- matters of creed,
- discharging all the rights of Allah, and
- good behaviour towards the rest of Allah's creation.

The highest and most fundamental part of faith – in belief, deification, and sincerity of worship – is the statement, “There is none worthy of worship other than Allah.” The lowest one is the removal of any harmful materials, such as bones, thorns, and the like from the road.

If matters of faith encompass points as small as this, then what about much greater things? The Prophet (ﷺ) also mentions that modesty is a part of faith, which is probably because modesty is the life of faith; with it, one is able to abstain from all forms of evil deeds, and it guides one towards good behaviour. Therefore, the levels of faith mentioned in the hadith touch upon all Islamic duties, both the inward and outward.

We also learn from the hadith that an individual's faith rises and falls in relation to increases or decreases in his or her practice of these Islamic duties. Just as people differ in their practice, their levels of faith differ as well. Anyone who claims that faith neither increases nor decreases has failed to recognize this fact and has disputed the clear message of this text.

The difference in the level of each individual's faith is further expressed in the well-known hadith of Gabriel (ؑ),²² in which the Prophet (ﷺ) differentiated between Islam and faith. Gabriel asked what faith was, and the Prophet (ﷺ) answered:

«Belief in Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers, the Last Day and destiny.» (Muslim)

In this hadith, Islam is defined by listing the five well-known pillars of Islam that were mentioned earlier as being included in matters of faith.²³ When Islam and faith are mentioned together, as they are in this hadith, they represent separate, distinct aspects of religion. Faith is described as belief in the heart, and Islam – which is otherwise referred to as righteous deeds – is redefined in terms of an individual's religious obligations. However, when faith is mentioned alone, as explained earlier, it encompasses all Islamic actions. The evidence is this narration of Anas ibn Mâlik, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than are his father, his children, and all of humankind.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) was informing us that when there is a conflict between any of his commands and another person's opinion, the Muslim who prefers what the Prophet (ﷺ) loves and commands is a true believer in Allah; otherwise, that person's faith is definitely not complete. This supports our point that faith increases and decreases, and that it encompasses all Islamic practices.

Concerning the love for the Prophet (ﷺ) and his rulings, Allah explains:

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٦٥)

«But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you [O Muhammad] judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged, and submit in [full, willing] submission.» (Qur'an 4: 65)

In this verse, Allah (ﷻ) swears that the people are not believers until they make the Prophet (ﷺ) judge between them, have no ill feelings in their hearts towards his judgment, and totally submit to and accept his judgment.

The 'judgment' referred to in this verse covers all aspects of the religion: the fundamentals and the non-fundamentals, as well as general and specific rulings.

Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«None of you is considered a true believer until you love for your fellow Muslim what you love for yourself.» (Bukhari and Muslim)²⁴

This hadith requires a Muslim to give fellow Muslims their rights, whether specific or general, for that is part of faith. Those who fail to carry out this responsibility – who do not love for others what they love for themselves – do not possess the true compulsory belief of a believer,

because their belief is deficient when it comes to discharging this responsibility.

This hadith, narrated by ‘Abbâs ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, further explains that faith encompasses all facets of religion. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The person who will taste the sweetness of faith is the one who is pleased with Allah as his Lord, with Islam as his religion, and with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as his prophet.» (Muslim)

It should be noted that being ‘pleased with’, as mentioned in this hadith, requires that the person be satisfied and content with the Lordship of Allah, and that he or she meditate and reflect on it a great deal. This person should be pleased with Islam as a religion, should feel happy about being Muslim, and should thank Allah for this blessing. The highest favour that Allah can grant His servant is to be chosen for Islam. In addition, a person should be pleased with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as the Messenger, since he is the most perfect human being, the best in all respects, and since his generation and followers are the best of humankind in both this life and the hereafter.

Being pleased with and obeying the Prophet (ﷺ) and his message are two of the best deeds for bringing about sincere faith, as Allah explains:

﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ
مُّبِينٍ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٤)

«Certainly did Allah confer [great] favour upon the believers when He sent among them a messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error.» (Qur’an 3: 164)

﴿لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ١٢٨)

﴿There has certainly come to you a messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you, and to the believers is kind and merciful.﴾ (Qur'an 9: 128)

Why would a believer not be pleased with this generous, kind, and merciful prophet whom Allah swears has an exalted standard of character?
[25](#)

The best that servants of Allah (□) can do is to be affiliated with the worship of their Lord and to be committed to imitating His Prophet (ﷺ) by loving him and obeying him. Obedience is a sign of true love for Allah; through it, a person establishes real love and belief. Allah mentions:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٣١)

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.﴾ (Qur'an 3: 31)

«Sufyân ibn ‘Abdullâh ath-Thaqafi once said to the Prophet (ﷺ): O Messenger of Allah, tell me something in Islam that I will not ask anyone other than you.

He replied: Say: I believe in Allah. Then be upright.» (Muslim)²⁶

With this general advice, the Prophet (ﷺ) meant that:

- If a servant of Allah accepts faith, both openly and secretly, and sticks to it firmly in terms of statements, actions, practices, and matters of abstinence, then that person has reached the peak of religious

disposition, and he or she is without a doubt on the straight path of Allah.

- A person should hope to be among those about whom Allah mentions:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُ أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾﴾ (سورة فصلت: ٣٠-٣٢)

﴿Indeed, those who have said, Our Lord is Allah, and then remained on a right course – the angels will descend upon them [saying]: Do not fear and do not grieve, but receive good tidings of paradise, which you were promised. We [angels] were your allies in worldly life and [are so] in the hereafter. You will have therein whatever your souls desire, and you will have therein whatever you request [or wish] as accommodation from a [Lord Who is] Forgiving and Merciful.﴾

(Qur'an 41: 30-32)

This narration from Ibn ‘Abbâs offers more evidence that faith encompasses Islamic practices and not just belief in the heart:

«When the delegation from the tribe of ‘Abdul-Qays reached the Prophet (ﷺ)... they asked him: Please order us to do something good (religious deeds), which we can tell our people, and by which we may enter paradise. They also asked him about drinks.

The Prophet (ﷺ) commanded four things and prohibited four things for them. He commanded belief in Allah alone, and then he asked: Do you know what faith in Allah means?

They replied: Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) know best.

He said: That you bear witness that none is worthy of worship except Allah alone and that Muhammad is His messenger, that you establish prayer, pay zakâh, fast Ramadan and give one-fifth of the war booty (to the Muslim state).

Then he prohibited these four things for them: (That which is soaked in) a verdurous (green) coated jar, a vessel made from a gourd, a vessel made from a palm tree trunk, and a vessel coated with pitch.²⁷

He then said: Memorize these (commands) and inform your people about them.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

This also proves that faith encompasses all Islamic duties, including prayer, zakâh, fasting, and giving one-fifth of the war booty. All these acts of worship define in clearer terms what faith is, so there remains no doubt that faith covers both matters of creed and physical practices. Invariably, all religious acts that can bring the servants of Allah closer to Him – including statements, actions, and matters of ideology – are regarded as part of faith.

We also have the report of Abu Umâmah, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever loves for Allah's sake, hates for His sake, gives for His sake and withholds for His sake has indeed fulfilled the conditions for the perfection of faith.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood, at-Tirmidhi and Aḥmad; authenticated by al-Albâni)

Love and hatred are both in the heart, so these feelings may be hidden, but both giving and withholding are actions that are observable. In order for such open or apparent actions to be accepted, they must be done with sincerity, which is the essence and secret of faith.

- Loving for Allah's sake involves loving Allah and the righteous deeds that He loves, as well as the generations that He prefers, the situation that one has been given, and the prophets and their followers.

- Hating for the sake of Allah means to hate whatever Allah hates in terms of disbelief, wickedness, and disobedience, as well as those for whom such evils have become a way of life and those who call people to them.
- Giving involves discharging all the responsibilities placed on a servant of Allah.

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنِيَرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى ﴿٧﴾﴾ (سورة الليل:

(٧-٥)

﴿As for the one who gives [as a duty to Allah] and fears Allah and believes in the best [reward], we will ease that person toward the easy [path].﴾ (Qur'an 92: 5-7)

So the giving includes discharging all that is commanded regarding religious practices. It is not only almsgiving, as the word may suggest, for almsgiving is only a part of this act.

- Withholding, on the other hand, involves stopping or preventing an evil act from occurring, warning someone about an evil act, or preventing a person from taking an opportunity that is actually bad even though he or she perceives it as good.²⁸

With these four, servants of Allah fulfil the conditions for completing their faith.

Further evidence is found in this narration of Abu Hurayrah (ؓ), on the authority of the Prophet (ﷺ), that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«A believer is one to whom people feel safe entrusting their lives and their property.» (Recorded by an-Nasâ'i, at-Tirmidhi, and Aḥmad; authenticated by al-Albâni)

This hadith indicates that sound faith will guide its owner to be trustworthy and will prevent betrayal, to the extent that people will trust this

person with their lives and property.

All these texts explain exactly what faith is. As al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri mentions,²⁹ “Faith is not by wishes, and it is not an adornment. It is that which is sincerely established in the hearts and certified by righteous deeds.”³⁰

So righteous deeds, both open and hidden, establish and certify the faith of a believer, as Allah mentions:

﴿... وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ...﴾ (سورة التغابن: ١١)

﴿...And whoever believes in Allah – He will guide that person’s heart...﴾
(Qur’an 64: 11)

If any servant of Allah is afflicted with an ordeal and believes that it is from Allah, that Allah is All-Wise and Most Compassionate in His ordainment, and that Allah knows best what is good for His servants at all times, then Allah (ﷻ) will guide that person’s heart to contentment, patience, submissiveness and tranquillity.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ...﴾ (سورة يونس: ٩)

﴿Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – their Lord will guide them because of their faith...﴾ (Qur’an 10: 9)

In this verse, Allah does not mention exactly what kind of guidance, but it encompasses the guidance towards what is good and the guidance of refraining from evil, and that is the result of sincere belief.

In one sense, deeds are a part of faith; in another sense, they are its fruits and essential products. May Allah guide us.

Also regarding faith, Allah says:

﴿...وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٣)

﴿...And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 143)

Many scholars of Qur'an interpretation have explained that in this verse, faith means the prayers that the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) had previously offered towards Jerusalem, which was the direction they used to face. Some of the Muslims had already died by the time the direction was changed to be towards the Kaaba (the House of Allah) in Makkah,³¹ so some of the people were confused, wondering what would happen to the prayers of their dead brothers and sisters. Allah revealed this verse to inform them that those prayers, offered towards Jerusalem in obedience to Allah and following His Prophet (ﷺ), actually exemplified the faith that Allah required from them.³²

Among the many other lessons that can be derived from the previous verse are:

- An excellent glad tiding is that Allah will not deny any believers their faith, no matter how small it is. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah will save from the hellfire anyone who has faith in his or her heart, even if it is as small as the weight of a mustard seed.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

- Another glad tiding is that if someone performs an act of worship in obedience to Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ), but follows a wrong interpretation of the text from either the Qur'an or Sunnah, or makes a mistake, or engages in an abrogated act without being aware of its abrogation, but he or she does so with sincere belief in Allah and in obedience to Him – that person will be forgiven.³³ Allah will not deny the reward for his or her good intention or for obedience to Him. Allah mentions this prayer of the believers:

﴿...رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨٦)

﴿...Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 286)

Allah replied to them through His Prophet (ﷺ):

«I have done that.» (Muslim)³⁴

The Prophet (ﷺ) also mentioned in this authentic hadith:

«When a judge gives a decision, having tried his best to decide correctly, and is right, there are two rewards for him. If he gave a judgment after having tried his best (to arrive at a correct decision) but erred, there is one reward for him. (Shaykh as-Sa'di added: and his mistake is forgiven.)» (Bukhari and Muslim)

In the same way, if someone intends to do a good deed, having a good intention and serious determination, but then is prevented from doing so (by sickness, a journey, incompetence, or anything else), that person will be rewarded for the intention.

This is established in the narration of Abu Moosâ in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Anyone who falls sick or embarks on a journey will have written for him the reward for whatever good things he used to do while healthy or at home.» (Bukhari)

This ruling also applies to elderly persons who are unable to continue their customary good practices.

We have adequately established the scope and meaning of faith as explained in the Qur'an and Sunnah – that faith is a broad concept encompassing all Islamic practices, and that the fundamentals of faith, the uniqueness of ihsân, and all their subordinate matters form part of the religion or even are the religion itself. It should also be understood that faith

increases and decreases; even within one individual, it may be very strong at times and weak at other times. There is no doubt about this, whether we look at it from the perspective of Islamic principles, common sense, or the practice of people.

Looking at it from the Islamic point of view, this cannot be doubted because the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah that establish it are very explicit. The following are just a few of the Qur'an verses on this topic:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزِدُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ...﴾ (سورة الفتح: ٤)

﴿It is He Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith...﴾ (Qur'an 48: 4)

﴿... وَبَزَادَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِيمَانًا...﴾ (سورة المدثر: ٣١)

﴿...those who have believed will increase in faith...﴾ (Qur'an 74: 31)

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدَّ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَأَخْشَوْهُمْ فَرَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٣)

﴿Those to whom the hypocrites said: Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them. But it [merely] increased them in faith, and they said: Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.﴾ (Qur'an 3: 173)

﴿وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَقُولُ أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ إِيمَانًا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ١٢٤)

﴿And whenever a chapter [of the Qur'an] is revealed, there are among the hypocrites those who say: Which of you has this increased in faith? As for

those who believed, it has increased them in faith, while they are rejoicing. ﴿Qur'an 9: 124﴾

Various aspects of faith, common sense, and people's practices testify to the fact that faith increases and decreases. The simple fact that people differ greatly in terms of demographic factors and the like, in addition to their levels of knowledge and understanding, and their dispositions and deeds – both open and hidden – is enough proof.

For instance, some Muslims have a comprehensive insight into the knowledge, understanding, and deeds of faith – an insight that is not found in many others. Others lack a general knowledge of religion; as a result, they do few good deeds.

A lot of these people suffer from confusion, inconsistency, vagueness, and a tendency to follow their own desires; this weakens their faith and decreases their state of belief.

One might observe that believers generally have different levels of knowledge regarding faith. Some of them have very good and sound knowledge of it, while others have poor knowledge.

People also differ greatly in terms of qualities like tolerance, patience, and manners;³⁵ these also indicate the level of their faith.

In a physical act of worship, such as prayer, two different men may be seen observing the same kind of prayer. One performs it correctly, fulfilling all its obligations (both the external and internal), performing it as if he sees Allah; even if the individual does not see Allah, he knows that Allah sees him. The other person performs the prayer without consciousness, either internal or external. (This is also applicable to all other physical acts of worship.)

This is why Muslims are categorized into three groups:

1. The foremost believers,

2. The people of the middle path, and
3. The people who wrong themselves.

The people in each of these categories are very different from those in the other categories. In practice, any servant of Allah may experience different circumstances at different times and with different states of mind. Sometimes a person is inclined to perform many good deeds; at other times, the opposite may be the case.

All this confirms the fact that faith increases and decreases; it is sometimes very strong and at other times weak.

This is why the noble and eminent people of this Ummah (the Muslim nation), as well as others who give special attention to matters of faith, struggle at all times to practice their faith. They strive to increase and strengthen it, and they strive to combat any form of confusion that could affect it. They always supplicate to Allah to strengthen and to increase their faith in terms of their knowledge, practice, and state of mind.³⁶

We ask Allah to increase our knowledge and certainty, and to increase our contentment with Him through remembrance of Him and through sincerity of belief.

These special servants of Allah always strive to attain perfection in their belief. They believe in what they hear (of beliefs) even before they are able to confirm it themselves, but then they strive to confirm it so that they can believe with certainty,³⁷ as in the story of Abraham (□):

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ ۗ قَالَ أُولَٰئِمَّا تُوْمِنُ ۗ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبِي ۗ قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ أَجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٠﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٠)

﴿And [mention] when Abraham said: My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead. [Allah] asked: Have you not believed? He responded: Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied. [Allah] commanded: Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them – they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is exalted in Might and Wise.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 260)

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ نُرَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾﴾

(سورة الأنعام: ٧٥)

﴿And thus did We show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth, that he would be among the certain [in faith].﴾ (Qur'an 6: 75)

When the sincere disciples of Jesus, the son of Mary, requested that food be sent down to them, Jesus (ﷺ) admonished them, but they explained:

﴿قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ صَدَقْتَنَا وَنَكُونَ عَلَيْهَا

مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١١٣)

﴿We wish to eat from it to let our hearts be reassured and to know that you have been truthful to us and so that we will be among its witnesses.﴾ (Qur'an 5: 113)

They mentioned their worldly needs together with the knowledge of faith that they desired.

CHAPTER TWO

Ways to Strengthen One's Faith

This is a much-needed and very important discussion, so we must give it serious consideration and understand it perfectly in relation to other associated matters.

This is because faith makes us perfect servants of Allah. With it, we are elevated in both this life and the hereafter, and it is the only way to salvation in both this life and the hereafter. However, this faith cannot be acquired, strengthened, or perfected until we know the perfect way to acquire it and we understand its causes and sources, as well as the things that strengthen it.

Fortunately, Allah (ﷻ) has not only given every human being certain desires, but He has also provided the ways to fulfil them. Faith is the most important and the most beloved desire a Muslim can have, and Allah provided very special and numerous ways to acquire and strengthen this faith.

Just as there are factors that weaken faith (and these have causes), there are also methods to acquire and strengthen it. These can be divided into general and more specific methods.

The general means of acquiring and strengthening our faith are:

- pondering upon the words of Allah as found in the Qur'an and Sunnah
- reflecting on the various signs of Allah in the universe
- striving to know the true purpose of human creation
- working with the truth after knowing it

Classical Islamic sources provide evidence to support all of these means.

Faith can also be acquired and strengthened through the following more specific methods.

Knowing the beautiful names of Allah

The best of these ways is learning the beautiful names and attributes of Allah, as mentioned in both the Qur'an and Sunnah, and devoting oneself to understanding their meanings and to using them to worship Allah. It is established from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Verily, Allah has ninety-nine names³⁸ – one hundred minus one. Whoever takes care of them will enter paradise.» (Bukhari and Muslim)³⁹

To 'take care of them' involves memorizing them, understanding their meanings, having sincere belief in them, and worshipping Allah with them; whoever is able to do this will be admitted to paradise, by the grace of Allah. None but the believers will be admitted to paradise, and having a good relationship with the names of Allah earns a person paradise, so it is

understood that this is the best way to achieve faith and a good way to strengthen it.

This also implies that knowing the beautiful names and attributes of Allah, and having a good relationship with them, is the basis of faith.

Moreover, an understanding of these names includes knowledge of the three forms of tawḥeed:

1. *Tawḥeed ar-Ruboobiyah* (Oneness of Allah in His Lordship)
2. *Tawḥeed al-Uloohiyah* (Oneness of Allah in worship)
3. *Tawḥeed al-Asmâ' waṣ-Ṣifât* (Oneness of Allah in His names and attributes)

These forms of tawḥeed are actually the functions, the fundamentals, and the goals of faith. As servants of Allah continue to grow in their understanding of, and good relationship with, the names and attributes of Allah, their faith simultaneously increases, and their certainty is strengthened. It is therefore compulsory for the believers to do all they can to understand this concept of the names and attributes of Allah.

This understanding must be very sound, of course, free of any weakness caused by alterations or false interpretations, and without likening anything to Allah or equating Allah with any of His creation. The practices of the people of innovation and of those who oppose the true guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ) are in error. True believers must take their understanding from the Qur'an and Sunnah, in the same way as it was understood by the Companions and by those who truly followed them. This is the understanding that will always serve to develop their faith, strengthen their conviction and guide them towards tranquillity.

Reflecting on the Qur'an

One way to achieve this understanding is by constantly reflecting on the verses of the Qur'an, because those who do so will benefit from their lessons, and this in turn will increase their faith. Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿... وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ﴾ (سورة

الأنفال: ٢)

﴿...and when His verses are recited to [the believers], it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely.﴾ (Qur'an 8: 2)

When one reflects on the beautiful arrangement of the Qur'an, its precision, its verses that confirm and strengthen one another,⁴⁰ and the absence of any conflict or contradiction, he or she believes with conviction that it is revealed by Allah, the All-Wise and the Most Praised. No falsehood can approach it from any direction; if it were from anyone other than Allah, it would surely contain many contradictions and discrepancies.

Allah mentions:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٢)

(سورة النساء: ٨٢)

﴿Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [anyone] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.﴾

(Qur'an 4: 82)

So reflecting upon the verses of the Qur'an is one of the best ways to strengthen one's faith, and this reflection occurs in several ways.

Ordinarily, if a servant of Allah recites any portion of the Qur'an, trying to understand its true message and the beautiful rulings therein, that person acquires a great deal of faith. How much more would he or she gain by trying to ponder over it and understand its in-depth meanings? This can

be understood from this statement of the foremost believers, the Prophet's Companions (□):

﴿رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَءَامَنَّا...﴾ (سورة

آل عمران: ١٩٣)

﴿Our Lord, indeed, we have heard a caller calling to faith [saying]: Believe in your Lord – and we have believed...﴾ (Qur'an 3: 193)

Faith is also acquired from, and strengthened by, understanding the authentic narrations of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the knowledge that they preach, and by all the actions that bring about faith.

As servants of Allah increase their knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah, their faith and conviction increase as well, and they can develop the highest level of certainty and belief.

For this reason, Allah praised the people who are firmly grounded in knowledge: the people who have real knowledge, who are capable of discarding all forms of doubt and ambiguity, and who can attain the highest level of certainty in their belief. These people are role models, whom Allah swore by and whom He presented as evidence to those who deny and doubt Him.

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ ءَايَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخْرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو

الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧)

﴿It is He Who has sent down to you [O Muhammad] the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise – they are the foundation of the Book – and others unspecific. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will

follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. But those firm in knowledge say: We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord. And no one will be reminded except those of understanding. ﴿ (Qur'an 3: 7)

In this verse, Allah informs us that those who are grounded in knowledge are able to combat ignorance, doubt and all forms of uncertainty. They use the understanding of the verses that are clear (on their own merit) to comprehend those that are not entirely clear. They say, “We believe in all of it. It is all from Allah, and all His words and rulings are truth and certainty.”

Allah mentions:

﴿ لَكِنَّ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ... ﴾

﴿ (سورة النساء: ١٦٢) ﴾

﴿But those firm in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you [O Muhammad] and what was revealed before you...﴾ (Qur'an 4: 162)

﴿ شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ﴾

﴿ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨) ﴾

﴿Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge – [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.﴾ (Qur'an 3: 18)

On account of their real and perfect knowledge of the Qur'an and their sound belief, Allah swears by them, both in this life and the hereafter.⁴¹ He mentions:

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلَكِن كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ (سورة الروم: ٥٦)

﴿But those who were given knowledge and faith will say: You remained the extent of Allah's decree until the Day of Resurrection, and this is the Day of Resurrection, but you did not used to know.﴾ (Qur'an 30: 56)

In many places in the Qur'an, Allah mentions that the Qur'an is a sign from Him to the believers (*mu'minoon*) and to the people who believe with certainty (*mooqinoon*). As they recite it and ponder upon it, they acquire knowledge, faith, and certainty, to the degree that Allah opens up their hearts, and this will not stop increasing as long as they recite it and ponder its verses. This is why reflecting on the verses of the Qur'an is one of the best ways to acquire and strengthen one's faith. Allah explains:

﴿ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾ (سورة ص: ٢٩)

﴿[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.﴾ (Qur'an 38: 29)

Acquiring these blessings of the Qur'an, of which faith is the most significant blessing, requires reflecting and meditating on its verses. If only people reflected on its verses, that would put a stop to any arguments regarding it, and it would prevent transgression. Allah asks:

﴿ أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ ... ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٨)

﴿Then have they not reflected over the Qur'an...?﴾ (Qur'an 23: 68)

In other words, if they had taken the time to really and truly ponder its message, this would have prevented them from disbelieving and rejecting it.

It would have compelled them to embrace faith and to follow the one with whom this message was sent.

﴿بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ...﴾ (سورة يونس: ٣٩)

﴿Rather, they have denied that which they do not encompass in knowledge...﴾ (Qur'an 10: 39)

If they had knowledge of it, they would have stopped denying it, and they would have been obliged to embrace faith.

Knowing the Prophet (ﷺ)

Another way to strengthen faith is to know who the Prophet (ﷺ) really was and to understand his exalted manners and noble attributes. Those who know him in his true sense will never doubt him; they will definitely believe in all he brought: the message of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the true religion.

﴿أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٩)

﴿Or did they not know their Messenger, so they deny him?﴾ (Qur'an 23: 69)

Knowing who the Prophet (ﷺ) actually was will prompt the servants of Allah to affirm and increase their belief in him. While urging the disbelievers to reflect upon the status of the Prophet (ﷺ), Allah mentions:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعِظُكُمْ بِوَحْدَةِ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَشْنَىٰ وَفِرَادَىٰ ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾
﴿مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِّنْ جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ لَّكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ﴾ (سورة

سبأ: ٤٦)

﴿Say: I only advise you of one [thing]: that you stand for Allah, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought. There is not in your companion any madness. He is only a warner to you before a severe punishment.﴾ (Qur'an 34: 46)

Allah (ﷻ) swore by the perfection of this Prophet (ﷺ) and his great and noble character, and He vowed that he was the best person in terms of character:

﴿بِالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ﴿١﴾ مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾﴾ (سورة القلم: ١-٤)

﴿By the pen and what they [the angels] inscribe, you are not [O Muhammad], by the favour of your Lord, a madman. Indeed, for you is a reward uninterrupted, and indeed, you are of a great moral character.﴾ (Qur'an 68: 1-4)

The Prophet (ﷺ) is the greatest caller to faith, with his praiseworthy qualities, beautiful features, truthful and fitting speeches, and prudent practices. He is the greatest leader and a perfect role model. Allah describes him this way:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ...﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٢١)

﴿There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example...﴾ (Qur'an 33: 21)

In one of the places where Allah commands the believers to follow in the footsteps of His Messenger (ﷺ), the greatest caller to faith, He explains:

﴿... وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا...﴾ (سورة الحشر: ٧)

﴿... And whatever the Messenger has given you – take it, and what he has forbidden you – refrain from it...﴾ (Qur'an 59: 7)

The Qur'an reports the comments of some of the people of understanding, those who accepted the message, who said:

﴿رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ ...﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٣)

﴿Our Lord, indeed, we have heard a caller calling to faith...﴾ (Qur'an 3: 193)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called them with eloquent and true speech, excellent character, a generous attitude, and beautiful religious practices. According to this verse, they go on to say:

﴿... فَآمَنَّا ...﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٣)

﴿...and we have believed...﴾ (Qur'an 3: 193)

Their belief is free from all forms of doubt. Moreover, since belief is the best way to bring servants close to Allah and to the path most beloved to Him, they beseech Allah with their belief, hoping that He will forgive their sins and have mercy on them. These people of understanding continue:

﴿... رَبَّنَا فَاعْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٩٣)

﴿...Our Lord, so forgive us our sins and remove from us our misdeeds and cause us to die with the righteous.﴾ (Qur'an 3: 193)

This is why all fair-minded people – those who are sincere in seeking only the truth – believe in the Prophet (ﷺ) just as if they could see and hear him, and after that, they do not doubt his message. It was even reported that some of the foremost believers accepted his message after merely gazing at his noble face, because they could discern from his face that he was not a liar.

One of these people was asked, “What prompted you to believe in Muhammad even before you acquainted yourself with his message?”

He replied, “I do not see him ordering anything that a rational person might reject; likewise, I do not see him prohibiting anything that a rational person might find appealing.”

This fortunate, wise man came to this beautiful conclusion about the Sharia (Islamic rulings) of the Prophet (ﷺ), and he was judicious about the whole of his message before he even had access to it, simply because the rulings were logical and appealed to good sense. He accepted the message immediately.

After being told of the Prophet’s message, and of what he commanded and prohibited, the Roman emperor Heraclius publicly concluded that he was a noble messenger. Nevertheless, Heraclius was prevented from following him due to concern over his own position of leadership and fear that his kingdom would collapse.⁴² This was also the case with some others who knew that the Prophet (ﷺ) was a true messenger but chose not to follow him; for the likes of these people, this fear of losing status is one of the greatest obstacles to accepting faith.

In contrast, people with good foresight and logical reasoning do not see these kinds of hindrances – leadership positions and other desires – as irresistible. Since they regard them as insignificant, they do not use them as excuses for discarding the truth, and this brings success in this life and the hereafter.

For this reason, the people with great affinity for memorizing and understanding the Qur’an, as well as those who have a good relationship with the authentic narrations of the Prophet (ﷺ), have stronger faith and the highest level of certainty and belief; they also engage in better actions, for the most part.

Reflecting on the creation of Allah (□)

Another way to strengthen one's faith is by reflecting on the creation. Reflecting on the creation of the heavens and the earth, as well as the different creatures they contain, and reflecting on the creation of human beings and their characteristics – all these are effective sources of strong faith.

Since these creations contain many features that indicate the power and the majesty of their Creator (including their beauty, orderliness and precision, which even the wise find difficult to comprehend), they all demonstrate the magnitude of His knowledge and the mightiness of His wisdom.

All of the creation – in addition to its various beneficial provisions and abundant and uncountable blessings – manifests Allah's great blessings, presence, and benevolence. This causes those with sincere minds to recognize the majesty of their Originator and their Fashioner; as a result, they are devoted to the praise, continuous remembrance, and sincere worship of Allah. All of these functions are the keys to faith.

Look at the requests of all the creation, at their general needs from their Lord, and at the fact that they cannot manage to live without Him even for as long as the blink of an eye. You can confirm this by thinking of your own personal requests and needs from Him; this is without a doubt profound evidence of everyone's reliance on Him.

Therefore, all servants of Allah should be totally submissive and humble in their supplications to Him, in order to achieve all their various needs, both worldly and religious, and to drive away every evil. This will cause them to have complete reliance on and confidence in their Lord, perfect trust in His promises, and a strong desire for His provision and help.

These servants of Allah will then be able to acquire real faith and to improve their acts of worship, because supplication is the core and purification of worship.⁴³

Reflecting on the blessings of Allah (□)

Another way to strengthen one's faith is by reflecting on Allah's numerous blessings and favours, both general and specific, without which His creation could not exist. This is a good source of faith.

Allah commanded the Prophet (ﷺ) and all the believers with him to be grateful to Him:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ ءِتِيَاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٧٢)

﴿O you who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is [indeed] Him that you worship.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 172)

So faith calls them to be grateful, and gratefulness in turn helps in the development of their faith; therefore, these attributes accompany one another.

One of the actions that can help to strengthen faith is to increase the remembrance of Allah, and interestingly, supplication, which is the core of worship, is a form of remembrance. The remembrance of Allah strengthens faith because it works to implant faith in the hearts of the believers, and then to nourish and develop it. Whenever the servants of Allah increase their remembrance of Allah, their faith increases. By the same token, faith

calls to the remembrance of Allah. Thus, those who love Allah remember Him often, and this love for Him is a function of faith; it can even be said to be the life of faith.

Knowing the virtues of religion

The whole religion of Islam is virtuous in its nature. Its creed is sound, truthful, and exact; its teachings are the best; and its practices and rulings are fair, impartial, and favourable. For those who are able to understand Islam in this beautiful way, Allah will beautify their hearts with faith, and He will make it dear and beloved to them, as He mentions having done for some of His beloved servants:

﴿... وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ
وَالْعَصِيَانَ...﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ٧)

﴿...but Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience...﴾

(Qur'an 49: 7)

This implies that faith in the hearts of the believers is the most beloved and most pleasant thing for them. With it, they are able to achieve the sweetness of faith in their hearts; inwardly, they are beautified with the fundamentals of religion and faith, and their external bodies are beautified with deeds of belief. ‘Ammâr ibn Yâsir reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) supplicated:

«O Allah, beautify us with the adornment of faith and make us of the rightly guided.» (Recorded by Aḥmad and an-Nasâ'i; authenticated by adh-Dhahabi)

Striving for perfection

One of the best ways to strengthen one's faith is by striving for perfection in worshipping Allah and in dealing with the rest of His creation. The believers try to worship Allah as if they see Him; if they cannot attain that level, then they should be conscious of the fact that Allah sees them, and they should then strive to complete and perfect their worship. Still, they should never relent in their efforts to attain that highest level until they are able to perfect and strengthen their faith. They should also endeavour to reach the highest level of certainty; this brings them the sweetness of sincere obedience to Allah as well as the fruit of good relations, which confirms their complete faith.

In addition, being kind to the rest of creation in terms of one's statements, wealth, and position, and in other beneficial ways, is part of faith and can bring about perfect faith. As the saying goes, "Your reward will be in accordance with the deeds you do." When individuals keep doing good to the servants of Allah, trying as much as possible to be benevolent to them, Allah is good to those individuals, too, in many ways.⁴⁴

The best favour that can be done for the servants of Allah is encouraging them to strengthen their belief, to engage in more good deeds, to perform all the acts that can move them closer to Allah, and to purify their deeds to Him. Those who do so will have discharged the duties required of them in regard to the rights of Allah and His servants, because religion is about the discharging of responsibilities.⁴⁵

So those who are blessed to attain a state of perfection, in the worship of their Lord and in their dealings with His creation, have indeed fulfilled their rights. By doing so, they have completed the requirements for the perfection of their belief.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«None of you is regarded as a true believer until you love for your fellow Muslim what you love for yourself.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Working on the qualities that believers should have

Another way to strengthen faith is by working on the qualities that Allah describes the believers as having:

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١-١١)

«Certainly, the believers are successful. They who are during their prayer humbly submissive, and they who turn away from ill speech, and they who are observant of zakâh, and they who guard their private parts except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed – but whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors – and they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive, and they who carefully maintain their prayers. Those are the inheritors who will inherit Firdaws. They will abide therein eternally.» (Qur'an 23: 1-11)

Each of the qualities mentioned in these verses can help one to acquire and develop true faith, because these qualities are originally characteristics

of faith, as explained previously.

For instance, if a person performs the prayer with full solemnity and submissiveness, striving to stay focused on the recitation, supplications, standings, sittings, bowings, and prostrations, this helps to develop faith.

We mentioned earlier that Allah refers to prayer as faith when He mentions:

﴿... وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٣)

﴿...And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 143)

Allah also mentions:

﴿... إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ...﴾ (سورة

العنكبوت: ٤٥)

﴿...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...﴾ (Qur'an 29: 45)

Prayer is the best thing to prevent one from engaging in any forms of evil that negate all acts of faith. It encourages the remembrance of Allah, and that in turn develops faith, as mentioned in a continuation of the verse above:

﴿... وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ...﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ٤٥)

﴿...and the remembrance of Allah is greater...﴾ (Qur'an 29: 45)

Giving charity – both compulsory and voluntary – increases faith, for the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned:

«Giving charity is a proof.» (Muslim)

This means that it is proof of sound faith; thus almsgiving helps in acquiring and developing faith.

The same applies to abandoning all illicit speech and actions. The people of faith should always utter good words and engage in good practices, always striving to abstain from evil, unlike the disbelievers. There is no doubt that this is a product of sound faith; it increases and develops it.

This is why when the Companions and their followers felt any loss or weakness in their faith, they would say to their fellow Muslims, “Sit with us for a while, and let us discuss matters that will develop our faith.” Then they would discuss matters that made them remember Allah, and they would mention the blessings of Allah – both religious and worldly; afterwards, their faith would have improved.

Guarding one’s chastity is no doubt an excellent sign of sincere belief and a means of improving it. On account of the fear of standing before Allah to account for their deeds, the believers refute evil desires in response to the call of faith, and thus they increase their faith.

Being truthful in promises and covenants is also a sign of sound faith, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«There is no faith for one who is not trustworthy.» (Recorded by Ibn Abi Shaybah; authenticated by al-Albâni)

If you want to know the state of faith and the religion of any person, look at how he or she handles matters of trust and promises, whether through monetary or verbal promises, or in terms of discharging responsibilities. Then ask, “Does this person give others their rights? Does this person keep promises? Does this person fulfil the covenants with Allah and with fellow human beings?”

If the individual fulfils these covenants, then he or she will have attained a level of sound faith and perfect religion; if not, this person’s faith and religion are deficient to the same degree as his or her shortcomings in being trustworthy and in fulfilling promises.

Guarding the prayer

Allah concludes this list of qualities with the strict guarding of the prayer in terms of its restrictions, rights, times, and the like, because safeguarding the prayer is like having a stream flowing through the garden of faith, constantly nourishing it. As we discussed earlier, the tree of faith must be nourished at all times.

Strictly guarding the prayers invariably serves to monitor one's actions because prayer is performed throughout the day and night. It ranges from the state of mind and the physical practices – both during the day and at night – to guarding one's actions by trying to refute any external attacks that might damage them; this in turn keeps a person away from prohibited statements and actions.

If these matters are perfected, then the garden of faith is brought to life, able to bring forth its various beautiful fruits.

Some other ways

Among the ways of improving one's faith are: calling to the way of Allah and His religion, encouraging one another to be truthful and patient, and calling to the fundamentals of religion and other Islamic practices by commanding what is good and forbidding what is evil.

With these, one is able to take care of oneself and to help others, as Allah mentions in the Qur'an when He swears upon time that humans are in a state of loss except for those with four qualities: 1) faith and 2) good deeds, both of which are needed to make a complete believer; 3) encouraging others to be truthful, which is the act of teaching others beneficial knowledge, good deeds, and the true religion; and 4) encouraging

one another to be patient in carrying out these practices.⁴⁶ This implies that calling to the way of Allah and upholding the rights of His creation are two of the best ways to strengthen faith.

The fact that callers to the way of Allah always strive to establish evidence for their claims, putting matters in the right perspective and tailoring them appropriately, is enough to guide a person to the true faith.

In line with the saying, “Your reward will be in accordance with the deeds you do,” if people strive to help the servants of Allah, encouraging them to be truthful and remaining patient, then Allah will definitely reward them. He will enlighten their hearts, strengthen their faith, and increase their confidence in, and reliance on, Him. With this faith and total confidence in Allah, they will be able to overcome all of their enemies from the devils of humankind and jinn, as Allah explains:

﴿إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ﴾ (سورة

النحل: ٩٩)

﴿Indeed, there is for him [Satan] no authority over those who have believed and rely upon their Lord.﴾ (Qur'an 16: 99)

These believers are on the path of defending the truth. Without a doubt, when anyone is defending Allah's religion, He will open ways for them in both knowledge and faith, according to the level of their truthfulness and sincerity.

Abstinance from acts that can damage faith

One other beautiful way of strengthening faith is fighting to prevent one's mind from falling into anything that can negate faith, such as disbelief, hypocrisy, wickedness, or disobedience. Just as it is compulsory to engage in acts that bring about and strengthen faith, it is also compulsory to abstain from acts that can damage it, by:

- Always refraining from every evil, and immediately seeking forgiveness if any evil does occur.
- Guarding all parts of the body from evil.
- Fighting all the doubts and desires that can come and weaken one's willingness for sound faith. The wish for sound faith, which is born out of desires and love for good things, will not be complete until one abstains from evil desires that negate it and one fights the part of the mind that commands evil.

Whenever servants of Allah are able to safeguard themselves from doubts and evil desires, their faith is complete, and certainty is ascertained; then their garden of faith becomes as Allah describes:

﴿وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٥)

﴿And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allah and assuring [reward for] themselves is like a garden on high ground which is hit by a downpour – so it yields its fruits in double. And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]. And Allah sees all that you do.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 265)

On the other hand, if the opposite is the case – if a person's evil mind wins, and he or she falls into the affliction of doubts and/or desires – then that person is best described by this verse:

﴿أَيُّودٌ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضُعْفَاءُ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٦)

﴿Would one of you like to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines, underneath which rivers flow, in which he or she has from every fruit? But he or she is afflicted with old age and has weak offspring, then [the garden] is hit by a whirlwind containing fire and is burned. Thus does Allah make clear to you [His] verses, that you might give thought.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 266)

Therefore, the fortunate believer will always pay attention to these two points:

- Establishing both the fundamentals and non-fundamentals of faith, in practice and knowledge
- Striving to fight against anything, whether open or hidden, that can either negate or reduce faith

One should always try to take care of any laxity in the first point, seek forgiveness for any shortcomings with respect to the second one, and take care of these matters before they get out of hand.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٢٠١)

﴿Indeed, those who fear Allah – when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember [Allah], and at once they have insight.﴾ (Qur'an 7: 201)

Those people will be able to see their shortcomings, as well as any laxity, as coming from Satan, the greatest enemy of humankind. When they realize that, they try to fight such impulses by attacking them at their roots;

thus they return to their former perfect state, whereas their enemies return
grieved and humiliated, as Allah mentions:

﴿وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّونَهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٢٠٢)

﴿But their allies – the devils increase them in error; then they do not stop
short.﴾ (Qur'an 7: 202)

The devils will not stop thrusting their allies in among the humans.
The people who answer their call will not stop following these enemies
until the enemies drive them further into destruction and eventually make
them of the losers.

O Allah! 8ndear to us faith, and beautify our hearts with it; make
disbelief, wickedness, and disobedience hateful to us; and count us among
the successful ones with Your grace and Your power.

You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

CHAPTER THREE

The Essence and Benefits of Sound Faith

Sound faith brings about numerous fruits and benefits, both immediately and later in life; it benefits both the hearts and bodies of its owners, and it brings relief and well-being in both this life and the hereafter.

This tree of faith has a great many mellow fruits, and they are very delicious, having a permanent and everlasting taste in addition to other constant, abundant benefits.

On a general note, all the blessings of this world and the hereafter, as well as salvation from every form of evil, are functions of this tree. When this tree of faith is firm – with strong roots, broad stems, blossoms and beautiful branches – it brings forth great benefits for its owner and others, not only immediately but also in the future.

The greatest of these benefits is attaining the position of being an ally to Allah. This is a blessing that one should hasten towards earnestly, and it is the best that any fortunate person can achieve.

﴿أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة يونس: ٦٢-٦٣)

﴿Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah, there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. [They are] those who believed and feared Allah.﴾ (Qur'an 10: 62-63)

Any believer who fears Allah is a potential ally of Allah,⁴⁷ and He mentions one of the benefits for them:

﴿اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ... ﴿٢٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٧)

﴿Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into the light...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 257)

This means that He brings them out from the darkness of disbelief into the light of faith, from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge, from the darkness of sins to the light of obedience, and from the darkness of forgetfulness to the light of consciousness and remembrance.

This implies that they will be taken out completely from the darkness of every kind of evil, to what will cleanse them in the light of all the good provision of this world and the hereafter. They are able to obtain this enormous blessing because of their sound faith and their ability to actualize it with the fear of Allah, since fearing Allah is fulfilling one of the duties of faith, as discussed earlier.

Among the benefits of faith is the success of having the pleasure of Allah and His blessed abode.

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيَطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ

سَيَّرَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
 جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكَنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ
 وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٧٢﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٧١-٧٢)

«The believing men and women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakâh and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those – Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is exalted in Might and Wise. Allah has promised the believing men and women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allah is greater. That is the great attainment.» (Qur'an 9: 71-72)

They obtain the pleasure and blessing of their Lord, together with the success of the blessed abodes, through their faith, and they work upon their faith in order to perfect themselves. They are also able to guide and influence other people through their obedience to Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) and their acts of enjoining good and forbidding evil, which become for them the greatest means of achieving the supreme goal: the favour of Allah upon them.

Another benefit of perfect faith is that it protects against entering the hellfire. Faith, even if it is just a little, prevents its owner from dwelling eternally in the hellfire. Many narrations report the Prophet (ﷺ) saying that anyone who sincerely believes in Allah and follows all His commands and prohibitions will not enter the hellfire. It was even reported in numerous narrations that anyone who has as little as an atom's weight of faith will not dwell forever in the hellfire.⁴⁸

Another benefit of faith is that Allah defends and protects the believers from all forms of misfortune and saves them from hardships.

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْفِعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا...﴾ (سورة الحج: ٣٨)

﴿Indeed, Allah defends those who have believed...﴾ (Qur'an 22: 38)

This means that He protects them from all kinds of misfortune. He protects them from the devils among the humans and jinn, and He protects them from their enemies. He prevents misfortune before it occurs, or He removes it or lightens its impact when it does occur.

Allah tells us the story of Prophet Jonah (ﷺ):⁴⁹

﴿... فَكَادَىٰ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَن لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٨٧)

﴿...And he called out within the darkness: There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.﴾ (Qur'an 21: 87)

﴿فَأَسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٨٨)

﴿So We responded to him and saved him from distress. Thus do We save the believers.﴾ (Qur'an 21: 88)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«No anguished person says my brother's (Jonah's) prayer except that Allah delivers him from his problems: *Lâ ilâha illâ Anta; Subhânaka; Inni kuntu min adh-dhâlimeen.* (There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.)» (Recorded by Ahmad, at-Tirmidhi, and an-Nasâ'i; authenticated by adh-Dhahabi)

Allah mentions:

﴿... وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا﴾ (سورة الطلاق: ٢)

﴿...And whoever fears Allah [stands up to the challenges of faith]⁵⁰ – He will make a way out for that person.﴾ (Qur'an 65: 2)

For the believers, He will always create a way out of every kind of distress that befalls them.

﴿... وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا ﴿٤﴾﴾ (سورة الطلاق: ٤)

﴿...And whoever fears Allah – He will make that person's affairs easy.﴾ (Qur'an 65: 4)

For those who truly fear Allah, Allah will ease their affairs, guide them to easy ways, keep them away from difficulties, and ease hardships when they do occur. If they experience difficulties, He grants them a way out and blesses them from many directions. There are many proofs for this from both the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Among the benefits of faith (and of practicing good deeds, which is a branch of faith) is that its owners have a pleasant life in this world and in the hereafter, the place of judgment. Allah promises:

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾﴾ (سورة النحل: ٩٧)

﴿Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while they are believers – We will surely cause them to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the hereafter], according to the best of what they used to do.﴾ (Qur'an 16: 97)

A unique feature of faith is that it brings tranquillity, relaxation, and peace of mind, and it prevents the mind from being preoccupied with anything other than faith. That makes a pleasant life in this world.

Faith enables one to achieve a pleasant life in this world, with tranquillity and peace of mind; it prevents disruptions caused by people

who do not have sincere and sound faith.

Another benefit of faith is that the actions and statements of every individual can be classified as good, perfect, or otherwise, based on the level of the person's sincerity, which is a function of faith. That is why Allah often mentions this condition, which is usually the fundamental condition for the acceptance of deeds. For instance, He explains:

﴿فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهِ...﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٩٤)

﴿So whoever does righteous deeds while they are believers – no denial will there be for their efforts...﴾ (Qur'an 21: 94)

The efforts of those believers will not be denied. Their works will not be rejected or destroyed; instead, each one will be rewarded in proportion to his or her belief.

﴿وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٩)

﴿But whoever desires the hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while they are believers – it is those whose effort is ever appreciated [by Allah].﴾ (Qur'an 17: 19)

To strive for the hereafter means to engage in all the acts that can move one closer to the blessing of the hereafter, meaning deeds that are sanctioned by Allah through His Prophet (ﷺ).

So if people base their works on sound faith, then their effort is appreciated, accepted, and rewarded; such people will not be denied anything from it, even as little as an atom's weight. On the other hand, if the works are devoid of faith, then even if the individuals spend all their days

and nights amassing them, these deeds will not be accepted. Concerning that, Allah explains:

﴿ وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَنْثُورًا ﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٢٣)

﴿And We will regard what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed.﴾ (Qur'an 25: 23)

That is because their works are not based on faith in Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ), which is the key to sincerity in worshipping Allah and following the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah mentions:

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا ﴾ (١٠٣) الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعِيَّهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٠٣-١٠٥)

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work. Those are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in [their] meeting Him, so their deeds have become worthless; We will not assign to them any importance on the Day of Resurrection.﴾ (Qur'an 18: 103-105)

So when they lost faith and replaced it with disbelief in Allah and His signs, their efforts were wasted. Allah explains:

﴿... لَئِنِ اشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبِطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾ (سورة الزمر: ٦٥)

﴿...if you should associate [anything] with Allah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers.﴾ (Qur'an 39: 65)

﴿... وَلَوْ اشْرَكُوا الْحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٨٨)

﴿...But if they had associated others with Allah, then worthless for them would be whatever they were doing.﴾ (Qur'an 6: 88)

This is why apostasy (renouncing faith) nullifies any previous righteous deeds; in contrast, entering into Islam erases any previous evil deeds, no matter how enormous they may be. Sincere repentance from sins (which can negate, spoil, or reduce faith) also cleanses any previous misdeeds.

A benefit of faith is that anyone with faith is guided by Allah onto the straight path, the path that leads to success. That person is led to the certainty of belief and given the ability to work with it. He or she is also blessed with the ability to accept every favour and happiness with thanks and gratitude, and to receive every misfortune and difficulty with patience and contentment.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ...﴾ (سورة يونس: ٩)

﴿Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – their Lord will guide them because of their faith...﴾ (Qur'an 10: 9)

﴿مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ...﴾ (سورة التغابن: ١١)

﴿No disaster strikes except by the permission of Allah. Whoever believes in Allah – He will guide that person's heart...﴾ (Qur'an 64: 11)

It was reported that some of our predecessors explained the latter verse by saying, “This verse talks about someone who is struck by a calamity but who believes that it has come from Allah and patiently perseveres.”⁵¹

Therefore it is enough, as a benefit of faith: the grace of consoling its owner in the face of calamities and misfortunes that everyone runs away from. Faith and certainty give a person great succour if a calamity does occur.

One can only achieve this comfort with very strong faith, reliance, and hope in Allah, and also through a strong desire for His blessings. Hoping for Allah's reward reduces the pain in times of perseverance, as He explains:

﴿... إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْمُونًا فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْمُونُ كَمَا تَأْمُونُ ۖ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنْ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ ۗ...﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٠٤)

﴿...If you should be suffering – so are they suffering as you are suffering, but you expect from Allah that which they expect not...﴾ (Qur'an 4: 104)

This is why there is a difference, in both physical and intrinsic states, between two individuals who are afflicted with the same kind of problem. One of them has faith, and the other does not. Their levels of faith and their dispositions towards it are different.

As faith gives succour in times of hardship and difficulty, it also helps in times of loss. When believers lose someone beloved to them, or some property, or anything else of value, their faith enables them to get over it. Experience shows that for believers, faith is the best compensation for any loss.

Without a doubt, the loss of a loved one is a calamity. Jacob's faith supported him through the calamity of losing his son Joseph, even though he loved him dearly. When his other sons asked him to allow Joseph to go out with them for revelry and play:

﴿قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ...﴾ (سورة يوسف: ١٣)

﴿[Jacob] said: Indeed, it saddens me that you should take him...﴾ (Qur'an 12: 13)

He explained that he refused to allow Joseph to go with them because he could not stand to be separated from him, even for the blink of an eye, due to his love for him. They gave him reasons why he should be allowed to go with them:

﴿...وَلَكِنْ لِّيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا...﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٤٢)

﴿...But [it was] so that Allah might accomplish a matter already destined...﴾ (Qur'an 8: 42)

Is it realistic to expect anyone with this state of mind (similar to Jacob's unimaginable love for his son) to live long afterwards?⁵² One would think that such love would tear up the body in no time, but in fact, strong faith and hope in Allah allowed Jacob to live for a long time, until Allah brought the relief that He has promised to all the believers.

This was also the case with Moses's mother when the river took Moses (□) away. If not for her faith, hope, and reliance on Allah, she would have gone out of her mind and wailed over the calamity that befell her. She was filled with grief and sorrow concerning Moses, but she had a strong faith – the kind that can combat difficulty, give succour in the face of calamity, provide strength when the strong lose courage, and give courage when they feel powerless.

Ibn 'Abbâs narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave this excellent advice:

«Get to know Allah in prosperity, and He will know you in hardship.» (A reliable hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

In other words, get to know Allah with faith and good deeds while you are healthy and prosperous, so that He will know you in hardship. He will be with you, strengthen you, and assist you in overcoming any problem, and

the most dangerous state in which a believer requires Allah's assistance is at the time of death.

This hadith gives glad tidings to all those believers who fulfil their duties to their Lord during prosperous times, worshipping Him as expected and fulfilling all of His rights. This leads to Allah's helping them out in difficult and delicate times, in times of sadness and weakness, when the devils gather around hoping to disrupt people's good ends in life and commanding that they disbelieve. At such times, Allah helps people by strengthening their belief and favouring them with His blessings. There is no plot or power beyond that of Allah.⁵³

Among the benefits of faith and its essential good deeds is what Allah mentions here:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وِدًّا﴾ (سورة

مريم: ٩٦)

﴿Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – the Most Merciful will appoint for them affection.﴾ (Qur'an 19: 96)

On account of their belief and their good deeds, Allah will love them and make other believers love them as well. Those whom Allah loves and who are beloved to the believers have indeed achieved great success and happiness. They also achieve many other benefits from the believers, such as praise and prayers, and others emulate their good conduct, which brings a reward that is also a benefit for them.

They can also attain knowledge in religion. This is another great benefit of faith with which Allah blesses the believers (the people who have sound knowledge and do good deeds); He blesses them with truthfulness and honesty in their speech and makes them scholars, giving them guidance under His command. He mentions:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ﴾

﴿٢٤﴾ (سورة السجدة: ٢٤)

﴿And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs.﴾ (Qur'an 32: 24)

So one attains scholarship in this religion through patience and certainty, which are the fundamentals of faith.

﴿... يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ...﴾ (سورة

المجادلة: ١١)

﴿...Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees...﴾ (Qur'an 58: 11)

So Allah raises the rank of the people of faith and the knowledgeable, both in this world and in the hereafter. They are the most highly placed people with their Lord. They achieve this lofty position only by their sound faith and beneficial knowledge, and knowledge and certainty are from the fundamentals of faith.

Among the benefits of faith are the glad tidings of Allah and His perfect security for the believers in all respects. He declares:

﴿... وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (سورة الصف: ١٣)

﴿...and give good tidings to the believers.﴾ (Qur'an 61: 13)

Allah makes a general promise to combine the glad tidings of this world with those of the hereafter. In some places, He specifies the reward:

﴿وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ﴾

﴿٢٥﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥)

﴿And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds that they will have gardens [in paradise] beneath which rivers flow...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 25)

So they have the general and the specific glad tidings. They also have security from Allah, as He states:

﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا ءِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ الْاَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾
(سورة الأنعام: ٨٢)

﴿They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice – those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided.﴾ (Qur'an 6: 82)

Allah also mentions:

﴿... فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَاَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٤٨)

﴿...So whoever believes and does good deeds – there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.﴾ (Qur'an 6: 48)

Allah safeguards them from any bad occurrences in the future, and He protects them from any grief over their past endeavours. Thus, the believers have complete security both in this world and the hereafter, and they are protected from Allah's anger and punishment. They are secure from every misfortune and evil, and Allah gives them glad tidings in this life and the hereafter:

﴿لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِى الْاٰخِرَةِ... ﴿٦٤﴾﴾ (سورة يونس: ٦٤)

﴿For them [the believers] are good tidings in the worldly life and in the hereafter...﴾ (Qur'an 10: 64)

To further clarify this matter of glad tidings, Allah explains:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهَى أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ نَزْلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾﴾ (سورة فُصِّلَتْ: ٣٠-٣٢)

﴿Indeed, those who have said: Our Lord is Allah – and then remained on a right course, the angels will descend upon them [saying]: Do not fear and do not grieve, but receive good tidings of paradise, which you were promised. We [angels] were your allies in worldly life and [are so] in the hereafter. You will have therein whatever your souls desire, and you will have therein whatever you request [or wish] as accommodation from a [Lord who is] Forgiving and Merciful.﴾ (Qur'an 41: 30-32)

He also explains:

﴿يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وءَامِنُوا بِرِسُولِهِ ءِ يُوْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِّن رَّحْمَتِهِ ءِ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ ءِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ءِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة الحديد: ٢٨)

﴿O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy, make for you a light by which you will walk, and forgive you, and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.﴾ (Qur'an 57: 28)

Allah prepared multiple rewards for faith. Just as a servant of Allah walks with light in this world, so also will that person walk with it in the hereafter, as Allah mentions:

﴿يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُم بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَانُكُمْ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾﴾ (سورة الحديد: ١٢)

﴿On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right [it will be said]: Your good tidings today are [of] gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein you will abide eternally. That is the great attainment.﴾ (Qur'an 57: 12)

The believers walk about in this life with the light of knowledge and belief. When that light is withheld on the Day of Resurrection, they will walk with their light while passing over the *ṣirâṭ*,⁵⁴ until they enter the abode of blessing and comfort.

Allah also mentions His forgiveness as a benefit of faith, and whoever is forgiven is definitely saved from punishment. That is an excellent reward.

Another benefit of faith is success, which means achieving the greatest goal: to have all that one's heart desires, to be saved from every fear, and to receive guidance, which is the greatest means to success.

After mentioning the believers and their belief in what was sent to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and what was sent before him, and in the unseen, as well as their performance of prayer and payment of zakâh, Allah mentions:

﴿أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٥)

﴿Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 5)

That is perfect guidance and complete success, both of which are keys to righteousness and happiness. They cannot be achieved without complete belief in all the revealed books and in all the messengers. Guidance is therefore the greatest means, while success is the ideal and desired goal.

Another benefit of faith is the grace of being among the people who benefit from admonition and remembrance. Allah advises us:

﴿وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَىٰ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (سورة الذاريات: ٥٥)

﴿And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.﴾ (Qur'an 51: 55)

﴿إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (سورة الحجر: ٧٧)

﴿Indeed, in that is a sign for the believers.﴾ (Qur'an 15: 77)

This is because faith helps its owner to recognize and follow the path of truth, in knowledge and in practice. This person has an excellent tool and good preparation to receive beneficial admonitions and to recognise signs that guide one to the truth. There is absolutely nothing preventing him or her from accepting the truth and working with it.

Also, having faith causes one to have a good nature and sound thinking, and to be able to benefit from reminders. As for those who are not able to benefit, it should not be a surprise that they do not accept or follow the truth when it is presented to them.

That is why Allah always mentions what prevents the disbelievers from believing the Prophet (ﷺ) and from accepting the truth that he came with, and He mentions the disbelief that they harbour in their hearts. This implies that the truth is very obvious and the texts that explain it are apparent, but what prevents them from following it is the disbelief in their hearts. That should not be surprising, since it is the case with every disbeliever.

One other benefit of faith is that it makes its owner grateful in times of happiness and patient in times of distress. Şuhayb ibn Sinân narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The affair of the believers is amazing! Everything with the believers is good; if they experience pleasant situations, they are grateful, and that is good for them, and if they are afflicted with a calamity and are patient, it is also good for them. This is only for the believers.» (Muslim)

We learn from this narration that gratefulness and patience are the cause of every good. The believers have this golden opportunity available at

all times, and they are successful in every situation.

It was also narrated, from Abu Hurayrah and Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri (ؓ), that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whenever a believer is afflicted with distress, depression or any form of evil, Allah uses that as an expiation for the person’s sins.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Going by these texts, we know that all believers are blessed with two graces from their Lord when experiencing pleasant situations or blessings:

1. the blessing that they desired, and
2. the opportunity to thank Allah; this is even greater than the blessing itself, and it makes the blessing perfect and complete.

When the believers experience unpleasant situations, they have three benefits:

1. the expiation of their sins;
2. the opportunity to exercise patience, which is even greater than the first benefit; and
3. having that ordeal simplified afterwards – when the believers think of the rewards and are patient, they perceive the difficulty as being easy, so they accept it with faith.

Part of the essence of faith is that it removes doubt from the mind of the sincere believers, whereas it affects the religion of many other people. As Allah explains:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ١٥)

﴿The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful.﴾ (Qur'an 49: 15)

Their sound faith will always help them to expel any doubts that may occur to them, whether from the devils among humans and jinn or from their evil minds. The only solution to this deadly problem is sincere faith. It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«People will not stop questioning until it is asked, from the whisperings of Satan: Allah created everything, but who created Allah?

Whoever this occurs to should say: I believe in Allah.

Then they should give up such thoughts immediately and seek refuge with Allah from Satan.» (Bukhari)

In this hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) gave us three remedies for that deadly disease:

- Stop the harmful thinking that occurs as a result of the whispering of Satan.
- Seek refuge with Allah from Satan, who engages in that whispering in order to cause doubts in people and to mislead them.
- Seek protection through sound faith. Whoever does this is a true believer, because evil is evident in many ways, the most obvious being that it always negates the truth; whatever contradicts the truth is nothing but evil.

﴿... فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ...﴾ (سورة يونس: ٣٢)

﴿...And what can be beyond truth except error...?﴾ (Qur'an 10: 32)

Faith is a safe haven for the believers from the phenomena that everyone naturally experiences in life, including happiness, sadness, and

fear; different levels of security; and obedience and disobedience.

In times of favour and happiness, the believers resort to their faith. They are grateful to Allah and praise Him, and they use the good provisions with which they have been blessed in the beloved path to their Provider.

In times of sorrow and difficulty, they also resort to their faith in many ways.

- They are able to find comfort in their faith and its sweetness.
- They are content when they reflect on the rewards they will have if they patiently persevere.
- They face all sorrows and worries with peace of mind, and afterwards they return to their pleasant lives.

In times of fear, they are confident; the fear only increases their faith, firmness, strength, and courage. They are able to cast off any fear, just as Allah informs us that His noble servants, the Prophet's Companions (ؓ), did:

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدِ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَآخَظُوهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا
حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَأَنْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمَسَّهِنَّ سَوَاءٌ
وَأَتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٣-١٧٤)

﴿Those to whom the hypocrites said: Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them. But it [merely] increased them in faith, and they said: Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs. So they returned with favour from Allah and bounty, no harm having touched them. And they pursued the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty.﴾ (Qur'an 3: 173-174)

These noble servants of Allah were able to discard fear from their minds and replace it with strong faith and its sweetness, as well as a strong

reliance on and confidence in Allah.

The believers resort to their faith in times of safety and security. It does not make them ungrateful or overly proud; rather, they are submissive, knowing that this blessing has come from Allah's bounties. They thereby give thanks to Him – the One Who blesses them with the means of achieving security, the One Who causes security and the means of attaining it. They also know that whatever power or might they have is by His favour and grace; it is not of their own making.

They also resort to their faith when they are blessed with opportunities to do good deeds and to obey Allah. They recognize this favour that Allah has bestowed on them, and they know that the opportunity for such good deeds is greater than the favour of health and worldly provisions. Therefore, they further strive to perfect the deed, making every effort to make it an acceptable one – one that will not be rejected or lose its value in any way. They ask Allah, Who has favoured them with it, to complete the favour on them by accepting it from them. They ask Him, the One Who favoured them with the grace to start the deed, to give them the grace to complete it.

They also resort to their faith when they are tried with sins, by quickly repenting and striving to engage in many good works to compensate for them.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَافٍ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ﴾

﴿٢٠١﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٢٠١)

﴿Indeed, those who fear Allah – when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember [Allah] and at once they have insight.﴾ (Qur'an 7: 201)

It was reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«A believer with his or her faith is like a horse that is tightened down to its peg; it goes around the peg and comes back to its point.» (Recorded by Ahmad and Ibn Hibban; graded weak by al-Albani)⁵⁵

Believers might go about in a state of forgetfulness, committing some sins but quickly returning to the faith upon which they built their lives. In all their ups and downs, though, they return to their faith, and their concern is always how to perfect and protect it from whatever might negate or contradict it. This carefulness is from the blessings that Allah has given them.

Another benefit of faith is that it prevents people from falling into the deadly and destructive sins. Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«An adulterer is not a believer at the time he commits adultery, a person who drinks alcohol is not a believer at the time when he is drinking, and a thief is not a believer at the time when he is stealing...» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Experience shows that if believers fall into any of these sins, it is due to the weakness of their faith, the loss of the light from their hearts, and the loss of modesty and shame that could have prevented them from such horrible acts.

A very sound faith should be accompanied by shyness towards Allah and true love for Him, so believers must fervently hope for their reward from Him, just as they fervently fear His punishment. They must possess the light that drives the darkness away.

There is no doubt that these matters, which are the means of perfecting faith, will guide individuals towards a great deal of good and will save them from indecent acts.

As stated in the hadith, if faith is accompanied by shyness, then the light of faith will always prevent its owners from falling into any of those deadly sins, even in the face of temptation. So the light that accompanies true faith, along with sweetness of faith in the heart and shyness towards Allah (which undoubtedly is among the greatest branches of faith), prevents people from falling into those illicit acts.

Part of the essence of faith is what was narrated from Abu Moosâ (ؓ):

«The believer who recites the Qur'an is like a citrus fruit that is fragrant and delicious; the believer who does not recite the Qur'an is like a date fruit that is delicious but has no fragrance.» (Bukhari and Muslim)⁵⁶

These two groups of people are the best sets of people, but people are generally categorized into four groups:

1. The people who are good by themselves and can extend the good to others. These are the best people, and these are the believers who learn the Qur'an and other religious knowledge. They are useful themselves and are also beneficial to others, and they are blessed wherever they go. Allah (ﷻ) mentions Prophet Jesus (ؑ) saying:

﴿وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ...﴾ (سورة مريم: ٣١)

﴿And He has made me blessed wherever I am...﴾ (Qur'an 19: 31)

2. The people who are good and are doing good deeds but do not have knowledge that others can benefit from.

These first two groups of people are the best; the good in them is a function of their faith, which is beneficial to others.

3. The people who do not have any good in them but do not inflict evil upon others.
4. The evil people, who are harmful to themselves and to others. These are the worst of people, and Allah explains about them:

﴿الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يُفْسِدُونَ﴾ (سورة النحل: ٨٨)

﴿Those who disbelieved and averted [others] from the way of Allah – We will add punishment over [their] punishment for what corruption

they were causing. ﴿Qur'an 16: 88﴾

So all the good generally comes back to faith and what surrounds it, and evil is generally traceable to the loss of faith and to things that contradict it. Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«A strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a believer who is weak, but there is good in both of them.» (Muslim)

Here, the Prophet (ﷺ) put the believers into two categories:

1. Those who are strong in knowledge and faith, and in terms of the benefits people derive from them; and
2. Those who are weak in all these respects.

Even so, they are both said to have good in them because faith and everything that surrounds it are good, even though believers differ in the level of that goodness. It is like the Prophet's statement:

«The believer who mingles and deals with people, enduring their harm and afflictions, is better than the believer who does not deal with them and does not tolerate them.» (Recorded by Ahmad, at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mâjah; authenticated by al-Albâni)⁵⁷

From these authentic narrations, it can be concluded that those who do not have faith do not have any good in them, because if they do not possess faith, then either:

- they are bad in all categories, by being bad to themselves and to the rest of society, or
- they have some good inside, but they are overwhelmed by evil; this still implies that they do not have any good.

When good is overwhelmed by immorality and corruption, it becomes bad. So it is with these people: the few good deeds combat the evil ones to the same extent, and they nullify one another.

Whoever reflects on the state of things in creation will surely see that these matters are exactly as described by the Prophet (ﷺ).

Conclusion

This discussion can be summarized as follows:

- The tree of faith is the most blessed and most beneficial, and it is everlasting.
- Its branches, roots, and basis are faith, together with the knowledge and understanding of faith.
- Its stems and branches are: the Islamic principles, meritorious deeds, and virtuous characteristics that are based on sincerity to Allah and following the Prophet (ﷺ).
- Its fruit and its numerous other benefits are: good disposition, perfect guidance, good character, strict attachment to the remembrance and praise of Allah, and benefiting other servants of Allah to the best of one's ability – in terms of beneficial knowledge, good advice, position, wealth, physical assistance, and other commendable ways.

To summarize, one should stand up to the challenge of discharging all of one's duties to one's Lord and fulfilling the rights of His creation.

- The growth of this tree of faith in the hearts of the believers differs greatly from one individual to another, according to how they

discharge these responsibilities. They are addressed and described in accordance with their level, and their position in the hereafter depends on it.

- The believers thank and praise Allah, Who favoured them with the blessing of faith. He explains:

﴿يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ
لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ١٧)

﴿They consider it a favour to you that they have accepted Islam. Say: Do not consider your Islam a favour to me. Rather, Allah has conferred favour upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.﴾ (Qur'an 49: 17)

The people of paradise, after entering paradise and seeing what Allah has prepared for them, will recognize this favour of Allah and say:

﴿...الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رَسُولَ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَنُودُوا أَنْ تِلْكَمُ الْجَنَّةُ أَوْرَثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٤٣)

﴿...Praise to Allah, Who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us. Certainly the messengers of our Lord had come with the truth. And it will be called out to them: This is paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do.﴾ (Qur'an 7: 43)

Many lessons are combined in this verse. It informs us about how the people of paradise will recognize the favours and the blessings of Allah on them, and about their praises to Him for placing them in that esteemed position through His grace and favour. It also mentions what earns them that favour from Allah, which is their good deeds, as well as their sound faith and its practices.

We ask Allah to bless us with true faith, to not leave us to ourselves even for the blink of an eye, to not let our hearts deviate after we have been guided, and to grant us His mercy, for truly He is the One Who bestows all blessings.

May Allah bestow His blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his household and his Companions (رضي الله عنهم).

Compiled by the poor servant of Allah, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Nâṣir ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn Nâṣir as-Sa‘di.

May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all the Muslims.

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Glossary of Islamic Terms⁵⁸

<i>abu</i> (or <i>abi</i>)	أَبُو، أَبِي	father (of)
<i>Firdaws</i>	الْفِرْدَوْسُ	the highest level of paradise
hadith (<i>hadeeth</i>)	حَدِيث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
Hadith (<i>Hadeeth</i>)	الْحَدِيث	the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law
<i>ihsân</i>	الْإِحْسَانُ	goodness, perfection, excellence; to worship Allah as if you see Him, knowing that even if you do not see Him, He sees you
jinn (sg. <i>jinni</i>)	الْجِنُّ	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'. They have free will like humans: some

are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni.

Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can foretell the future, near or distant, or provide people with riches or some sort of power.

Kaaba (<i>Ka'bah</i>)	الْكَعْبَةُ	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, which Muslims face when they pray
Quraysh	قُرَيْشٌ	the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism
Sharia (<i>Sharee'ah</i>)	الشَّرِيعَةُ	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah
Sunnah	السُّنَّةُ	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
<i>tawh̄eed</i>	التَّوْحِيدُ	the Oneness of Allah: the knowledge that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners
Ummah	الْأُمَّةُ	community or nation: <i>usu.</i> used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims
<i>zakâh</i>	الزَّكَاةُ	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth that is paid by Muslims and distributed to others who

qualify as recipients

Notes

- ¹ The translations of the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an in this book are taken (with some changes to the text) from Saheeh International, *The Qur'an: Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings*. [8 ditor]
- ² Sunnah: the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law. It includes his way of life and his statements, deeds and characteristics, as well as his tacit approvals regarding the actions of the Companions and those around him. [Translator]
- ³ This biography was compiled by the translator. [8 ditor]
- ⁴ Wherever possible, Arabic terms have been translated into English. In cases where we have chosen to retain the Arabic, the transliterated word or phrase is shown in italics the first time it appears in the text; the term is also defined in the Glossary found at the end of this book. [8 ditor]
- ⁵ Hadith: the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law.
- ⁶ al-Awdi, *Tarâ'if al-Adab*, 10. [Commentator]
- ⁷ This is because the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) is also a revelation from Allah so that the Prophet (ﷺ) could explain the message of Qur'an. Allah mentions:

«And We revealed to you the message [the Sunnah] that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought.» (*Qur'an 16: 44*)

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim, while talking about the relationship between the Qur'an and the Sunnah, explains:

It is compulsory that every Muslim bear in mind that there is no authentically reported Sunnah that contradicts the Book of Allah; rather, the Sunnah relates to the Qur'an in these three ways:

- It corresponds to and further proves the message of all the revealed books, with the Qur'an being the best of them.
- It explains the Qur'an and clarifies its meaning.
- It gives some rulings that the Qur'an is silent about.

Ibn al-Qayyim, *aṭ-Ṭurq al-Ḥukmiyah fis-Siyâsati ash-Sharee'ah*, 107. [Translator]

⁸ The term 'actions of the heart' refers to the heart's reactions when it experiences different states, such as fear, depression, sorrow, grief, anger, hunger, loss, love, hope, trust, desire, interest, contentment, satisfaction, and so on. This also includes the state of mind upon hearing and seeing Allah's verses and signs; it is this state of mind that causes the individual's level of faith to increase or decrease.

«The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely.» (*Qur'an* 8: 2) [Translator]

⁹ This refers to His soldiers from among the humans, *jinn*, and angels. [Translator] Jinn are non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire. [8 ditor]

¹⁰ This second blessing (being saved from the hellfire) is not the same as the first (entrance into paradise). Some believers will be made to enter the hellfire to receive the punishment for their evil deeds before being taken out and allowed to enter paradise. [Translator]

¹¹ All hadiths in this text have been checked and verified by IIPH's researchers. It is rare, but it does happen that a hadith is not verifiable within the timeframe of researching and editing the book. In that case, a decision is made by the editorial board whether or not to include the hadith. It is IIPH's policy not to include weak hadiths or fabricated (fake) hadiths in our publications. If a weak hadith is included in any text, it is usually because the author of the book discusses it as a weak hadith. [8 ditor]

¹² Zakâh: obligatory charity paid by Muslims whose assets reach a certain threshold. It purifies one's wealth and is distributed to others who qualify as recipients. In general, it is an annual payment of 2.5% of a Muslim's savings. [Translator]

¹³ Abu Burdah reported on the authority of his father that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Some people among the believers will come on the Day of Resurrection with their sins as heavy as mountains, and Allah will forgive them for their sins (by His mercy and as a reward for their belief)...» (Muslim) [Translator]

¹⁴ The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«When you ask Allah for paradise, ask for Firdaws, for it is the best and highest paradise. From it, all the springs of paradise took their sources, and it is just under the throne of Allah.» (Bukhari) [Translator]

[15](#) It should be noted that this can only happen through the mercy of Allah, even though a person may have performed an enormous number of good deeds. This is because no one can enter paradise except by Allah's mercy, and His mercy (through which His sincere servants will enter paradise) is much greater than the deeds of an individual. It is very important that Muslims do not consider themselves to be doing too many or too few good deeds; rather, they should continue to maximize the opportunities in their lives by increasing their good deeds, and maybe Allah will accept them by His mercy.

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: No one can achieve salvation through his or her deeds.

He was asked: Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?

He replied: Not even me, except if Allah bestows on me His mercy from His bounties.» (Bukhari and Muslim) [Translator]

[16](#) 'Permissible acts' in Islam refer to allowable actions such as eating and drinking lawful items or wearing permissible garments. One is neither rewarded for performing them nor punished for not doing them. However, the closest servants to Allah leave a lot of these things and take only their primary needs, out of fear of Allah and fear of accountability on the Day of Resurrection, and out of asceticism. They use their lives to prepare for the hereafter, and they will enter paradise without any accountability, if Allah wills. [Translator]

[17](#) These are the Muslims who will have to enter the hellfire at first, to receive the punishment for their bad deeds before being removed to paradise (unless Allah pardons them by His mercy). These people are referred to as 'the people who wrong themselves' because during their lives, they waste the opportunities to earn direct entry to paradise. [Translator]

[18](#) See also *Qur'an* 3: 57, 4: 122, 4: 124, and 4: 173. [Commentator]

[19](#) When Ṭalq ibn Ḥabeeb (from the generation after the Companions) was asked about the fear of Allah, he said that it was "to worship Allah upon His light (clear guidance), hoping for reward from Him; to abstain from sinful acts; and to be upon His light in fear of His punishment." (Recorded by Ibn Mubâarak, Abu Nu'aym, and Ibn Abi Shaybah with an authentic chain of narration)

Ibn al-Qayyim comments on this statement:

This is one of the best discussions ever made on the explanation of the scope of the fear of Allah because every act has its principle as well as its goal. So no act is recognized as an act of obedience to Allah or a means to achieve closeness to Him unless it is an act of faith, and its drive must be faith alone, not a mere habit or desire, and its goal must be to earn reward from Allah and to seek His pleasure, which is called sincere hope in Allah.

Ibn al-Qayyim, *ar-Risâlat at-Tabookiyah*, 28. [Commentator]

[20](#) Al-Qurtûbi comments on this hadith:

We can learn from this hadith that the love of any believer that can bring him sweetness of faith must be a sincere one, only for the sake of Allah, and not associated with any worldly motive or any inner human desires or wishes... Unfortunately, when the desire for worldly things becomes people's goal, few are the people who have the sweetness of faith.

al-Qurtûbi, *al-Mufhim limâ Ashkala min Talkhees Muslim*, 214-215. [Translator]

[21](#) Qâdi 'Iyâd comments on this hadith:

Some of the people of knowledge tried to state these levels of faith, but in principle, it may be difficult to say that the count of these levels is what is meant by the number, and the fact that they are not known does not affect their implication regarding the matters of faith.

Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bâri*, 1:52-53. [Commentator]

[22](#) This hadith narrates an incident when the angel Gabriel came to the Prophet (ﷺ) in human form while the Companions were present. He asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about Islam, faith, *ihsân* (excellence) and the Last Hour. [Translator]

[23](#) When Gabriel asked about Islam, the Prophet (ﷺ) responded:

«Islam is for you to bear witness that there is there is none worthy of worship other than Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, to establish prayer, to give zakâh, to fast during Ramadan, and to perform the pilgrimage if you have the means.» (Muslim) [Translator]

[24](#) An-Nasâ'i, Ahmad, Ibn Hibbân (and others), with authentic chains of narration, added some words at the end, making it, "...what you love for yourself of good." This is a very important addition that explains the actual meaning of the hadith, because the word 'good' is a broad word that includes all obligatory and permissible matters of religion, as well as of mundane life, that bring about benefits in both this life and the hereafter; it excludes all prohibited matters because the word 'good' does not include them.

al-Albâni, *Silsilat al-Ahâdeeth as-Şaheehah*, 1:155. [Commentator]

[25](#) The author is referring to the verse:

﴿And indeed, you are of a great moral character.﴾ (*Qur'an* 68: 4)

He explains that what this verse means about the Prophet (ﷺ) is:

His firm upholding of the worship of Allah in various forms and his beautiful and perfect character towards all the creation of Allah. This character is no other

than modesty and humbleness, which is driven by the sincerity of worship of Allah and being compassionate towards His servants, all being the opposite of the description of the arrogant.

as-Sa'di, *ar-Riyâḍ an-Nâḍirah*, 41-42. [Translator]

[26](#) Imam Fakhr ad-Deen ar-Râzi explains the verse:

«So remain on a right course as you have been commanded...» (*Qur'an 11: 112*)

The uprightness and firmness commanded in this verse is very broad, comprising matters of:

Ideology: It prohibits likening anything to Allah and any act of disrupting the texts of either the Qur'an or Sunnah.

Deeds: It involves being careful not to change or alter the message of either the Qur'an or Sunnah to suit one's own desires.

Manners: It requires that one avoid both excessiveness and negligence.

aṭ-Ṭayyibi, *Sharḥ al-Mishkât*, 1:135. [Commentator]

[27](#) Imam an-Nawawi explains that:

...The prohibition of these four containers is because of the prohibition of soaking materials in them. Materials like dates or raisins were soaked in them to improve the taste of water or to sweeten it for drinking. However, the use of these vessels is specifically prohibited because the materials from which they are made ferment very easily and strongly; this makes the drink alcoholic and thereby prohibited. Also, someone who was not aware of the content of the container could mistakenly drink it... This prohibition was an early Islamic practice, but it was abrogated by this narration of Buraydah, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«I used to prohibit you from soaking, except in open containers, but now you can soak in all available vessels. But do not drink anything that turns alcoholic.» (Muslim)

an-Nawawi, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim*, 1:185-186. [Translator]

[28](#) Abu Sa'eed narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever sees an evil act should correct it with his hand. If he cannot do that, then he should change it with his tongue; if he cannot do that, then he should detest it in his heart, and that is the weakest faith.» (Muslim) [Translator]

[29](#) Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri was the leader of the people of his time, and he was from the generation that immediately followed the Companions. He learnt hadiths of the Prophet

(ﷺ) from a number of the Companions, such as Abu Hurayrah, Ibn ‘Abbâs, Anas ibn Mâlik and others (□).

al-Mazzi and Ma‘roof, *Tahdheeb al-Kamâl fee Asmâ’ ar-Rijâl*, 6:97-102; adh-Dhahabi, *Sayr A‘lâm an-Nubalâ’*, 4:565.

Al-‘Awâm ibn Hawshab said, “Al-Ḥasan among the people of his time was like a prophet among his people for sixty years, calling them to the path of Allah.”

al-Mazzi and Ma‘roof, *Tahdheeb al-Kamâl fee Asmâ’ ar-Rijâl*, 6:105.

Bakr ibn ‘Abdullâh al-Mazni addressed the people, saying:

Anyone who wishes to know the most knowledgeable of this time should look to al-Ḥasan. Anyone who knows him should wish to learn more from him, and anyone who does not know him should wish to meet him.

al-Mazzi and Ma‘roof, *Tahdheeb al-Kamâl fee Asmâ’ ar-Rijâl*, 6:108. [Translator]

[30](#) Recorded by al-Baghdâdi with a reliable chain of narration.

See: ‘Abdul-Lateef, *Tabyeed aş-Şaḥeeḥah fee Uṣool al-Aḥâdeeth aḍ-Ḍa‘eefah*, 99-102. [Commentator]

[31](#) See Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bâri*, 1:95-98. [Commentator]

[32](#) Barâ’ ibn ‘Âzib reported about this incident:

Some of our brothers were already dead before the prayer direction was changed. We were then worried about their states, so Allah revealed in this regard:

﴿...And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith...﴾ (*Qur’an 2: 143*) (Bukhari) [Translator]

[33](#) One of the most relevant narrations regarding this is the report of Ibn ‘Abbâs that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Verily, Allah has lifted for my generation the punishment for what they do by mistake, forget to do, or are compelled to do.» (Recorded by Ibn Mâjah; authenticated by al-Albâni) [Translator]

[34](#) The full text of the hadith is from the narration of Ibn ‘Abbâs:

«﴿...Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it...﴾» (*Qur’an 2: 284*)

Ibn ‘Abbâs said: They were pleased with a part of it and unhappy about another.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then said to them: Say: We hear, we obey and we submit.

Ibn ‘Abbâs mentioned: They complied with the instruction of the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah then blessed them with perfect belief in their hearts and revealed to them this verse as a supplication:

﴿Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned. Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred...﴾ (Qur’an 2: 286)

Allah then answered them through His Prophet (ﷺ): I have done that.

Then Allah revealed to them:

﴿...Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us...﴾ (Qur’an 2: 286)

He also replied to them through His Prophet (ﷺ): I have done that.

He then revealed:

﴿...Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear...﴾ (Qur’an 2: 286)

Allah replied through His messenger (ﷺ): I have done that.

Then Allah revealed:

﴿...And pardon us, and forgive us...﴾ (Qur’an 2: 286)

He also replied through His Prophet (ﷺ): I have done that.» (Muslim) [Commentator]

[35](#) These three qualities make up the good character of a Muslim. Some people possess these qualities naturally, but those who do not must strive to acquire them because the Prophet (ﷺ) told us that good character is the way to paradise.

The author mentions in another book, “Good character is very beneficial, and its basis is patience, tolerance and a wish for good manners.”

as-Sa’di, *ar-Riyâḍ an-Nâḍirah*, 7. [Translator]

[36](#) Al-Aswad ibn Hilâl reported that Mu‘âdh ibn Jabal used to tell the people around him, “Sit with us for a while, and let us exercise acts of belief.” They would then sit together discussing matters wherein they remembered Allah and praised Him.

Recorded by Ibn Abi Shaybah with an authentic chain of narration. [Commentator]

[37](#) Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmoo‘ al-Fatâwâ*, 10:652-654. [Commentator]

[38](#) This does not mean that there are only ninety-nine names; the purpose of this hadith is not to give the number of His names but to mention the benefit of good dealings with them. Only Allah knows the number of His names. [Translator]

[39](#) See al-‘Uthaymeen, *al-Qawâ'id al-Muthalah*, 36-38. [Commentator]

[40](#) The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said:

«Verily, the Qur'an is not revealed such that a part belies another; rather, it is revealed such that a part strengthens, corroborates and confirms another. Therefore, act upon whatever you understand of it, and refer what you do not know to those who have knowledge.» (An authentic hadith recorded by Aḥmad) [Translator]

[41](#) See: Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftâḥ Dâr as-Sa'âdah*, 1:219-221. [Commentator]

[42](#) Abu Sufyân (who later accepted Islam) was the spokesman for the delegation from the Quraysh (the polytheistic tribe that was dominant in Makkah). Ibn ‘Abbâs narrated that Heraclius asked the translator to tell Abu Sufyân the following:

«I asked you about his (the Prophet's) lineage, and you replied that he is from a noble family. So it is with the messengers; they are usually raised from the noblest family of their people.

I also asked you: Before him, did anyone among you ever claim that which he claims (prophethood)? You said no. Had anyone claimed that before him, I would have said that he is emulating that person.

I asked you: Was any of his forefathers a king? You replied no. Had any of his forefathers been a king, I would have said that he wants to claim the kingdom of his father.

I asked you: Did your people know him to be a liar before his claim? You replied no, and I am sure that (if he had been a liar) he would not abstain from telling lies in his dealings with people of his kind and yet tell lies against His Lord.

I asked you about his followers: Are they the rich people among you or the poor? You replied that they are poor people. These are the people who used to be the followers of the messengers.

I asked you: Are his followers increasing or decreasing in number? You replied that they are increasing, and this is the case with true faith, until it spreads all over and becomes well known.

I asked you: Has anyone reverted to his former religion after accepting his message? You replied no. So it is with faith; when the heart enjoys its sweetness, it does not leave it.

I asked you: Does he betray any covenant you have with him? You replied no. So it is with the messengers; they do not betray anyone.

I asked you what he commands, and you replied that he commands you to worship Allah alone, and not to worship other than Him. He forbids you from worshipping idols, and he commands prayer, almsgiving and decency.

If all of what you said about him is true, then he will conquer this kingdom of mine. I am aware that one has been raised (as a messenger), but I did not know that he was raised from among you. If I know how to reach him, I will prepare to meet him, and when I approach him, I will submit myself to him.» (Bukhari and Muslim) [Commentator]

[43](#) The author is referring to this hadith, which is classified as weak:

«Supplication is the core of worship.» (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi with a weak chain)

The following hadith, however, is authentic with the wording from an-Nu‘mân ibn Basheer:

«Supplication is a worship (meaning an act of worship).» (Recorded by Aḥmad, Abu Dâwood, at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mâjah; authenticated by adh-Dhahabi) [Commentator]

It should be noted that the author’s statement does not indicate that he perceives the hadith to be authentic. The scholars, even with their knowledge of the weakness of this hadith, have always used its good meaning. [Translator]

[44](#) The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah, the Most Beneficent, blesses the benevolent, so be merciful to the creation of Allah on the earth, and Allah, Who is above the heavens, will be merciful to you.» (An authentic hadith from Abu Dâwood and at-Tirmidhi) [Translator]

[45](#) The author is referring to this hadith of Tameem ad-Dâri:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: The religion is about discharging responsibilities.

(The Companions) asked: To whom?

He replied: To Allah, His Book, His Messenger, the Islamic leaders and the Ummah.» (Muslim) [Translator]

This hadith is often seen translated as, “The religion is about advice.” [8 ditor]

[46](#) «By time, indeed, humankind is in loss, except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.» (*Qur’an 103: 1-3*) [8 ditor]

[47](#) Ibn Taymiyah, *al-Furqân*, 57. [Commentator]

[48](#) Among these narrations is the report of Anas ibn Mâlik, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever says *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* (There is no god worthy of worship except Allah) and has in his or her heart the worth of a barley grain’s weight of good will be emancipated from the hellfire.» (Bukhari)

Ibn Ḥajar explains that the meaning of ‘good’ in this hadith is ‘faith’.

Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bâri*, 1:105. [Commentator]

[49](#) Prophet Jonah, after leaving his people because they rejected his message, was swallowed by a whale and called out to Allah in despair. [8 ditor]

[50](#) The words in brackets were inserted by the author. [8 ditor]

[51](#) This is a reliable report of a statement from ‘Alqamah ibn Qays. Aṭ-Ṭabari, *Tafseer at-Ṭabari*, 28:80. [Commentator]

[52](#) Meaning after Joseph went missing

[53](#) Ibn Rajab comments on this hadith:

If someone obeys Allah, fears Him, and keeps His boundaries while alive, Allah will be with him at his time of death. He will take his soul in the state of faith and strengthen him in the grave while responding to the two angels of the grave, prevent him from the punishment of the grave and keep his company in that state of loneliness... but whoever does not get to know Allah while in a prosperous state, he has no one to be with him in difficult conditions, either in this life or in the hereafter. This is evidence of his state in the life of this world, and that of the hereafter is going to be severe, and he will not have Allah as his protector or helper.

Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbali, *Noor al-Iqtibâs*, 75-77. [Commentator]

[54](#) This is a bridge that will be laid above the hellfire for people to pass over. The successful people will go across it into paradise, while the wrongdoers will fall into the fire. Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Some believers will cross the bridge as quickly as the blink of an eye, some as fast as the speed of lightning, some as fast as a strong wind and some as fast as moving horses or she-camels. Some will be saved without any harm, and some after receiving some injuries, while some will fall into the hellfire. The last person will cross as if he is dragged. The bridge is slippery; it has clamps and hooks like a thorny stem that is wide at one side and narrow at the other, and it also has thorns with bent ends.» (Bukhari) [Translator]

[55](#) This hadith suggests that anyone with firm and strong faith can deliberately commit sins and come back to the exact previous state of belief, the way a horse goes around its peg. In reality, sound faith guides its owner away from sin, and sin can lead its owner totally away from the religion if care is not taken. This is why some scholars say that even the meaning of this hadith indicates that it cannot be authentic. [Translator]

[56](#) Ibn al-Qayyim explains this hadith, saying:

The citrus fruit has a lot of benefits. It has four important parts: its peel, its main fruit, its juice and its seed; each of them has a specific benefit. They are mostly useful in these states: the peel, when dry and hot; the fruit, either fresh or dry;

the juice, cool or cold; and the seed, dry and hot... It can best be described as mentioned in the hadith: that it is like a believer who recites the Qur'an. In fact, some of our predecessors loved to see this fruit because of its beautiful appearance.

Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zâd al-Ma'âd*, 4:285. [Commentator]

[57](#) Al-Mannâwi discusses this hadith:

To combat enmity requires a great deal of patience, and to deal with people requires great tolerance. It should be noted that Allah would not give others power over a person unless that person had committed a sin, so one should seek Allah's forgiveness from sins committed and should know that the hindrance from people is a punishment from Him. One should then try to give people their rights and should not capitalize on their wrong deeds; a person should mention their good deeds and keep their evil ones secret.

al-Mannâwi, *Fayḍ al-Qadeer fee Sharḥ al-Jâmi' aṣ-Ṣagheer*, 6:255.

Regarding the matters of isolation and relating with people, one should be mindful of the situations. Abu Sulaymân al-Khaṭṭâbi says:

The way out of this matter is that one should not withhold people's rights, even when they do not ask for them, and one should not join them in evil even when called. Whoever preoccupies himself with what does not concern him loses what concerns him, and whoever dwells on a wrong act loses the truth, so join people in doing good acts, and isolate yourself from others when they do wrong.

al-Khaṭṭâbi, *al-'Izlah*, 98. [Commentator]

[58](#) The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (i.e., is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.