

*Characteristics of
al-Abrār
(The Righteous)
&
al-Muqarrabīn
(Those Brought Near to Allāh)*

*Being an Excerpt from the Book:
The Exquisite Collection of
Counsels, Ascetic Teachings, &
Heart-Softening Admonitions.*

المجموع الرائق من الوصايا والزهديات
والرقائق

Shaykh Rabī' bin Hādī Umayr
رحمه الله *al-Madkhalī*

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Definition of *al-Abrār* (The Righteous)

al-Abrār (the righteous) is the plural of *Bārr* (righteous), which is an adjective derived from *al-Birr* (righteousness). Scholars have defined *al-Birr* as expansiveness in goodness and an abundance of it.

As al-Azharī رحمته الله said in his book *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*:

“Open land is called *al-Barriyyah* [in Arabic] due to its vastness.” Then he said, “*al-Birr* is a comprehensive term encompassing every kind of goodness.”

ar-Rāghib رحمته الله said in his book *Mufradāt al-Qurʾān*:

“*al-Barr* (dry land) is the opposite of *al-Baḥr* (the sea), and from it the notion of expansiveness was conceived. From it, then, *al-Birr* was derived, meaning expansiveness in goodness.”

This meaning is reflected in the verse from Sūrah al-Baqarah:

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ﴾

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives *Zakāh* (obligatory charity); [those who] fulfill their covenants when they make them; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones

who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.” [al-Baqarah: 177]

He (ar-Rāghib رحيب) said:

“This verse regarding *al-Birr* includes both beliefs and actions, both obligatory and voluntary. Thus, *al-Birr* has two aspects: one of belief and one of action, as the verse exemplifies.”

Imām Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah رحيم defined *al-Birr* as follows:

“It is the perfection sought from a thing, along with its benefits and good. From it comes *al-Burr* (wheat), owing to its abundant benefits and the good contained in it, by which it is distinguished from all other kinds of grain. From it also comes [the expression] a man who is *Bārr* بَارٌّ and a man who is *Barr* بَرٌّ, [with the plurals] *Bararah* بَرَرة and *Abrār* أَبْرَارٌ. Thus, *al-Birr* is a word encompassing all kinds of good.

Then he cited the same verse cited by ar-Rāghib رحمته as evidence, which is Allāh's saying:

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ﴾

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west” [al-Baqarah: 177]”¹

This demonstrates that *al-Birr* is a comprehensive word embracing every form of goodness. For this reason, those described as *al-Abrār* (the righteous) are people who combine every aspect of goodness:

- ❖ in their beliefs,
- ❖ in their acts of worship,
- ❖ in their character,
- ❖ in their conduct,
- ❖ in their dealings with their Lord,
- ❖ and in their dealings with His creation.

Before discussing the specific qualities of the righteous in detail, it should be noted that there are other groups of people: one group is opposite to

¹ ar-Risālah at-Tabūkiyyah (pp. 7–8)

them. In contrast, another group shares some of these qualities, and others even surpass them in certain respects.

The opposite of *al-Abrār* (the righteous) are *al-Fujjār* (the wicked).

Allāh, the Exalted, says:

﴿ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ﴿١٤﴾ ﴾

“Indeed, the righteous (*al-Abrār*) will be in bliss, and indeed, the wicked (*al-Fujjār*) will be in Hellfire.” [al-Infīṭār: 13–14]

And He says, mentioning their punishment:

﴿ كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ ﴿٧﴾ ﴾

“No! Indeed, the record of the wicked is in *Sijjīn* (the register of the wicked).” [al-Muṭaffifīn: 7]

Then He says, mentioning their reward:

﴿كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عَلِيِّينَ﴾

“No! Indeed, the record of the righteous is in *Illīyyīn* (the register of the righteous).”
[al-Muṭaffifīn: 18]

Allāh, the Exalted, also mentions the different categories of people and their characteristics in:

- ❖ Sūrah Fāṭir,
- ❖ Sūrah al-Wāqī‘ah,
- ❖ Sūrah al-Insān,
- ❖ Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn, and
- ❖ Sūrah al-Infiṭār.

This is the Qur’ān’s method: it mentions Allāh’s allies and their reward, along with His enemies and their punishment.

The Difference Between *al-Abrār* (The Righteous) and *al-Muqarrabīn* (Those Brought Near to Allāh)

After this introduction, we begin discussing the qualities of the *Abrār*, and many of these qualities are also shared by the *Muqarrabūn*. Rather, the *Muqarrabūn* excel beyond them.

As for the *Abrār*, they are those who fulfill the obligatory duties and avoid the prohibited matters, but they do not burden themselves with avoiding permissible things, as stated by Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله.²

As for the *Muqarrabūn*, they draw near to Allāh by performing the obligatory duties and the recommended acts, while avoiding both the prohibited matters and the disliked (*Makrūh*) matters.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said:

“All of the deeds of the *Muqarrabūn* are purely for Allāh; they contain nothing done for their own personal benefit. As for the *Abrār*, their deeds are for Allāh, but some of their actions

² Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (11/23, 183)

may include benefiting themselves through the permissible things that Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, has allowed for them.”³

Therefore, the *Muqarrabūn* are superior and hold a higher rank than the *Abrār*. Some scholars have even stated that the *Muqarrabūn* include:

- ❖ the prophets,
- ❖ the angels,
- ❖ the best people of the Muslim nations,
- ❖ the closest friends of the prophets,
- ❖ the disciples (*Ḥawāriyyūn*) of the prophets,
- ❖ and their supporters.

In every category, they are the foremost and the best.

³ Majmū' al-Fatāwā (10/21, 534–535), (11/179–180); Ṭarīq al-Hijratayn Ibn al-Qayyim (p. 30)

Among the Characteristics of al-Abrār (The Righteous) and al-Muqarrabīn (Those Brought Near to Allāh) in Sūrah al-Baqarah

Among the qualities and praiseworthy characteristics of the *Abrār* is what Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, mentioned in the verse that the scholars have cited as evidence for the qualities of *al-Birr* (righteousness) and the *Abrār*. Among those scholars are the ones already mentioned, such as ar-Rāghib رحمته and Ibn al-Qayyim رحمته, who cited Allāh's statement:

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ﴾

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the

prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives *Zakāh* (obligatory charity); [those who] fulfill their covenants when they make them; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.” [al-Baqarah: 177]

This is their creed with the addition of *al-Qadr* (the Divine Decree), which is mentioned in the Qur’ān⁴ and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ⁵. With that, they complete the essential pillars of belief, without which Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, does not accept a person’s faith.

The pillars of faith are mentioned in this verse as well as other verses of the Qur’ān. Among them is what Allāh mentions at the end of Sūrah al-Baqarah, and some are also mentioned at the beginning of this great *Sūrah*. We will suffice here with referring to them.

⁴ Muslim (2656)

⁵ al-Bukhārī (50) & Muslim (8, 9)

Then Allāh says regarding their qualities:

﴿وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ
السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ﴾

“...and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves” [al-Baqarah: 177]

These are acts of righteousness through which a person draws near to Allāh. Allāh, the Exalted, mentions maintaining ties of kinship, showing compassion, mercy, and generosity toward these groups. The believer does not seek any worldly gain through these acts. Rather, his giving preference to the poor and needy, and the other categories mentioned in the verse, is evidence of his righteousness and sincerity. He seeks only the Face of Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted, and desires neither reward nor gratitude from people.

As Allāh praised them in Sūrah al-Insān:

﴿إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا﴾

“We feed you only for the sake of Allāh. We desire from you neither reward nor thanks.”

[al-Insān: 9]

Thus, caring for the poor and needy and treating them kindly is evidence of this noble quality. Such a person seeks only Allāh’s pleasure; he is not motivated by courtesy, repayment, praise, recognition, or people’s appreciation. Rather, his sole objective is Allāh’s Face, as Allāh mentioned in Sūrah al-Insān. Thus, these deeds are built upon sound creed, that which Allāh described in this verse.

Then Allāh says regarding their qualities:

﴿وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ﴾

“...[and who] establishes prayer and gives *Zakāh* (obligatory charity).” [al-Baqarah: 177]

Among their beautiful and praiseworthy characteristics is that they establish the prayer and perform it in the manner legislated by Allāh in His

Book and in the *Sunnah* of His Messenger ﷺ, along with sincerity, submissiveness, and humility before Him.

A person cannot truly be described as one who establishes the prayer in its complete sense unless he fulfills all its conditions, pillars, obligations, and everything legislated by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

Likewise, they give the *Zakāh*, which is the third pillar of Islām, while the establishment of prayer is the second pillar.

Allāh specifically mentions prayer and *Zakāh* among the qualities of the *Abrār* because, once a person correctly fulfills the pillars of Islām and gives proper attention to prayer and *Zakāh*, he is generally more likely to fulfill the remaining pillars and duties of Islām correctly.

﴿وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا﴾

“...[and those who] fulfill their covenants when they make them.” [al-Baqarah: 177]

Then Allāh described them as fulfilling their covenants. This is a matter of tremendous importance. Fulfilling covenants, whether they are

with Muslims or with the enemies of Islām, is one of the most outstanding qualities of the believers and the righteous. Even if the agreement is with the most disbelieving of people, it must still be honored, because Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, has commanded it.

Allāh has strongly condemned those who fail to honor their promises and those who break their covenants. In contrast, He described the righteous, and among them are those brought near to Him, as people who fulfill their agreements and praised them for doing so. This is a matter that some people treat lightly because they do not appreciate the status of covenants in the sight of Allāh or in the legislation of Islām. Such people deserve severe blame.

One of the finest examples of fulfilling a covenant is the treaty that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ concluded with Quraysh. Abū Jandal رضي الله عنه came dragging his chains, saying:

“O Messenger of Allāh! Will you leave me to the disbelievers so that they persecute me because of my religion and do with me whatever they wish?”

The Prophet ﷺ requested from Suhayl ibn ‘Amr رضى الله عنه, Abū Jandal’s father, that he allow Abū Jandal رضى الله عنه to join the ranks of the Muslims. However, Suhayl رضى الله عنه insisted that the terms of the treaty be carried out. One of those terms was that anyone who came to Muḥammad ﷺ from Quraysh had to be returned to them, whereas anyone who came from Madīnah to the people of Makkah would not be returned.

This condition was very difficult for the believers. It caused many of them to hesitate, not out of disobedience to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, but in the hope that he might revise his decision.

‘Umar رضى الله عنه objected, and many of the Muslims also objected. Some of them said:

“O Messenger of Allāh, are we to accept humiliation in our religion? Are they not disbelievers while we are Muslims? Are they not destined for the Fire while we are destined for Paradise?”

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ replied:

“Yes.”

So they said:

“Then why should we accept humiliation in our religion?”

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ then said to them:

“Indeed, I am the Messenger of Allāh, and He will surely grant me victory.”

Thus it became clear that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ honored this covenant and treaty, and accordingly returned Abū Jandal رضي الله عنه to the disbelievers. He said:

“Allāh will surely make for you a way out and a relief.”⁶

This demonstrates the great importance of treaties and agreements in Islām. Here we see that Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, made honoring covenants one of the qualities of the righteous and of those brought near to Him. Conversely, He made breaking covenants one of the characteristics of the disbelievers. How unfortunate are those who claim to belong to Islām yet do not fulfill their covenants. We ask Allāh for well-being.

⁶ al-Bukhārī (2731, 2732)

Allāh says:

﴿وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ
صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ﴾

“...and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.” [al-Baqarah:177]

Patience is a matter of tremendous importance. Allāh mentions three situations here in which patience is required:

- “In poverty (*al-Ba’sā*)”—meaning poverty and financial hardship.
- “In hardship (*ad-Darrā*)”—meaning illness and physical suffering.
- “During battle (*Hīna al-Ba’s*)”—meaning fighting and confronting the disbelievers in the battles between Islām and disbelief.

In all of these situations, the righteous demonstrate patience in its fullest sense, especially when facing enemies. This is the most difficult form of patience

because it involves sacrificing one's own life and willingly exposing oneself to death.

However, the sincere, righteous believer whose eyes are fixed on Paradise finds patience for the sake of Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, made easy.

Thus, this verse summarizes the qualities of the righteous: it describes them by their sound beliefs and their noble deeds, which have been explained to you. We will now move on to other qualities of the righteous that Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, has mentioned in His Noble Book.

Among the Qualities of al-Abrār (The Righteous) and al-Muqarrabīn (Those Brought Near to Allāh) in Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān

Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, says in Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān:

﴿قُلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذَلِكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي
 مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
 بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿١٠٢﴾ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا عَامِنَا فَاعْفُ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا
 عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٠٣﴾ الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ
 وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ ﴿١٠٤﴾﴾

“Say: Shall I inform you of something better than that? For those who have *Taqwā*, with their Lord are gardens beneath which rivers flow, where they will remain forever, and purified spouses, and the pleasure of Allāh. And Allāh is All-Seeing of His servants.

Those who say, ‘Our Lord, indeed we have believed, so forgive us our sins and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.’ The patient, the truthful, the devoutly obedient, those who spend [in the way of Allāh], and those who

seek forgiveness before dawn.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 15–17]

These are the qualities of those who have *Taqwā*, and they are also the qualities of the righteous and those brought near to Allāh. Among their qualities is patience, and some of its meaning was explained previously in the verse from Sūrah al-Baqarah.

“The devoutly obedient” ﴿وَالْقَانِتِينَ﴾: This means those who continually remain obedient to Allāh, Glorified and Exalted. They remain obedient night and day, whether they are settled or traveling, and in every circumstance.

“Those who spend [in the way of Allāh]” ﴿وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ﴾:

These are those who spend their wealth in the various forms of righteousness and goodness: maintaining family ties, giving charity to the poor and needy, spending in the cause of Allāh, and the other forms of spending encouraged by Islām. They spend their wealth in all or many of these good causes.

“Those who seek forgiveness before dawn”

﴿وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ﴾: They stand in prayer during

the night, and shortly before dawn they turn to Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, in obedience and seeking forgiveness. They humbly call upon Him with supplication and prayer during this virtuous time, when Allāh descends to the lowest heaven and says:

“Who is calling upon Me so that I may answer him? Who is asking Me so that I may give him? Who is seeking My forgiveness so that I may forgive him?”⁷

Thus, they expose themselves to the blessings and mercy of Allāh during this magnificent time, when the Lord of the heavens and the earth descends to the lowest heaven, and they ask of Him that His servants may receive His forgiveness, and that their supplications may be answered. Thus, they are among the people most eager to make use of this time, seize the opportunity it contains to turn to Allāh, and seek His generosity, bounty, forgiveness, and righteousness.

So these are five qualities of the righteous that Allāh mentioned in this passage.

⁷ al-Bukhārī (1145) & Muslim (758)

Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, also says:

﴿وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمُوتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
 أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ۖ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُظُمِينَ
 الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا
 فَعَلُوا فُحْشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن
 يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ۖ
 أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَمَلِينَ ۖ﴾

“And hasten toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who have *Taqwā*; those who spend in times of ease and hardship, who restrain their anger, and who pardon people—and Allāh loves those who do good. And those who, when they commit an immoral deed or wrong themselves, remember Allāh and seek forgiveness for their sins—and who can forgive sins except Allāh?—and they do not knowingly persist in what they have done. Their reward is

forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens beneath which rivers flow, where they will remain forever. How excellent is the reward of those who work [righteousness].” [Āl ‘Imrān: 133–136]

Here Allāh mentions the qualities of those who have *Taqwā* (*al-Muttaqīn*). These are qualities shared by both the righteous (*al-Abrār*) and those brought near to Allāh (*al-Muqarrabīn*).

This is because the righteous include those brought near to Allāh, just as Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said: those brought near are included among the righteous, just as all the characteristics of faith are included within Islām, and all the characteristics of Islām are included within faith.

But here, those brought near are included among the righteous, and not the other way around, because *al-Abrār* (the righteous) is the more general category. In contrast, *al-Muqarrabūn* (those brought near to Allāh) is a more specific category.⁸

Let us shed some light on these beautiful qualities of the righteous (*al-Abrār*) and those brought near to

⁸ Jāmi‘ ar-Rasā’il (1/74)

Allāh (*al-Muqarrabīn*). Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, says:

﴿وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمُوتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

“And hasten toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who have *Taqwā*.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 133]

They truly hastened. Allāh described them as people who race and compete toward this Paradise which He, Glorified and Exalted, has described. We ask Allāh to make us and you among its people.

Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, encourages hastening toward the Gardens that He has prepared for those who have *Taqwā*. He describes Paradise as being as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who have *Taqwā* with all their various qualities: those who guard themselves against *Shirk* (associating partners with Allāh), and those who guard themselves against those things that anger Allāh, Glorified and Exalted.

So we are encouraged to hasten toward this Paradise that Allāh has prepared for those who have *Taqwā* from among His slaves, foremost among whom are the righteous and those brought near to Him.

Allāh describes them as:

﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ﴾

“Those who spend in times of ease and hardship.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 134]

The matter of spending is tremendous, my brothers! It is a fundamental principle in Islām to which a Muslim must give serious attention, as is the case with all the other deeds that Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, has legislated.

Whether this matter of spending or those actions which are more virtuous, the Muslim who is righteous and sincere must act upon what he knows. Many people acquire knowledge simply for the sake of culture and information! We do not say everyone, because there are good people in this *Ummah*. However, we must understand that the purpose of knowledge is action.

Look at the qualities of the righteous: there is serious and devoted action in drawing closer to Allāh. A person spends in times of prosperity and hardship. He may be poor, yet despite this, he gives from what he possesses. In times of prosperity, he gives according to his abundance and is generous; and when he is poor, he still gives from his wealth.

Indeed, Allāh described the *Anṣār* as preferring others over themselves even though they themselves were in need.

This spirit should prevail among Muslims, among those working for Islām, and among those calling to the truth—to the *Sunnah* and to following Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

This spirit should prevail among them: the spirit of action and the spirit of correctly putting Islām into practice; sincere faith, sound belief devoted purely to Allāh, followed by earnest deeds that bring one closer to Allāh, Glorified and Exalted.

These are the people whom Allāh has described as spending in times of prosperity and hardship.

So a person should look at himself and ask: “Am I among this category of people?” If not, then he

should strive against himself so that he may rise to this rank.

The soul requires striving, treatment, and cultivation to join those whom Allāh has praised in many verses of His perfect Book.

Allāh has described them with these qualities and has given them this special care only because they deserve Allāh's care. He has praised and commended them. Their status with Allāh is tremendous.

So compete with these people in acquiring these qualities, so that you may come under Allāh's care, attention, and protection, and so that you may be among those whom Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, loves.

For the one who follows the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ must give following him its full due in everything: in giving, in worship, and in creed. Allāh says:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

“Say, ‘If you love Allāh, then follow me; Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. And

Allāh is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 31]

Following the Messenger ﷺ is not an easy matter. It means following him in every aspect of life so that you may become among those brought near to Allāh.

Strive to be among *al-Muqarrabīn*—those whose deeds are entirely for Allāh. Allāh, the Most High, has praised them greatly.

﴿وَالْكُظُمِينَ الْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ﴾

“Those who restrain their anger, and who pardon people.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 134]

These are among their qualities. Anger may almost overcome a person, but he restrains it and holds back its force.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“The strong person is not the one who overcomes others by wrestling; rather, the strong person is the one who controls himself when angry.”⁹

⁹ al-Bukhārī (6114) & Muslim (2609)

A fool or an enemy may anger you, so what is required of you?

What is required is that you restrain your anger, so that you may be among the righteous. But even more than that is required of you: forgiveness. This is because when you suppress your anger, you restrain it, but something of the pain may remain within you. With forgiveness, however, all of that disappears, and tolerance and serenity of the heart remain. This is something praiseworthy before Allāh, Blessed and Exalted.

It is among the qualities of those who are close to Allāh and of the righteous. For this reason, Allāh says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

“and Allāh loves those who do good (*al-Muḥsinīn*).” [Āl ‘Imrān: 134]

That is, those who restrain their anger and pardon people are among the doers of good (*al-Muḥsinīn*). *Iḥsān* holds a tremendous rank with Allāh. In worship, it means that you worship Allāh as though you see Him; and even though you do not see Him, He sees you.

In dealing with people, *Ihsān* means conducting yourself with noble character: patience, forgiveness, overlooking faults, and restraining anger. These matters are difficult for people. However, a Muslim who wishes to attain the rank of the righteous and those drawn near to Allāh must train himself in these qualities until they become firmly rooted traits within him.

So we ask Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, to discipline and refine us with this noble conduct, to adorn us with these magnificent qualities, and to make us among the righteous doers of good (*al-Abrār al-Muhsinīn*).

Among their good qualities is that when they fall into sin, they do not persist in it or continue stubbornly in it:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا
لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“And those who, when they commit an immoral deed or wrong themselves, remember Allāh and seek forgiveness for

their sins—and who can forgive sins except Allāh?—and they do not knowingly persist in what they have done.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 135]

If a person falls into a major sin, and he is not infallible, or falls into a lesser sin, then he has wronged himself through that sin. Thus, he should return to Allāh, repent to Him, and hasten back to Him.

It is not part of his nature or disposition to persist stubbornly in falsehood or continue defiantly in sin. This is a blameworthy character trait from which a righteous believer must keep himself far removed. These are important matters that we must give due attention to and sincerely strive to embody.

﴿ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ ﴾

“They remember Allāh and seek forgiveness for their sins.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 135]

They seek forgiveness from Allāh, and Allāh forgives all sins. Allāh is vast in mercy, vast in goodness, and vast in forgiveness:

﴿قُلْ يُعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

“Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh forgives all sins. Indeed, He is the All-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.’” [az-Zumar: 53]

Rather, Allāh rejoices at the repentance of His servant with the greatest joy imaginable. Allāh’s joy is greater than any joy that exists. The Prophet ﷺ gave the following example:

“Allāh is more joyful at the repentance of His servant than one of you who was riding his mount in a barren land. Then his camel escaped from him while carrying his food and drink. He despaired of finding it, so he came to a tree and lay down in its shade, having lost all hope of recovering his mount. Then suddenly, it was there, standing beside him. He grabbed its reins and, because of the intensity of his joy, said: ‘O Allāh, You are my servant, and I am

your lord!’ He made this mistake because of his intense joy.”¹⁰

Allāh is even more joyful at His servant’s repentance than this man was. Therefore, the believer does not despair of relief from Allāh and does not persist in any sin, whether small or great. Rather, it is part of his nature and character to return to Allāh, Glorified and Exalted. So be people of this character.

Among the verses in which Allāh describes His righteous and close servants is what Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, says in this *Sūrah*:

﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, are signs for people of understanding.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 190]

“People of understanding” (*Ulū al-Albāb*) means those who possess sound and healthy minds. This is one of the qualities of the righteous, and through it they surpass others and become among those brought

¹⁰ Muslim (2747)

near to Allāh. They have a great share of this quality: reflecting upon the creation of the heavens and the earth and arriving through that reflection at a very profound conclusion, namely, declaring Allāh far above purposelessness and play.

Rather, Allāh created the heavens, the earth, and everything within them only with truth and for a true purpose, and with immense wisdom. These heavens, these two earths, and what is in the sky from fixed and moving celestial bodies, their movements and courses, their precise order, and the marvelous creation found within them, all of this points to the power of Allāh.

Through this, the righteous come to recognize the greatness of Allāh and the greatness of His power and authority. From the perfect order of this universe, they conclude that Allāh is Wise and places all things in their proper places. He is completely far removed from purposelessness; Exalted is Allāh, far above such a thing as the disbelievers wrongly suppose.

Allāh says:

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَطْلًا ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ﴾

“We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them without purpose. That is the assumption of those who disbelieve. So woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire.” [Ṣād: 27]

The righteous, on the contrary, through their insight and the soundness of their minds, which Allāh praised them for, come to understand that Allāh created these heavens, the earth, and everything within them only for a tremendous wisdom and purpose. Part of that wisdom is that Allāh will resurrect them and recompense them for their deeds in this life:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُضْعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ
لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾

“Indeed, Allāh does not wrong even by the weight of an atom. And if there is a good deed,

He multiplies it and gives from Himself a tremendous reward.” [an-Nisā': 40]

They arrive at such a conclusion through their mature, enlightened, expansive, and conscious minds. As for the disbelievers, no matter how deeply they advance in the worldly sciences and how proficient they become in them, they are lower in rank and more deficient than even the lowest levels reached by these righteous people of understanding.

Even if the righteous knew nothing of these worldly industries and technologies, through their pure and perceptive minds they recognize the wisdom of Allāh in this universe and the wisdom of its Creator, the wisdom behind the creation of this universe in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. For this reason, Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, praised them.

Then they seek nearness to Allāh through one of the greatest forms of *Tawassul* (seeking a means of nearness to Allāh): seeking nearness to Allāh through His Most Beautiful Names, His exalted attributes, and His magnificent actions. They reflected upon the universe and reached the tremendous conclusion that Allāh created it in truth and did not create it in vain. Then, through this faith and through the reflection that led them to these conclusions, they

sought nearness to Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, asking Him to save them from the punishment of the Fire.

These are the righteous and those brought near to Allāh. These are their requests, and these are the means by which they seek nearness to Him: through faith and righteous deeds, and before that, through the Names of Allāh, His attributes, and His wise actions. These are among the greatest forms of *Tawassul*, and Allāh has praised them in many verses of the Qur'ān.

This understanding has become obscured in the minds of the people of innovation, to such an extent that when *Tawassul* is mentioned, they think only of false practices, acts of *Shirk*, and corrupt deeds.

﴿رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ﴾

“Our Lord! You have not created all of this without purpose. Glory be to You! Save us from the punishment of the Fire.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 191]

These intelligent and noble-minded people, those possessing sound intellects, perceived the end and humiliating fate of the wrongdoers. Here,

wrongdoing means disbelief, major sins, and the grave innovations associated with them. So they say:

﴿رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ﴾

“Our Lord, indeed whoever You admit to the Fire, You have certainly disgraced him, and the wrongdoers will have no helpers.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 192]

They understood the fate of such people, so they sought refuge in Allāh, turned to Allāh for salvation, and sought nearness to Him so that He would save them from this humiliating fate.

Ibrāhīm ؑ said:

﴿وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ﴾

“And do not disgrace me on the Day they are resurrected—the Day when neither wealth nor children will benefit, except one who comes to Allāh with a sound heart.”
[ash-Shu‘arā’: 87–89]

These righteous people are the pious ones who are brought near to Allāh, so they seek Allāh’s protection from this humiliating fate.

﴿رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَنِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا﴾

“Our Lord, indeed we heard a caller calling to faith, saying, ‘Believe in your Lord,’ so we believed.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 193]

They responded to this caller, and the callers are the Messengers ﷺ. They responded to them, believed, and thus sought nearness to Allāh through this faith.

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

“Our Lord, forgive us our sins, erase from us our evil deeds, and cause us to die with the righteous.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 193]

The sins (*Dhunūb*) are the major sins, while the evil deeds (*Sayyi’āt*) are the minor sins. They asked to be joined with the righteous:

﴿وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ﴾

“And cause us to die with the righteous.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 193]

This contains yet another form of *Tawassul*. These legislated forms of *Tawassul* have been overwhelmed by innovations, such that many innovators have forgotten this prescribed form of *Tawassul*. The deviations they are in have blinded them to perceiving it; otherwise, it would have been sufficient for them, because these are the forms of *Tawassul* practiced by the Prophets ﷺ, the righteous, and those brought near to Allāh.

So why does the believer not follow their example in having faith in Allāh and in seeking nearness to Allāh

through the means that He prescribed upon the tongues of His Messengers?

﴿رَبَّنَا وَءَاتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ﴾

“Our Lord, grant us what You promised us through Your Messengers, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, You do not break Your promise.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 194]

After their belief, they asked Allāh for these requests, including sparing them from disgrace on the Day of Resurrection, and giving them what He promised them through the tongues of the Messengers: Allāh’s forgiveness, and admitting them into the gardens which Allāh has prepared for those who have *Taqwā*, whose expansiveness is the heavens and the earth.

Allāh says:

﴿فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ﴾

“So their Lord responded to them” [Āl ‘Imrān: 195]

This is a supplication deserving of an answer from people possessing these qualities: righteous people brought near to Allāh, who believed in Allāh and employed all the means that bring them closer to Allāh. They turned to Allāh with these supplications, so Allāh said:

﴿فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ﴾

“So their Lord responded to them” [Āl ‘Imrān: 195]

Their Master and King. The expression “**their Lord**” is an attribution of honor: their Lord who nurtures and cares for them, supports them, and strengthens them against their enemies.

﴿فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمَلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنشَأَ بَعْضُكُم مِّنْ بَعْضٍ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا﴾

“So their Lord responded to them: ‘Indeed, I will not allow the work of any good-doer among you, whether male or female, to be lost. You are both the same in that respect. So those who emigrated...’ [Āl ‘Imrān: 195]

Among the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ were the *Muhājirūn* (the Emigrants) and others. Ibrāhīm ﷺ emigrated, and the Prophets ﷺ emigrated and were driven from their homes. Among the emigrants were Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ who emigrated, were expelled from their homes, and were harmed in the path of Allāh. They endured all of these sacrifices for Allāh and bore various forms of harm in the path of Allāh.

So Allāh rewarded them:

﴿لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ﴾

“I will surely expiate their evil deeds and surely admit them into Gardens beneath which rivers flow, as a reward from Allāh; and with Allāh is the best reward.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 195]

Allāh has explained this excellent reward in many verses of the Qur’ān.

لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ

“But those who feared their Lord will have Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever, as an accommodation from Allāh. And what is with Allāh is better for the righteous.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 198]

Among the qualities of the righteous mentioned here is *Taqwā* of Allāh. Allāh explains that He has prepared for the righteous and those who have *Taqwā* Gardens in which they will remain forever, beneath which rivers flow. Allāh has prepared these Gardens for them as an accommodation, meaning hospitality for a guest.

Thus Allāh honored them with the finest hospitality and gave them the finest dwelling: Gardens beneath which rivers flow. How excellent is the reward and recompense of Allāh!

These are some of the qualities of the righteous, and the people brought near to Allāh share these qualities with them and surpass them in them.

Perhaps we should mention some of the qualities of the righteous that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ described: they love Allāh, believe in Him, show loyalty for His sake, love for His sake, and hate His enemies. Through this they draw near to Allāh. They hate those whom Allāh hates, love those whom Allāh loves, become displeased with what displeases Allāh, and are pleased with what pleases Allāh, Blessed and Exalted. These are among their qualities.

As the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“The firmest bond of faith is loving for the sake of Allāh and hating for the sake of Allāh.”¹¹

And the Messenger ﷺ said:

“Whoever loves for Allāh’s sake, hates for Allāh’s sake, gives for Allāh’s sake, and withholds for Allāh’s sake has perfected faith.”¹²

These are among the qualities of the righteous allies of Allāh and those brought near to Him.

¹¹ *Musnad* Aḥmad (4/286); *Musnad* al-Ṭayālīsī (747); Ibn Abī Shaybah *Kitāb al-Īmān* (110), *al-Muṣannaḥ* (13/229)

¹² Abū Dāwūd (4681); Ibn Abī Shaybah *al-Muṣannaḥ* (13/358); al-Ṭabarānī *al-Kabīr* (7613, 7737), *al-Awsaṭ* (9083); al-Bayhaqī *al-Shu‘ab* (9021)

Among the Qualities of al-Abrār (The Righteous) and al-Muqarrabīn (Those Brought Near to Allāh) in Sūrah al-Insān

They are described in verses from Sūrah al-Insān. Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, says concerning them:

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا ﴿١﴾ وَيُطْعَمُونَ
الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ۖ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ
اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا
عَبُوسًا قَمَطِيرًا ﴿٤﴾ فَوَقَّعَهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا
﴿٥﴾ وَجَزَّاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا ﴿٦﴾ مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ
لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا وَلَا زَمَهْرِيرًا ﴿٧﴾ وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلُّهَا وَذُلَّتْ
قُطُوفُهَا تَذَلِيلًا ﴿٨﴾ وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِدَانِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ
قَوَارِيرًا ﴿٩﴾ قَوَارِيرًا مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا
كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا ﴿١١﴾ عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسَبِيلًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَيَطُوفُ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَدُنْ مُّخَلَّدُونَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَّنثورًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِذَا
رَأَيْتَ ثُمَّ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَمُلْكًا كَبِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾ عَلَيْهِمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ

وَاسْتَبْرَقُوا وَحُلُّوا أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَسَقَلَهُمُ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا ۖ إِنَّ
هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا ﴿٢٠﴾

“They fulfill their vows and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread. And they give food, despite their love for it, to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, saying, ‘We feed you only for the sake of Allāh. We desire from you neither reward nor thanks. Indeed, we fear from our Lord a grim and distressful Day.’ So Allāh will protect them from the evil of that Day and grant them radiance and happiness, and reward them for their patience with a Garden and garments of silk. There they will recline on couches, seeing neither scorching sun nor bitter cold. Its shade will be close over them, and its clusters of fruit will hang low within easy reach. Vessels of silver and cups of crystal will be passed around among them—crystal-clear, made of silver—which they will measure precisely. And they will be given a drink mixed with ginger from a spring therein called *Salsabīl*. There will circulate among them eternally youthful servants; when you see them, you would think they were scattered pearls. And when you look

there, you will see bliss and a magnificent kingdom. Upon them will be garments of fine green silk and brocade, and they will be adorned with bracelets of silver. Their Lord will give them a pure drink. Indeed, this is a reward for you, and your striving has been appreciated.” [al-Insān: 7–22]

These qualities are particularly associated with *al-Abrār* (the righteous), while *al-Muqarrabūn* (those brought near to Allāh) are even higher than them in these matters. But in Sūrah al-Insān, Allāh specifically mentions the characteristics of the righteous.

Regarding:

﴿يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ﴾

“They fulfill their vows.” [al-Insān: 7]

If they make a vow, they fulfill what they have committed themselves to. Allāh only obligates them to fulfill it after they have imposed it upon themselves. Since this is their attitude and position regarding vows and covenants, then the matters that Allāh Himself has originally made obligatory upon them, which constitute foundations of faith and

worship, are even more deserving of being carried out and fulfilled by them.

Regarding:

﴿وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا﴾

“And they fear a Day whose evil will be widespread.” [al-Insān: 7]

This is also one of their qualities, and it is likewise one of the qualities of the Prophets. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“By Allāh, I am the one among you who has the greatest fear of Allāh and the greatest *Taqwā* of Him.”¹³

Some Sufis claim that they worship Allāh neither out of fear of His Fire nor out of desire for His Paradise! This is ignorance and misguidance, and it contradicts the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, for the people who have the greatest hope and desire for what is with Allāh are the Prophets ﷺ, the best of creation, the noblest of them, and the most honored, followed by the close servants of Allāh

¹³ al-Bukhārī (5063) & Muslim (1401)

and the righteous. Allāh described them as fearing Him.

Nūḥ عليه السلام said:

﴿ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا ﴿١٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ﴿١٥﴾ ﴾

“What is the matter with you that you do not attribute to Allāh due grandeur, while He has created you in stages? Do you not see how Allāh created seven heavens in layers?” [Nūḥ: 13–15]

Allāh commanded Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to say:

﴿ قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴾

“Say: Indeed, I fear, if I were to disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.” [az-Zumar: 13]

When a group of men came to the homes of the wives of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ asking about his worship, they were informed that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would stand in prayer and sleep, fast and break his fast, and marry women. One of them said,

“As for me, I will pray and never sleep.” Another said, “As for me, I will fast and never break my fast.” The third said, “I will not marry women.”

When this reached the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, he said:

“What is the matter with people who say such-and-such? By Allāh, I am the one among you who has the greatest fear of Allāh and the greatest *Taqwā* of Him.”¹⁴

They had considered the practice of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ insufficient. They said, “This is the Messenger of Allāh; Allāh has forgiven his past and future sins!” They thought that this was why the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would sleep for part of the night, break his fast on some days, and marry women, whereas they themselves had not been forgiven their past and future sins.

So the Messenger ﷺ explained that it was not what they thought, and that other *Aḥādīth* (Prophetic narrations) clarify what motivated him.

¹⁴ al-Bukhārī (5063) & Muslim (1401)

In the *Hadīth* of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Indeed, your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you, your wife has a right over you, and your visitor has a right over you.”¹⁵

Thus, the believer cannot fulfill these rights except by being balanced and moderate in his worship, following the moderation of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Fulfilling rights and obligations takes precedence over becoming absorbed in voluntary acts of worship. These are the teachings and care of Islām.

The heart of the matter is that the Prophets ﷺ were the people who feared Allāh the most and who had the greatest hope for what is with Allāh. This is explicitly stated in the Qur’ān:

﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خُشْعِينَ﴾

“Indeed, they used to hasten to do good deeds and supplicate to Us with hope and fear, and

¹⁵ al-Bukhārī (6134) & Muslim (1159)

they were humbly submissive to Us.”
[al-Anbiyā': 90]

That is, the Prophets ﷺ.

This matter deserves attention because many people are deceived by it. Those who worship Allāh [neither out of fear of His Fire nor out of desire for His Paradise] regard this as one of the highest spiritual stations, whereas in reality it is among the lowest levels. This results from ignorance, misguidance, and deviation.

No one truly understands the status of the Prophets ﷺ except one who recognizes their proper rank. So how could a person exalt himself above their station by stripping himself of fear of Allāh and hope for what is with Allāh?!

Perhaps this explanation of these verses is sufficient.

We ask Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted, to guide us, correct our mistakes, and prepare for this *Ummah* outstanding callers to Islām, sincere scholars, and wise jurists who will guide the Muslims along the path of honor and dignity with wisdom and reason.

Indeed, our Lord is the Hearer of supplications.

May Allāh's peace and blessings be upon His Prophet Muḥammad, his family, and his companions.

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