**In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.**

**AL-FALAQ**

The Dawn – Chapter 113

Commentary by Dr. Basharat Ahmad

Translated by Imam Kalamazad Mohammed

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

Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn,

From the evil of that which He has created,

And from the evil of intense darkness, when it comes,

And from the evil of those who cast (evil suggestions) in firm resolutions,

And from the evil of the envier when he envies.

Surah al-Falaq is one of the last two chapters of the Holy Qur’an called al-mu’awwazatain, as these start with the word ‘a’-oo-zu, which means I seek refuge. In this chapter, Allah’s protection or refuge has been sought against all sorts of evils which incite others to cause injury to us, whereas in surah al-Nas, protection has been sought against all such evil inclinations through which we cause harm or injury to others. Thus these two chapters are so comprehensive that no evil or evil inclination has been left out from which refuge has not been sought in Allah. It is written in the Hadith that on the revelation of these two chapters, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) became very happy and he forsook other prayers seeking Allah’s protection and adopted these instead.

The word fa-laq in the first verse of the chapter means cleaving or splitting. This word has been used at two other places in the Qur’an. In 6:96, the words are Faa-li-qul hab-bi wan na-waa: One who causes the grain and date-stone to split or germinate. Then in verse 97 of the same surah, the words are Faa-li-qul isbaah: the Cleaver of the daybreak. Here Allah’s attribute, Faa-liq, has been mentioned in the beginning. This word carries two meanings: firstly, the Being Who brings out the dawn from the darkness of night; and secondly,
the One Who splits the hard date-stone and brings out the young shoot. In other words, it refers to the all-pervasive power of Allah which extends from the tiny creation of the young shoot to the manoeuvring of the huge planets, such as the sun and the moon, in the universe. By using His divine attribute al-Falaq, the idea is to impress upon the mind of the believer that it is Allah alone Who can protect one from evils.

The other word which needs explaining is *na-fa-sa* which means to blow. To blow into one’s heart means to put a thing or an idea into one’s heart. Similarly, to blow over a knot, as is mentioned in verse 4: *naf-faa-saa-ti fil u-qad* means to insinuate evil suggestions into the resolution of men or into the management of their affairs. And it does happen that when a person undertakes some good work, there are people who themselves do nothing, but would always discourage him by dissuading him or by weakening his determination by over-emphasizing unfounded fears.

Unfortunately, some of the commentators of the Holy Qur’an, confined themselves to the literal meaning of the words *blowing into the knots* and this gave rise to the baseless story that some Jewish woman wove a magic spell over the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas), with the effect that he became forgetful. The Holy Qur’an rejects all such stories and narration.

The fact is that it was the disbelievers who accused the Holy Prophet of being a magician, as we find in the Qur’an: *Qaa-lal kaa-fir-oona in-naa haa-zaa la-saa-hi-rum mu-been: The disbelievers say: This is surely a manifest enchanter – 10:2.* As has already been mentioned, these two chapters cover all sorts of evils, and that is why most devout Muslims, before going to bed, recite them to seek Allah’s protection.

Now we come to the second verse, *From the evil of that which Allah has created.* We should bear in mind that man, by and large, depends on the environment for the maintenance of his very existence. It is our common experience that a human being faces two kinds of dangers while living on this earth. Firstly, dangers which are obvious and known such as beasts, snakes, robbers etc. Secondly, things which although essential and beneficial for the maintenance of human life, yet at times take a dangerous turn, such as air, water, fire, food etc. For instance, fire is the primary source of energy and heat for human beings, but at times it blazes uncontrollably thus destroying property and killing people. Similarly, water is the main source of life and vegetation, but sometimes it turns into devastating floods causing widespread havoc and destruction. Then come man’s own creations, such as the motorcar, the aeroplane and other means of transport. These have made man’s travelling faster and more comfortable, but sometimes when an accident occurs, it causes injury and death. Again, one eats delicious food for enjoyment but at times it causes serious illness and food poisoning. So in this verse, protection is sought in Allah from evils which are known and from the evil consequences of things which Allah has created for the maintenance and benefit of human beings, but which at times due to accidents or mishandling by human beings themselves, become harmful and dangerous.

In the third verse (*And from the evil of intense darkness, when it comes*), protection is sought against the evils of darkness, whether it is the darkness of night or the darkness of ignorance. We find that mugging, theft, robbery, murder and other crimes are committed mostly in the darkness of the night. Similarly, social evils such as drinking, dancing-parties and all sorts of licentious and promiscuous activities are carried out during the night. Sometimes even useful things become dangerous in the dark when one cannot see them and can get one-self injured, such as a staircase or any other thing which one may come across in darkness.

So, darkness in many ways becomes a source of danger or injury and even useful things can cause harm in the dark when one cannot see them properly. Similarly, lack of knowledge or correct information may lead one to failure or loss, such as in business etc.

In other words, lack of knowledge not only keeps one away from the right path but also wastes one’s capabilities and may land one into harmful and dangerous situations.

The fourth verse, *And from the evil of those who cast evil suggestions in firm resolutions* emphasizes the need for one’s determination to carry on some work to its successful end. It is at this stage that some people try to dissuade one from some good work by making evil suggestions or by over-emphasizing the dangers and the supposedly unfortunate consequences which may result in case one fails to accomplish the undertaking.

The last verse, *And from the evil of the envier when he envies* teaches a very important prayer to save one
from the evil of the envier when he envies. It is at this stage that jealous people become more active in trying to strike the final blow and destroy the work which they could not stop otherwise by insinuation or evil suggestions. So one really needs Allah’s help and protection at this final stage because one is desperate to complete the work as any obstacle or hindrance at this stage will certainly upset one very much.

So in this chapter, as explained before, a prayer has been taught to seek protection in Allah against all such evils which come in the way of a believer in his struggle in life.

The first verse of the chapter also emphasizes a subtle truth about Allah’s protection for human struggle in life. The Divine attribute Faal-liq denotes that as Allah cleaves the daybreak out of the darkness of the night and brings young shoots out of the hard date-stone, so, too, will He bring a believer out of the darkness of indecision, confusion and difficulties and definitely guide and help him to final success.

A Muslim believes Allah to be the All-powerful and Over-all Controller of things, and so to Him alone we should address our supplications. That is why the Holy Qur’an starts with the prayer: iy-yaka na’-bu-du wa iy-yaka nasta’-in (Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help). Thus the start made by seeking Allah’s blessings and help has been beautifully ended with a prayer, seeking Allah’s protection for all we do in our struggle through the arduous journey of life.

“What can I do for Islam and Muslims?” is a question which every Muslim, young and old, should ask himself. Without minimising the value of the work that others are doing, I will place my own answer to the question as briefly as possible before my Muslim brethren.

Before attempting an answer to this question, it is necessary to find out the greatest need of Islam in its present trials. It is true that the most conspicuous thing that strikes us at first sight about Islam today is the decline of its political dominance in the world. But searching beneath the surface, one will find that the vanishing away of the temporal power of the Islamic world is itself due to other causes, which have brought about a general deterioration in the condition of the Muslim peoples throughout the world. The remedy, therefore, must be applied to the root-disease. An immutable Divine law is thus stated in the Holy Qur’an:

\[
\text{God does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition} \\
(13:11).
\]

Muslims were once the masters of the world and their condition now is the reverse of this. The change in their condition is therefore a clear sign that they themselves have changed; in other words, they gave up the high principles that made them eminent in the world. The inner change came first and the outward change in their political condition is only the outcome of that inner change. In fact, so great was the power wielded by Muslims in the world that no power from outside could bring about its fall, if deterioration had not taken place from within. And just as the fall is due to internal causes, even so, the rise can be brought about only by an internal change. This is the first point which must be borne in mind. No alliance with this people or non-co-operation with that people can do any good to Muslims unless they think more about themselves than about love or hatred for others and unless they exert themselves to a much greater extent for bettering the condition of Muslims, throwing all other questions into the background. Their efforts must in the main be directed towards the reform of the Muslim community.

The second point to which I wish to draw the attention of my Muslim brethren is that the mission of Muslims in this world is not simply their own betterment; it is the betterment of humanity at large, the bringing out of people from darkness into light, the disseminating of truth, the removing of all distinctions of colour and nationality, the establishing of a universal brotherhood all over the world and finally, the bringing about of a real union between God and man. Thus says the Holy Qur’an:

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\text{And thus We have made you an exalted nation, that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and that the Apostle may be a bearer of}
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Islam brought a message of peace to the world as its very name shows, and we are not true to Islam if we do not carry that message to the farthest corners of the earth. The Apostle was a bearer of witness to us because he delivered to us the message of Truth, and exactly in the same way we are required to be the bearers of witness to others and to convey to them the message of Truth. That is our ideal. To be content with anything short of this is to waste away the opportunity that has been given to us, to be untrue to ourselves and to Islam. So says the Word of God:

Most surely, man is in loss, except those who believe and do good and enjoin on each other patience (3:2-3).

The mere acceptance of truth, even putting it into practice, does not make us gainers if not accompanied by our inviting others to it. Truth is not a thing merely to be received; it is a thing to be received and imparted.

A little consideration would show the truth of the statement made by the Holy Qur’an. Man remains a loser so long as he does not carry the message of truth to others. Why? Because there is nothing stationary in the world. If you do not move forward, you shall go back. Life is a struggle onwards. The moment that struggle stops, there is decline and decay. This is the lesson conveyed in the above verses. It is useless to speak of the betterment of the Muslim peoples unless the very first condition of betterment is fulfilled and the banner of Truth is raised aloft and carried forward. It is the lesson written large in the pages of the history of Islam. So long as Muslims were inspired by the zeal to carry the banner of Islam forward, they were a great people. The moment they called a halt, they began to deteriorate and it is only the result of that deterioration that is facing us in the fallen condition of the Muslim community. Let that spirit to conquer the whole world by the message of peace inculcated in the Holy Qur’an again move our hearts and we shall soon see how Muslims are once more ahead of the nations of the world in the race of life. Our betterment, the reform of the Muslim community, can only be brought about by the propagation of the truth that has been given to us in the Holy Qur’an.

The truth of the statement made above is clear in more ways than one. The world today is devoid of clear and correct notions about Islam. Misrepresentation has been rampant in Europe for centuries and it requires a long and sustained struggle on the part of Muslims to remove it. As a people, Muslims cannot afford to be looked down upon by the nations of the earth, and the greater the esteem in which they are held by others, the smaller the chances of being ill-treated by them. Thus the propagation of Islam is the greatest religious, as well as the most important political need of Muslims, and unless this need is fulfilled, our advancement from within cannot bring about any appreciable results.

The misgivings that lurk in the minds of some Muslims on this point are due to a lack of appreciation of the spiritual power of Islam and its effect on the material advancement of the Muslims. The Holy Qur’an speaks of Islam as being the greatest spiritual power that has ever existed in the world and it, therefore, speaks of the principles of Islam as destined ultimately to be the only dominant principles in the world.

And what does history show? Islam is the latest religion of the world; its preaching commenced when all other religions had been firmly established and claimed homage from different nations of the earth. Yet so great was the spiritual power wielded by Islam, that no religion has been able to withstand it. Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, have all contributed their millions to Islam, while none of these has ever been able to take away any appreciable number from amongst the Muslims. Christianity has, for centuries, worked with the most powerful resources to deal a blow to Islam, but has not been able to win back even those contributed by it. So great is the spiritual power of Islam that even at the ebb of its physical power, its principles are gaining ground in the West, the day of whose conquest by Islam seems to have dawned after a long night of a thousand years. Islam came into the world to conquer; it has gone on conquering and it shall continue to conquer.

“The sun shall rise from the West in the later days” (Mishkat al-Masabih) was foretold by the Holy Prophet. Obviously, the reference was to the...
sun of Islam which rose first in the East and filled the Eastern countries with its resplendent light. The West was to receive the spiritual, like the physical, light later in the day, and that light has shone forth on it just when the temporal power of Islam was considered to have almost vanished away. It is only a sign that Islam shall be a conqueror spiritually, whether winning or losing in the physical world. And this sign of the wonderful conquests that are yet to be made by Islam has been manifested through the greatest religious personality of this age, the late Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Mujaddid (Reformer) of the 14th century of Hijrah.

About sixty years ago, he drew the attention of the world to the wonderful spiritual power of Islam – a power that can make the whole world bow to it even in the days of its trial, even at the time of its political subjection to its greatest foe. He spoke with the force that comes from on High, that the apparent loss of Muslim power was a sign of the great conquest that awaited Islam in the spiritual field. When he reached the outskirts of the town with the star-bedecked firmament above him, his thoughts went up to the great Allah Who had made these. Thus musing upon Allah’s greatness and beauty, he went on till he was quite a long way from the town. All of a sudden, in the dark of night, his eyes fell on a flame of fire in the distance. Spurred on by curiosity, he approached the light and after a while there loomed out what appeared to be a small tent. Drawing closer, he found a Bedouin seated in front of the tent, his face buried in his hands and a camel standing nearby. The Bedouin was lost in thought and took no notice of this nocturnal visitor.

"Assalamu ‘Alaikum!" said the visitor at last, to wake the Bedouin from his reverie, but to no effect. The visitor repeated the salutation, yet received no reply. After a third time, the Bedouin, taking him for a wayfarer or a beggar, sternly told him to be off and not to worry him. "Why, brother? What is the trouble with you?" asked the visitor, not minding the rebuff in the least.

"Don’t pester me!” shouted the Bedouin. “Haven’t I already told you to clear off?” The visitor insisted on knowing what the matter was with him. At this, the Bedouin jumped to his feet to fetch his sword from inside his tent. “If you don’t want to lose your head,” he said, “be off with you. It seems you must be a highwayman out on your game.”

"No brother,” replied the visitor gently. “I am no highwayman. Nor am I a wayfarer or a beggar. I belong to Madinah. I earn my living by working for others. I live in the town and have come out just for a stroll and seeing this fire in the wilderness, I was attracted here. I was afraid you are in trouble. What can I do for you?”

"Whose slave are you, then?” asked the Bedouin?

"I am a slave of the Muslims. My profession is to work for them,” the visitor replied.

"What has brought you here?” enquired the Bedouin.

"All I want to know is the trouble that keeps you here in the desert in such perplexity,” replied the visitor, taking his seat by the Bedouin. As he did so, he heard a painful cry from inside the tent – the cry of a woman.

"Why, brother? Who is crying with pain?” asked the visitor.
“It is my wife,” replied the Bedouin. “We were coming from a long distance when her time came. I am a poor man and could not afford to take her to a town to engage a midwife so I stopped here in the desert. She is in great distress now. Please pray that Allah may help her in this desert place.”

“Don’t worry about it in the least,” replied the visitor. “I know a midwife and will shortly be back to you along with her.”

“Wait!” said the Bedouin. “Don’t fetch a midwife. I have no money to pay her.”

“Don’t worry on that account either,” replied the visitor. “She will want no remuneration. Besides, she will be a great help to your wife.”

It was past midnight when the visitor returned to his house. His wife was still up, waiting for him. Finding that her husband looked distressed, she asked him what was the matter. The husband told her the Bedouin’s story and asked her if she would help a fellow-woman in time of need. The wife was as good a Muslim as the husband. She said she was prepared to start that very moment.

“But they look very poor,” said the husband. “Is there anything to eat that we might take for them?”

Wife: “Your own dinner is all that is left.”

Husband: “Anything more?”

Wife: “Some flour and some olive oil.”

Husband: “Anything more?”

Wife: “By Allah! nothing else.”

Husband: “Well, then, have all these things ready. I am going to saddle the camel. We must be quick.”

Wife: “But won’t you have your dinner?”

Husband: “Allah knows if they have had any food at all since morning.”

Wife: “Then do take a little milk.”

Husband: “That poor woman would want it. Hurry up! They must be very anxious. Take a lamp with you.”

In a moment, the camel was ready and they started with all the provisions they had in their house. In a short while they were at the Bedouin’s tent. Addressing the Bedouin, the visitor said: “Please permit my wife to go in to render whatever help she can.”

Bedouin: “Are you a native of Madinah?”

Visitor: “No, my birthplace is Makkah.”

Bedouin: “Why did you leave Makkah?”

Visitor: “I came here along with my master.”

Bedouin: “Has your master set you free?”

Visitor: “He has put me to the service of Muslims.”

Bedouin: “Have you seen the Prophet’s time?”

Visitor: “Yes, I had that privilege too.”

Bedouin: “Have you been in the Prophet’s company?”

Visitor: “O yes! Hundreds of times.”

Bedouin: “What a fortunate fellow! Then surely you must tell me how the Prophet lived and what he taught.”

Visitor: “The Prophet lived a simple life. He wore plain clothes and ate simple food. He was very keen on cleanliness. He rose very early and first thing in the morning, he would thoroughly clean his teeth and mouth. He worked very hard and did everything with his own hands. He patched his own clothes, mended his own shoes, milked his own goats, and even cursed himself and the Bedouin had a hearty meal. When he had finished, they entered into a friendly conversation.
swept his own floor. Allah, he would say, loves the man who earns his living by honest labour. He helped the poor and took care of the orphans and the widows. He stood by the weak, and never did a man in distress come to him who went back disappointed. He respected women. He never despaired. In the face of the greatest obstacles, he always looked his best. He taught that all men are equal. Though the Prophet of Allah and the King of Arabia, he never looked upon himself as superior to other men. When on his deathbed, he had it announced that if he had offended anyone, he was there ready to suffer the penalty; if he owed anything, he was there to repay it. Such was the Prophet’s life of love and labour; such was his teaching.”

Bedouin: “But you have told me nothing about prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, and so many other things which he enjoined.”

Visitor: “Yes, he was very particular about prayers. He said when we say our prayers we are taking a spiritual bath and come out cleaner and refreshed. He also said prayers were like a ladder that took us up to a higher and nobler life. But all worship, he said, was meant to enable us to play our part in life worthily. A man, he said, who says his prayers but does not feel for the orphan and the needy, is saying no prayers. Prayers must make us truthful, honest, hardworking, fearless, humble, regular, and above all, loving and beneficent to our fellow-men. Religion, he taught, meant love for Allah and service to our fellow-men.”

Renewed restlessness within the tent disturbed their conversation. For a while there was silence. The Bedouin walked up and down and then resuming his seat by the visitor went on with his questions.

Bedouin: “So you must know Umar, too. They say he is a very harsh man.”

Visitor: “Rather! This is indeed a great defect in him.”

Bedouin: “I wonder why people elected such a harsh man as their caliph?”

Visitor: “Perhaps they could find no better servant.”

Bedouin: “Servant! What do you mean? The caliph must be having the time of his life. He must have plenty of money.”

At this moment, a voice from within the tent announced a newcomer.

“Amīr ul-Mu’mīnīn!” said the visitor’s wife. “Congratulate your friend. God has blessed him with a son.”

The Bedouin was taken aback at the words, Amīr ul-Mu’mīnīn. His visitor was the caliph, himself. He was overtaken by fear.

“I beg your pardon, Amīr ul-Mu’mīnīn,” he said, with fear on his face. “I have been rude to you.”

“Don’t worry about that, friend,” Umar the Great reassured him. “You are just as much a human being as I am. In the sight of God, there is neither high nor low. We are all equal. God loves those who love His creatures. I have only done my duty, for, in Islam, the leader of a people means the servant of the people.”

(Taken from The Golden Deeds of Islam.)
Maulana Maudoodi’s article – “Mischief of Takfīr”

In the period of the decline of Muslims, among the many troubles that have arisen, one serious and dangerous mischief is that of declaring one another as kafir and wrong-doer, and cursing one another. People introduced cracks within the plain and simple creed of Islam, and by means of inference and interpretation, they created from them such branches and details as were mutually contradictory, and which were not explained in the Qur’an and Sunnah, and even if these were, then God and His Prophet had not given them any importance. Then these servants of God (may God forgive them) gave so much importance to their own invented side-issues that they made them the criteria for faith, and on the basis of these they tore Islam to pieces, and made numerous sects, each sect calling every other kafir, wrong-doer, misguided, doomed to hell, and God knows what, whereas God in His clear Book had drawn a plain line of distinction between kufr (disbelief) and Islam, and had not given anyone the right to have the discretion to declare anything he wants as kufr and anything he wants as Islam. Whether the cause of this mischief is narrow-mindedness with good intentions, or selfishness, envy and self-seeking with malevolent intentions, the fact remains that probably nothing else has done Muslims as much harm as this has done.

As to the question of a person being in fact a believer or not, is not the task of any human being to decide. This matter deals directly with God, and it is He Who shall decide it on the Day of Judgement. As for people, if they have to decide anything, it is only this: Which person, according to the distinctive signs of the followers of Islam, as laid down by God and His Messenger, is within the borders of Islam, and which person has gone outside them. For this purpose, the things, which have been taught to us as the foundations of Islam, are the following:

“Islam is that thou bear witness that there is none to be worshipped except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and that thou should keep up prayer, and pay the zakāt (poor-rate), and fast in Ramadan, and perform the pilgrimage to the House of God if thou art
able to do it” (Muslim, Abu Da’ud, Tirmizi, Nasa’i).

These are the marks of the borders of Islam. As to those who are within these borders, we are commanded to treat them as Muslims. No one has the right to expel them from the community. As to those who have gone outside these borders, we must deal with them as required by Islamic teachings. In neither case are we empowered to judge what is in the heart. Our work is to look only at the outward, and who are we when even the Messenger of Allah looked only at the outward in this matter.

Hence, Bukhari and Muslim agree on the report that once Ali sent some money from Yemen to the Holy Prophet, and the Holy Prophet divided it among four men.

At this, a man who was there said: “O Messenger of Allah, fear Allah!”

The Holy Prophet said: “Woe to thee! Who on earth is more obliged to fear Allah than I?”

Khalid ibn Walid was present. He said: “Messenger of Allah, should I not kill him?”

The Holy Prophet said: “No, perhaps he says his prayers.”

Khalid said: “Many are they who say their prayers, but do not have in their hearts what they say with their tongues.”

The Holy Prophet said: “I have not been commanded to open up the hearts of people or to cut open their insides.”

Imam Shafi’i and Ahmad in their Musnad and Imam Malik in his Mu’atta have recorded the report that once a man from among the Ansar was talking confidentially with the Holy Prophet. Suddenly, the Holy Prophet said loudly (about someone): “Does he not bear witness that there is no god but Allah?”

The Ansari said: “Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allah, but his testimony cannot be trusted.”

The Holy Prophet said: “Does he not accept that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah?”

He again replied: “Yes, he professes it but his profession cannot be trusted.”

The Holy Prophet said: “Does he not pray?”

He again said: “Yes, he does, but his prayer cannot be trusted.”

The Holy Prophet said: “Allah has forbidden me to kill such people.”

Now, what a great injustice it is that a Muslim who professes to have faith in the beliefs taught by God and the Messenger, and is within the borders of Islam according to the clear explanations given above, should be declared by some person as being excluded from the community. This is not boldness against men, but rather against God. It is in fact to oppose God, Himself, that while the law of God passes a decree about a man that he is a Muslim, a creature of God issues a decree of kufr about the same man. For precisely this reason, the Holy Prophet has very strictly forbidden calling people kafir and wrongdoers. He went so far as to say that if a man calls another kafir, and the latter is not so in reality, the verdict of kufr shall rebound on the accuser.

“If a man calls his Muslim brother kafir, it applies to one of the two” (Bukhari).

“Whenever a man accuses another of being a kafir or wrongdoer, this accusation will rebound on him if the accused is not in reality a kafir or wrongdoer” (Bukhari).

“If a man who calls another kafir or enemy of God, and the latter was not such, then this charge will indeed turn back upon the accuser” (Muslim).

“He who curses a believer, it is as if he has killed him. And he who accuses a believer of kufr, it is as if he has killed him” (Bukhari).

Takfir and calling others wrongdoers is not merely the violation of the rights of an individual; rather it is also a crime against society. It is an act of injustice against the entire Islamic society, and it does immense harm to the Muslims as a community. The reason for this can be understood easily with a little thought.

The fundamental difference between Islamic society and non-Islamic societies is that the latter are based on ties of colour, race, language and country, and in contrast to these, Islamic society is based only on the bond of religion.
cieties, differences of belief and thought do not introduce any obstacle because such differences do not remove people from the bonds that are based on uniformity of race or country or language or colour. Views may be as far apart as heaven and earth, but neither the relationship of blood, nor the ties of country, nor the link of language, nor the unity of colour, are cut off. Therefore, differences of belief pose no danger to non-Islamic societies. However, in Islam, the factor which unites persons of different races, colours, languages and countries into one nation is nothing else but the unity of belief. Here belief is all in all; race, colour, language and country do not matter. Therefore, the man who cuts the bond of faith really cuts that rope of God which binds together all those who worship God, but the unity of belief. Allah says:

And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited. And remember Allah's favour to you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren. And you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes clear to you His messages that you may be guided.

And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful. H.Q. 3:102-103

All these instructions were given because the strength and the unity of Muslims are based on the bond of faith and nothing else. If Muslims do not honour this bond, and they keep on cutting it because of trivial things, the community will become disintegrated, and it will have no collective strength left to proclaim the word of God to the followers of falsehood and to invite them to good. J

(Article taken from Muslim Times, March-April 2000.)

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If a person, to show that he is a Muslim, presents salam to you, do not just say to him, without investigations, Thou art not a believer (4:98).

It is recorded in the Hadith that once during a military expedition a man, when he saw the Muslims, said: “Assalamu ‘Alakum. There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,” but a Muslim killed him, thinking that the man had proclaimed the kalimah just to save his own life. When the Holy Prophet heard of this, he was very angry, and he reprimanded that Muslim. But he replied: “O Messenger of Allah, that man read the kalimah merely to protect himself from our sword.”

The Holy Prophet said: “Did you open his heart and look inside it?”

A companion of the Holy Prophet asked: “If a man (in battle) attacks me and cuts off my hand, yet when I attack him he recites the kalimah, can I kill him in these circumstances?”

The Holy Prophet said: “No.”

The companion said: “O Messenger of Allah, he cut off my hand.”

The Holy Prophet said: “Despite that, you cannot kill him. If you do kill him, then he will have the rank which you had before you killed him, and you will have the rank which he had before he recited the kalimah.”

In another hadith, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet said: “If a man (in battle) is attacking a kafir with a spear, and it has reached his throat, and at that moment he says, ‘There is no god but Allah’, the Muslim must immediately withdraw his spear.”

Another hadith records that “To abuse a Muslim is an act of wrong-doing, and to fight a Muslim is an act of kufr.”
Poem

Hu-way ham Te-re ay Qaa-dir ta-waa-naa
Te-re dar ke hu-way aur Tujh ko maa-naa.
Ha-men bas hai Te-ree dar-gah pe aa-naa
Mu-see-bat se ha-men har-dam ba-chaa-naa.
Ke Te-raa naam hai Ghaf-faar o Haa-dee
Fa-sub-haa-nal La-zeel akh-zal a’aa-dee.

Tu-jhey dun-yaa men hai kis ney pu-kaa-raa
Ke phir khaa-lee ga-yaal qis-mat kaa maa-raa.
To phir hai qis qa-dar us ko sa-haa-raa
Ke jis kaa Too hee hai sab se pi-yaa-raa.
Huwa main Teraa fazlon ka munadee
Fa-sub-haa-nal la-zee akh-zal a’aa-dee

We have submitted completely to Thee, O Lord of might and power
To Thy threshold we have come in complete faith.
We ask for nothing but to enter Thy court
Please save us from calamities at all times.
For Thou art the Protector and the Guide
So glory be to Thee Who hast routed my enemies.

Thou hast always given to all who called upon Thee
Only the most unfortunate one has left empty-handed.
So how wonderful is Thy support to him
For whom Thou art the most beloved.
I am the one who proclaims Thy favours to the world
So glory be to Thee who hast routed my enemies.

Quiz

1. Q. Who was the last Prophet and who was the first Prophet?
   A. Prophet Muhammad (sas) was the last and Prophet Adam (ra) was the first.

2. Q. In what year was the Holy Prophet Muhammad born?
   A. 570 AD.

3. Q. What are the names of the Holy Prophet’s mother and father?
   A. Amina and Abdullah.

4. Q. What was the age of the Holy Prophet when his father died?
   A. The Holy Prophet was not born yet.

5. Q. How old was the Holy Prophet when his mother died?
   A. Six years old.

6. Q. Who became the Holy Prophet’s guardian when his mother died?
   A. His grandfather, Abdul Muttalib.

7. Q. The Holy Prophet was born in Arabia. In which city?
   A. Makkah.

8. Q. To which tribe did the Holy Prophet belong?
   A. Quraish.

9. Q. After his grandfather died, who looked after the Holy Prophet Muhammad?
   A. His uncle, Abu Talib.

10. Q. With whom did the Holy Prophet go for the first time to Syria on a trading mission?
    A. His uncle, Abu Talib.

Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the Ummi, whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel. He enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and prohibits for them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were on them. So those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him – these are the successful. – H.Q. Chap. 7 V. 157
In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Assalāmū ‘Alaikum.

Congratulations and Allah’s blessings on our Brothers and Sisters of the Ruby Jama’at on the formal opening of your Masjid. Everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, knows the place and importance of the Masjid in the life of the Muslim individual and the Muslim community. Not only does it serve a spiritual purpose, but it is the very centre of the Muslim community and caters for its every need: social, political, economic, educational, medical and even sporting.

According to Maulana Muhammad Ali, the Masjid is “a place which sends forth the blood of spiritual life hour after hour, into the veins of a Muslim” as well as the Muslim national centre in the truest and most comprehensive sense of the word.

It is our fondest hope and most deep-seated prayer that this Masjid, as well as all others, develop the type of character and bring about the status that the Holy Qur’an and our noble Prophet envisage for us all. One or two quotations will suffice.

The Holy Qur’an says:

*Only he can maintain the mosques of Allah who believes in Allah and the Last Day and keeps up prayer and pays the zakāt and fears none but Allah.*

*So these it is who may be of the guided ones* (9:18); and

*In it are men who love to purify themselves* (9:108).

Our Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

“For him who proceeds to the masjid morning or evening, Allah prepares an entertainment in Paradise every time he proceeds, morning or evening.”

“The best part of a city in the eyes of Allah are its masjids.”

Whilst it is true that: The mosques belong to Allah (72:18), yet it is a fact that there are different schools of thought in Islam. As this Jama’at draws its life-giving inspiration from the Imam of the Age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, and subscribes to the teachings of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman, it is therefore pertinent that we remind ourselves of our role in the renaissance of Islam and our duty to make the sun of Islam shine resplendently in the West even though, at present, we are a misunderstood and unpopular minority in the House of Islam.

The following are words of advice and encouragement given with the certainty and force of conviction of one who knew he was sent by Allah, Himself. He advises us thus:

“He then gives us the wonderful assurance of inevitable success when he says:

“Do not think that Allah will let you perish. You are the seed by the hand of Allah sown in this earth. Allah says this seed shall grow and bear fruit, throw out shoots on all sides, becoming a big tree. Therefore, blessed are they who have faith in what Allah has said, and who are not afraid of the difficulties they might have to face in-between, for tribulations along this path are indeed necessary so that you should be well tested as to who among you...”
is true in his profession of faith and homage, and who is false.”

Finally, we end with the du’a of the Prophets, Abraham (as) and Ishmael (as), when they had raised the foundation of the Ka’bah.

*Our Lord, accept from us; surely Thou art the hearing, the Knowing* (2:127).

May Allah bless you all abundantly as you seek to fulfil the mission for which you were created.

*Imam Kalamazad Mohammed Fireburn, Freeport Trinidad.*

FROM THE FOUNDER...

**The Question of Good and Evil**

Some intellectuals have raised the question about what is good and what is evil, and which one has God created and which one He has not.

The Holy Imam’s view in this matter was that whatever has been created by God under His attribute of *Al Hakîm* (The Wise), has been created through wisdom, and all the things that are found in the universe must have some benefit and some purpose. However, one can clearly discern the *sunnah* of Allah working in this universe, in that the existence of something in this world can only be useful and beneficial as long as it remains within its limits; anything going beyond its limit becomes harmful instead of being beneficial. For example, food is essential and beneficial for a human being, but within certain limits. If one eats too much, it will lead to indigestion, illness and maybe even death. Water is life-giving and beneficial to us, but if we drink it beyond its limit becomes harmful instead of being beneficial. For example, if one takes arsenic, it will kill; if used in correct dosage, the same arsenic can be useful for purifying the blood and for producing fresh blood. The poison of a bee or a snake comes to our notice in an excessively-used form and hence appears to us to be harmful, but a doctor knows that within certain limits all these poisons are very useful in the treatment of gout and other joint pains.

Similarly, is the case with the emotions within us. If these come into play within limits, they become high moral qualities and lead to good deeds, but when these exceed certain limits, they give rise to evil deeds. For instance, take the emotion called ambition. Were it not present in us, we would not be interested in earning wealth nor would we toil and make progress, nor would we try and do good deeds in the hope of reward in the Hereafter. Thus, when this emotion works within certain limits, it becomes a driving force for man’s material and spiritual progress. One tries to obtain worldly goods, honour and prestige, and the reward in the Hereafter under this very emotion. By keeping it within limits, one attains to good moral qualities like honesty, righteousness, hard work and fortitude. But if this emotion is not contained within certain limits, man is led to evil deeds like dishonesty, robbery, dacoity, theft, lying, breach of trust and embezzlement. In other words, though God has bestowed this instinct on man for his worldly and spiritual progress, it can only be beneficial if it is kept within certain bounds, because when it goes out of bounds, it becomes harmful. Take also the example of anger. Anger is an emotion which if kept within certain limits will make a man do good deeds full of bravery, self-defence, gallantry, etc., but if it goes out of bounds, it will give rise to evil deeds like abuse, assault, murder and destruction. In other words, God has bestowed this emotion on man so that through it he can attain worldly and spiritual perfection, but it can only be beneficial if man keeps it within limits. The same applies to the rest of the emotions. In fact, all the senses and organs given to man by God also work under the same principle. For example, for talking with the tongue, a limit has been laid down about what one should and one should not say, and also what talk is beneficial and what is not. There is a limit for all these.

There is also a limit to what work one can and cannot do with one’s hands.
The Holy Qur’an has named all these *hudud* (limits), by keeping to which a man can use all his emotions, his senses and his organs in accordance with the intention of his Creator as *hudud-ullah* (limits of Allah). The names for observing these limits are *goodness* or *virtue* and the names for breaching these limits are *evil* or *badness*. The Holy Qur’an says: *These are Allah’s limits. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him to Gardens wherein flow rivers, to abide in them. And this is the great achievement. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and goes beyond His limits, He will make him enter fire to abide in it, and for him is an abasing chastisement* (HQ:4:13-14).

The Holy Qur’an tells us in the above verse that the reward for the observance of God’s limits is Paradise (that is, it is goodness) and the recompense for breaching the limits of Allah is Hell (that is, it is evil), and the criterion of due observance of Allah’s limits is obedience to Allah and His Messenger and disobeying them is another name for breaching Allah’s bounds. That is right, because is was God Himself Who has bestowed emotions, senses and organs upon man and Who has made it a rule that these can be beneficial and useful within certain limits, and when they exceed the bounds, the same emotions etc. become harmful. Consequently, it was the duty of this same God, Who is the Maker of all these things and the Setter of limits, to vouchsafe to man complete and correct knowledge from His Perfect Knowledge, of these limits of His, so that man, by observing these limits, can become a doer of good and attain to worldly and spiritual progress and attain the perfection for which he has been created, and save himself from the degradation and chastisement which would befall him through breaching the limits of Allah. Thus, the recurrent guidance and knowledge which God has given to man is called the *Book* and the *Messengership*, and by obeying which he remains within the limits of Allah and by disobeying which he breaches His limits.

**Adam versus Satan**

The guidance mentioned above was promised to Adam, or to all mankind through Adam: *We said: Go forth from this state all. Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve* (HQ:2:38). This promise was made in view of the fact that it was essential to endow man with animal-like emotions like ambition, lust, love, anger, etc. so that he should earn his livelihood through them and should maintain his life and the continuity of his species and so that he could continue to guard his life and his progeny from enemies, and so that by making them come into play within the bounds of Allah, he should achieve worldly and spiritual progress and attain the perfection for which he was created. It was also essential that some motivator and catalytic agent be created in order to bring these emotions into play, because these passions, though having their origin in dust, have taken on the form of a fire within man under the process of evolution.

As every person knows, when emotions like ambition, lust and anger are aroused, one feels a fire-like sensation in one’s body. So, appropriately, the agent created for arousing these emotions is a fiery species named *jinn* or *Iblīs* by the Holy Qur’an. This agent is not a part of human nature, but it has an independent external existence. Dr. Sigmund Freud, a great expert in the science of psychoanalysis, has conceded that the human consciousness can be divided into three elements: the *Ego*, the conscious part of man’s personality which says, I am; the *Super-ego*, the part which motivates man to goodness and towards high morals; and the *Id*, the part which motivates man towards evil and makes him forget his duties and leads him to the wrong path.

The Id is an enemy of man. The Holy Qur’an has also depicted three entities: one is the human consciousness which says, I am; second, the *malak* (angel), an entity which keeps on urging and motivating man towards goodness, and this corresponds to Dr. Freud’s Super-ego; and third is the *Iblīs* or the jinn which motivates man towards evil, and this corresponds to Freud’s Id. But the difference between the Qur’anic philosophy of good and evil and Dr. Freud’s theory is that the Holy Qur’an depicts both these motivating agents for good and evil to be outside the human entity. The Qur’anic analysis of the human personality is that a part of the human personality is called Conscience, and the motivator for this part is the angel, and the other part is comprised of animal passions and the motivator for this part is *Iblīs*. As I have said above, the presence of animal emotions is necessary for the life and progress of mankind and it was also essential that there should be a motivator, called *Iblīs* in the Holy Qur’an. But this motivator is so strong and overpowering that if it is not controlled it runs amok and does not allow man to remain within the bounds of
Allah, but tries to make man cross all bounds and thus destroy himself. To stop him, God, Most High, bestowed conscience, and along with this, He bestowed man with intellect, which, listening to the voice of conscience, keeps warning the human being to stop, that the bounds of Allah have been reached, so do not urge your emotional horse beyond this point! For instance, a man may be aroused to anger under his sense of honour and jealousy. It would be considered a virtue to display such anger within limits in order to preserve one’s selfrespect. But the jinn or Iblis, would try to fan this emotion, and since he is an enemy of man, he does not want man to observe any bounds, and he would try and take him to a point of angry arousal where he might be led to commit murder or destruction. But if an angry man listens to the voice of intellect and conscience, these would try and stop him at a certain limiting point and would not advise him to cross the bounds of Allah.

Dr. Freud’s theory is defective in as much as it considers the motivators to good and evil to be part of the human personality. The motivators for good and evil could not be part of the human personality. If these were part of the human personality, then man’s doing good would not be good nor would acts of evil be evil, for mere following natural instincts is no credit to any living being nor does it make him culpable for the commission of any evil. A mongoose killing a snake is not an act of virtue, nor is a wolf devouring anything, after tearing it apart, an evil. In any case, Dr. Freud does not believe in good and evil, and is quite ignorant of spiritual perfection. The interesting part is that on the one hand he considers the Id, the motivator to evil, to be a part of human nature and on the other hand he considers it an enemy of man, which means that man’s nature is man’s enemy and wants to destroy him, and this is evidently wrong. Human nature wants man to continue living and does not want to destroy him. Hence, the view which the Creator of human nature has described in the Qur’an is the correct view, that is, both the motivators of good and of evil are external entities: the motivator of the conscience is called an angel (because the conscience is an angelic part of human personality) and the motivator of animal passions is called the jinn or Iblis. When a man breaks the bounds of Allah under the suggestion by Iblis, then the same Iblis is called a Satan in Qur’anic terminology, and this (Satan) means someone who has perished and someone who has distanced himself from God. When Iblis made Adam and Eve commit a sin by infringing the bounds of Allah, the Holy Qur’an gave him the title of Satan, as it says: But Satan made them slip from it (HQ:2:36). In short, the human mind is like a judge which judges with the help of the intellect between the voice of the conscience, which is raised under the motivation of the angel, and the frenzy of the passions which is aroused by the motivation from Iblis. If it listens to the voice of the conscience and the intellect and gives a verdict in their favour, then, because of obeying the bounds of Allah, man is credited with having done a good deed; but if he is blinded by the frenzy of his passions and does not listen to the voice of the intellect and the conscience, he is debited with having done an evil deed because of having breached the bounds of Allah.

The objection by some people about why God created Satan is entirely meaningless; in fact, God did not create Satan. Rather, God created Iblis or the jinn for motivating the animal emotions of man. Now, if man, following his animal passions, breaches the bounds of Allah, and if the jinn, because of his insubordination, prove to be satan for this slave of animal passions, then this is his own deed. As for the question why the emotions and their motivator were created at all, this is an objection like saying, why provide an engine and its driver in a car!

All human actions and all consequent progress depend upon the existence of the animal-like emotions in man and upon their motivation according to different situations in life. If these emotions were not present, or if they are not put into motion, there would be no man and no action of his, nor would man go forward through various stages of progress. If the engine is removed from a car, or if the engine is there and its driver is removed, neither would the car run nor would any destination be reached. So the wise policy is to have an engine in the car, the stronger the better, but there should also be a driver to regulate the speed of the engine, and the driver should have the sense and the intelligence to determine when to run the engine and when to stop it, and which way to turn the car and which road to follow. Thus it was absolutely essential to endow man with animal-like emotions in order to ensure his progress, and for motivating it, a regulator called the jinn or Iblis was also created. However, in order to stop this engine of emotions and for keeping it on the right track, another component called the conscience, as well as the presence of intellect and discrimination in the mind of the driver, was essential.
The need for divine revelation

On what path to take the car, how far to go, and which way to turn, for these man needed knowledge out of the perfect knowledge of the All-knowing, All-wise Creator, because man’s intellect and conscience were not enough to determine the limits to which the motor-car could go, limits that would help man develop perfect morals. There is so much diversity in intellect, and yet the human intellect keeps growing or declining depending upon the time and the social and the educational environment, and the conscience may be mutilated under some circumstances. For example, someone’s intellect may tell him that usury is the worst of sins, and another may declare it to be a very useful thing. To one person, wisdom demands veiling women, but another may consider it an impediment on the road to progress. There is no doubt in the fact that the rough outline of correct behaviour may be indicated by the conscience, but there are hundreds of details and minor points of correct behaviour in which the conscience cannot help the human intellect. And who knows that these rough outlines were also learnt through divine revelation, because the cycle of revelation has gone on ever since man appeared on this earth. To instruct the animal instincts of human beings to stop at a certain point was the work of the Entity Who created them. The need for this instruction arose the day the first human was born or the day he developed intellect and discrimination. That is, the day he was made responsible for these actions. So God first of all helped man with His knowledge, which is called Divine revelation, and through it He made a promise with the whole of mankind and said: Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve (HQ:2:38). In another place, He said about the sending of revelation: O children of Adam, if messengers come to you from among you relating to you My messages, then whoever guards against evil and acts aright – they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve (HQ:7:35).

Thus, the coming of the prophets and the messengers and their bringing guidance from God in book-form was for the purpose that man should recognise the bounds of Allah and by using his intellect and his conscience, he should learn to drive the motor-car of his emotions on the right path, knowing where to go and where to stop, and thus go through various stages of his development and perfection.

(Excerpt from the book: Mujaddid-e-‘Azam (Volume 3) (The Great Reformer) by Dr. Basharat Ahmad.)