

Issues

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Verses 23-26 Surah Al-Jathiya

In The Name of Allah, The Most Merciful, The Bestower of Mercy.

Allah, The Exalted, said:

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبَهُ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ
بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ
وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
إِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ
وَإِذَا تُلِّيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَّا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اأُنْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ

Have you seen him who takes his own lust (vain desires) as his ilah (god), and Allah knowing (him as such), left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who then will guide him after Allah? Will you not then remember? And they say: **"There is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except Ad-Dahr (the time).** And they have no knowledge of it, they only conjecture. And when Our Clear Verses are recited to them, their argument is no other than that they say: "Bring back our (dead) fathers, if you are truthful!" Say (to them): "Allah gives you life, then causes you to die, then He will assemble you on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt. But most of mankind know not."
[Al-Jathiyah 23-26]

The Current era

The current era of our children markedly differs from ours during childhood, as we hardly encountered advocates for a life devoid of genuine purpose under the guise of progress. Discussions surrounding various distractions, video games, social media addiction, and mindless entertainment were extremely scarce. There were minimal efforts to redefine masculinity as toxic, and the use of strength to manage chaotic individuals through robust leadership was not perceived as oppression. The notion that men should insist that women should contribute equally to household income was unheard of, as it would have undermined their inherent roles as protectors and providers.

Few voices promoted vice as freedom or portrayed discipline as confinement, and only a handful of misguided individuals suggested that belief in Allah should be abandoned, labeling religion as an impediment to progress, equating submission to Allah with weakness, or asserting that morality is subjective. Discussions on nihilism or hedonism were limited, which has led many in the West further away from the true purpose of life. This illustrates that those promoting these ideologies seek to strip individuals of all foundational aspects of well-being to exert control, as a life devoid of Iman, obedience to Allah and His messenger through the pure Shariah ultimately leads to destruction.

The worldly life is a prison for the believer

Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "The worldly life is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the one who is a disbeliever (in Allah and the final Messenger)". (1)

Imam An-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy be upon him, said:

Every believer is imprisoned and prevented - in the worldly life - from evil and repugnant desires and obligated to perform demanding acts of obedience. But after death, they relax and receive the permanent bliss and perfect relaxation that Allah promised (them). As for the disbeliever, he receives what he receives in the worldly life together with the fact that it is very little and disrupted by distress. And after he dies, he finds himself in permanent punishment and eternal wretchedness. (2)

Imam Muhammad Ibn Salih Al-Uthaymeen, may Allah have mercy upon him, said:

Regardless of how great the affair of the worldly life is - its good days and its dwelling places, it is like a prison for the believer because a believer looks forward to a bliss that is better, more perfect and loftier. As for the disbeliever, the worldly life is his paradise because he enjoys himself in it (i.e. without abiding by Allah's commands) and forgets the afterlife, thus he becomes like those about whom Allah, The Exalted, stated:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ

Those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as cattle eat, and the Fire will be their abode. [Surah Muhammad Aayah 12]

When the disbeliever dies, he does not find anything in front of him except the fire and Allah's punishment, and woe to the people of the fire. Thus that which is found in the worldly life of distress, grief, sadness and sorrow is like a paradise in relation to the state of affairs of the disbeliever because he will leave this world to receive Allah's punishment. It has been reported about Ibn Hajar Al Asqalaani - the author of Fat'hul Baari – that he used to be the chief judge in Egypt in his era, and he used to go past the market with an entourage. One day a Jew stopped him and said, "Your Prophet said that the worldly life is a prison of the believer and paradise of the disbeliever; how can this be the case whilst you are in a state of luxury and joy, and I am in a state of extreme poverty and low status?" Ibn Hajr said to him, "If in your view I am in a state of joy and that people are at my service, this state is a prison in comparison to what a believer will receive of bliss in Paradise. As for yourself, even though you are in a state of extreme poverty and low status, it is like paradise in comparison to what a disbeliever will receive in the fire". The Jew was amazed by this statement and then testified that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger. (3)

Freedom

Imam Muhammad Ibn Salih Al-Uthaymeen, may Allah have mercy upon, said: If a free person says that he is liberated and intends by it freedom from slavery to the creation, yes he is free from slavery to the creation. However, if he intends by this that he is liberated from servitude to Allah, The Mighty and Majestic, he has erred in his understanding of servitude and does not understand the meaning of freedom because servitude to other than Allah is bondage. As for servitude to Allah, The Mighty and Majestic, then this is true freedom because if he does not humble himself to Allah, he will humble himself to other than Allah. So, he deceives himself when he says that he is free, meaning, liberated from obedience to Allah. (4)

Ahmad Ibn Aasim Al-Antaakee, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "The most beneficial intellect is the one that makes you acknowledge the blessings of Allah, aids you to be grateful and oppose (evil) desires". (5)

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "Everyone with a bit of (sound) intellect knows that the corruption of the world and its ruin occurs due to giving precedence to opinion over the divine revelation and (evil) desires over sound intellect. These two corrupt motives are not entrenched in a heart except that its destruction becomes inevitable nor in a nation except that its affairs are completely corrupted". (6)

Wisdom of the Islamic Shariah

Shaikh Abu Iyaad, may Allah preserve him, stated: The wisdom of the Islamic Shariah: Cut off evils and harms to society from their very roots and enjoy the resulting freedom, ease and wholesome life. In contrast: the barbarity and backwardness of commercialising corrosive evils-- usurious banking, alcohol, gambling-in order to profit from the masses through affairs in which their ruin and impoverishment lies--and then managing this commercialisation through legislation, policies, guidelines and so on to "limit the harms". The result? Inescapable enslavement, bondage, disease and ruin of the masses for the enrichment of the few who peddle these vices. Where is the intellect?! (7)

Religion and Creed-Related Issues

Imam As-Sadi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said:

This is the most important and crucial topic in life because it impacts everything depending on its soundness, corruption, or absence. Indeed, humankind split into many religious groups and pursued different pathways in terms of beliefs. All of these paths are distorted, crooked, harmful, and unbeneficial, with the exception of those who are led to the true religion of Islam since such individuals will achieve uprightness, goodness, and peace of mind in every way.

Among the people are those who have been influenced by Shaytan, so they worship things other than Allah, such as trees, stones, images, prophets, angels, the righteous and the unrighteous, while acknowledging that Allah alone is their Lord, Owner, and Creator. These are the polytheists of various groups and methodologies that accept the Oneness of Allah's Lordship but they deviate from worshipping Him alone. Indeed, the (uncorrupted) divine books of the past and their seal (i.e. the Qur'an) demonstrate the wretchedness of these people and the path that leads them to destruction. All the Messengers agreed on the command to (establish) pure monotheism and forbid polytheism, and that anybody who ascribes a partner with Allah in worship will be barred from entering paradise permanently (if they do not repent before death), and their abode will be the fire. Sound minds and sound natural disposition would view polytheism, the deification of other than Allah, and devotion to created things and objects made by people (for the sake of worship) to be corrupt.

Among the people are those who believe in some of the Messengers and divine Books but not in others, despite the fact that the Messengers and divine Books affirmed each other's truthfulness, agreed with each other, and agreed on fundamental principles. As a result, their denial invalidated their belief, and their acknowledgment of some Prophets and divine books was rendered invalid by their denial of other Prophets and divine books; thus, they remained in deviation in their religion, befuddled in their faith, and in a state of contradiction in their knowledge. Allah [The Exalted] said:

إن الذين يكفرون بالله ورسله ويريدون أن يفرقوا بين الله ورسله ويقولون نؤمن ببعض ونكفر ببعض ويريدون أن يتخذوا بين ذلك سبيلاً أولئك هم الكافرون حقا

Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make a distinction between Allah and His Messengers (by believing in Allah and disbelieving in His Messengers) saying, "We believe in some but reject others," and wish to adopt a way in between. They are in truth disbelievers. [An Nisa 150-151]

The reason Allah pronounced a judgement of unbelief against them is that He is aware that their claim to belief was false; if it had been sincere, they would have believed all the facts that the Messengers had agreed to. Allah said that they stated:

نؤمن بما أنزل علينا ويكفرون بما وراءه وهو الحق مصدقا لما معهم

"We believe in what was sent down to us". And they disbelieve in that which came after it, while it is the truth confirming what is with them]. [Surah Al-Baqarah. Ayah 91]

Since their claim of faith is false, Allah declared the following concerning them:

فلم تقتلون أنبياء الله من قبل إن كنتم مؤمنين

Why then have you killed the Prophets of Allah aforetime, if you indeed have been believers?

There is a group among the people who ascribe to the (knowledge) of philosophy and metaphysics; they then introduced the greatest misguidance and ridiculous statements, denied the Great Lord (Allah) and His existence, and so denied the Messengers, the divine books, and matters of the unseen. They wrongly, arrogantly, and owing to self-exaltation denied Allah's Ayaat [lessons, proofs, revelations], although being convinced within their own souls about them; and denied the Messengers' knowledge and what the divine scriptures advised, and arrogantly turned away from them because of what they knew about natural sciences and the affairs associated with them. In contrast to the knowledge of the Prophets, they denied all other realities outside what they could perceive through their senses and limited, restricted experiences, so they worshipped nature, made it their primary preoccupation, and the totality of their knowledge, went beyond what their (innate) natural dispositions dictated and did not adhere to any divine religious laws or (sound) human morals. As a result, animals became better than them since they were bereft of (sound) morality and urged towards animalistic desires - neither had a real goal to strive for nor outcomes to achieve. Allah said: [وقالوا ما هي إلا حياتنا الدنيا نموت ونحيا وما يهلكنا إلا الدهر] - And they say: "There is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except Ad-Dahr (the time).] [Surah Al-Jaathiyah. Ayah 24]

Thus, despite their polytheism and disbelief, the polytheists became better and considerably less evil than these individuals. Furthermore, due to religious weakness and lack of understanding, as well as when powerful nations built traps to encourage it, this detrimental school of thought has destroyed a vast number of people in recent times. The Islamic religion, on the other hand, guided people out of the darkness of ignorance, disbelief, injustice, aggressiveness, and other ills and into the light of knowledge, (sound) faith, certainty, justice, mercy, and all good things. Allah said:

لقد من الله على المؤمنين إذ بعث فيهم رسولا من أنفسهم يتلو عليهم آياته ويزكيهم ويعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة وإن كانوا من قبل لفي ضلال مبين

Indeed Allah conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (the Qur'an), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (the Qur'an) and Al-Hikmah [the wisdom and the Sunnah of the Prophet (i.e. his legal ways, statements, acts of worship, etc.)], while before that they had been in manifest error. [Surah Aal Imran. Ayah 164]

Allah said:

إن الله يأمر بالعدل والإحسان وإيتاء ذي القربى وينهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر والبغى يعظكم لعلكم تذكرون

Verily, Allah enjoins Al-Adl (i.e. justice and worshipping none but Allah Alone – Islamic Monotheism) and Al-Ihsan [i.e. to be patient in performing your duties to Allah, totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet in a perfect manner], and giving (help) to kith and kin (i.e. all that Allah has ordered you to give them e.g., wealth, visiting, looking after them, or any other kind of help, etc.): and forbids Al-Fahsha' (i.e. all evil deeds, e.g. illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents, polytheism, to tell lies, to give false witness, to kill a life without right, etc.), and Al-Munkar (i.e. all that is prohibited by Islamic law: polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds, etc.), and Al-Baghy (i.e. all kinds of oppression), He admonishes you, that you may take heed. [Surah An-Nahl. 90]

Allah said: *إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ* - Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right. [Surah Al-Isra.9]

Allah said: [اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام ديناً] - This day, those who disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion, so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion]. [Surah Al-Maa'idah. 3]

Allah said: [وتمت كلمة ربك صدقا وعدلا] - And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice (Surah Al-An'am. Ayah 115)]- Meaning, Allah's divine revelation through which He legislated the laws and established rulings. Indeed, Allah perfected them in every aspect, with no defect in any form- (perfect) truthful reports from Allah regarding His Oneness and Recompense, the sincerity of His Messengers in that which they have communicated regarding issues of the unseen, and just rulings. All of its commands are founded on (perfect) justice, benevolence, all types of good, righteousness, and (upright) rectification; its prohibitions are based on flawless wisdom, and it condemns all forms of injustice, transgression, and harm.

Allah said: [ومن أحسن من الله حكما لقوم يوقنون] - And who is better in judgement than Allah for a people who have firm Faith]. [Surah Al-Maa'idah. Ayah 50]

Neither has Allah forbidden anything that a person of sound mind would say, "If only Allah had commanded it," nor has Allah commanded anything that a person of sound mind would say, "If only Allah had forbidden it." This religion has approved of all that is good and beneficial while forbidding all that is evil and harmful. Allah said:

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ

Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Muhammad) whom they find written with them in the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel), he commands them for Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained); and forbids them from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); he allows them as lawful At-Tayyibat [(i.e. all good and lawful) as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.], and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khaba'ith (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allah's Covenant), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. [Surah Al-A'raaf. 157]

Islam is the religion that guides (Allah's) servants towards everything that is beneficial to them in their worldly and religious affairs and cautions them to avoid everything that is detrimental to their livelihood and religion. When there is an ambiguity between things that bring about welfare and things that are corrupt, and between beneficial and harmful things, it commands them to establish consultation in choosing the affair whose greater benefit is clearly established and repelling the affair whose corruption is manifest.

It is the mighty comprehensive religion that commands belief in every (divine) book revealed by Allah and every Messenger sent by Allah. Allah said:

فلذلك فادع واستقم كما أمرت ولا تتبع أهواءهم وقل آمنت بما أنزل الله من كتاب وأمرت لأعدل بينكم الله ربنا وربكم لنا أعمالنا ولكم أعمالكم لا حجة بيننا وبينكم الله يجمع بيننا وإليه المصير

So unto this (religion of Islam, alone and this Qur'an) then invite (people) (O Muhammad and Istaqim [(i.e. stand firm and straight on Islamic Monotheism by performing all that is ordained by Allah (good deeds, etc.), and by abstaining from all that is forbidden by Allah (sins and evil deeds, etc.)], as you are commanded, and follow not their desires, but say, "I believe in whatsoever Allah has sent down of the Book [all the divine Books - the Taurat (Torah), the Injeel or the Pages of Ibrahim (Abraham), and this Qur'an as the final one, and the only one to be acted upon], and I am commanded to do justice among you, Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us our deeds and for you your deeds (good and bad). There is no dispute between us and you [i.e. after the realities have been manifested, and after the clear distinction between truth and falsehood, and after the clear distinction between guidance and misguidance, there is no room for debate because the goal behind the debate is to distinguish between right and wrong so that the one to be guided is guided and the proofs established against the misguided one (Tafseer Sadi)]. Allah will assemble us (all), and to Him is the final return. [Surah Ash-Shuraa. 15]

It is the mighty religion whose accuracy and perfection have been attested to by the All-Mighty Lord (Allah), as well as by the most perfect and the purest among the creation.

Allah said:

شهد الله أنه لا إله إلا هو والملائكة وأولو العلم قائما بالقسط لا إله إلا هو العزيز الحكيم

Allah bears witness that Laa ilaaha illaa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness); (He is always) maintaining His creation in Justice. La ilah illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the All-Wise]. [Surah Aal Imran. 18]

Allah said: [إن الدين عند الله الإسلام] - Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam. [Surah Aal Imran. 19]

It is the religion through which Allah gathers outer and inner beauty, perfect morals, and deeds for those who embody it. Allah said: [ومن أحسن دينا ممن أسلم وجهه لله وهو محسن] - And who can be better in religion than one who submits himself to Allah (i.e. follows Allah's Religion of Islamic Monotheism); and he is a Muhsin (a good-doer)]. [Surah An-Nisa. 125]

There is none better than one who is sincere to Allah, benevolent to Allah's servants, and sincere in their adherence to Allah's laws, which are the best of laws and the most upright methodology, so that their heart becomes imbued with sincerity and sound Islamic monotheism, and their morals and actions are based on upright guidance and sound rectification.

Allah said: [صبغة الله ومن أحسن من الله صبغة ونحن له عابدون] - The Religion (ordained and chosen by) Allah (for humankind and jinn (i.e. Islam) and which religion can be better than the One (ordained and chosen) by Allah? And we are His worshippers].

It is the religion whose adherents - those who established it and embodied its guidance and teachings - gave the hearts access to good with knowledge and sound faith, and they triumphed over the inhabitants of the various regions of the earth through justice, mercy, and sincere advice to the human race.

It is the religion through which Allah rectifies the beliefs, morality, the worldly life, and (a person's) affairs in the afterlife, and through which the disunited hearts and divergent desires unite (upon one upright path).

It is the great and decisive religion, conclusive in all of its judgements and reports. It doesn't report or make judgements unless they are (perfect) statements of truth and justice that directly address the reality of the situation. There is no factual knowledge that invalidates any of its reports, and there is no ruling that is superior to its rulings. All affairs, both present and past, are perfectly addressed and governed by its foundations and rules. Because it is a revelation from the All-Wise, The One Worthy of All Praise (Allah), perfect equity and justice, mercy, goodness, and benevolence are applied wherever the various mutual dealings between individuals and groups are established--in every time and place--based on its fundamental principles.

Allah said: [كتاب أحكمت آياته ثم فصلت من لدن حكيم خبير] - (This is) a Book (i.e. the Qur'an), the Verses whereof are perfected (in every sphere of knowledge, etc.), and then explained in detail from One (Allah), Who is All-Wise and Well-Acquainted (with all things). [Surah Hud 1]

Allah said: [لا يأتيه الباطل من بين يديه ولا من خلفه تنزيل من حكيم حميد] - Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it (it is) sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise (Allah)]. [Surah Fussilat. 42]

Allah said: [إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر وإنا له لحافظون] - Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the reminder (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)]. [Surah Al-Hijr. 9]

Its words (statements and meanings) are unquestionably safe from addition, deficiency, and change, and its rulings are secure from deviation and deficiency; rather, they are at the highest degree of justice, uprightness, and a means of facilitating every good.

It is the magnificent religion that leads to the truth and the straight path--truthfulness is its motto, justice is its focal point, truth is its basis, mercy is its essence and goal, goodness is what always accompanies it, righteousness and upright rectification are its beauty and functions.

Islam is the religion that combines the needs of the body, the heart, and the soul. Allah gave the believers the same instructions He gave the Messengers, commanding them to worship Him alone, perform good deeds that please Him, eat from the good things (He provided), and extract (benefits from the various things He created), which He subjugated to His servants in this life. Those who truly established this affair achieved every lofty achievement and sound progress. Anyone who knows any of the attributes of this religion will know the huge favour that Allah has bestowed on humankind and Jinn, and anyone who rejects it will fall into falsehood, misguidance, disillusionment, and loss. The creeds that oppose Islam are either founded on superstitions and the worship of images, or they follow the paths of materialism and atheism, and they cause their followers' hearts and actions to resemble those of animals (in behaviour); in fact, they lead them even further away from the way of upright behaviour than animals do. This is because when sound religion (or creed) departs from the hearts, good morals are abandoned and replaced with evil behaviour; thus, those on this path are led to the lowest level of evil behaviour, and their greatest concern and knowledge is confined to the enjoyment of this present (temporary) worldly life. (8)

Vain Desires and Social Ills

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said:

Disobedience is the cause of being in shaytan's captivity and a prisoner of lowly desires. A disobedient person is always in the captivity of his devil, the prison of his lusts and leadership of his desires. He is a captive and a shackled prisoner. There is neither a captive whose state of affairs is more evil than that of a captive whose captor is his worst enemy, nor is there a prison more restricted than the prison of desires, and shackles that are more restrictive than the shackles of lust. Thus, how can a heart that is a captive and a shackled prisoner follow the path to Allah and the home of the afterlife?! How can he follow a single path when the heart is shackled and stricken with harm from every angle as a result of its shackles?! The likeness of the heart is that of a bird; it distances from harm whenever it flies high and is surrounded by harm whenever it lands. Just as an unprotected sheep in the midst of wolves is quickly destroyed, likewise if there is no protection from Allah for the slave, it is inevitable that his wolf will prey on him. He is protected by Allah through piety - a shield and shelter from Allah between the person and his wolf just as it is a shield against punishment in this life and the afterlife.

Whenever the sheep is closer to its shepherd, it is safer from the wolf and whenever it is distanced from the shepherd, it comes closer to being destroyed. Therefore, the sheep is more protected when it is closer to the shepherd, for the wolf only takes away the (sheep, cattle) that are distanced and far away from the shepherd.

The basis of this affair is that whenever the heart is distanced from Allah, harm upon it is quicker, and whenever it comes closer to Allah (in obedience), it is distanced from harm. Being distanced from Allah is of various levels and some are more severe than others. Being distanced through disobedience is greater than being distanced through thoughtlessness; being distanced through bidah is greater than being distanced through disobedience, and being distanced through hypocrisy and Shirk is greater than all of that. (9)

Imam As-Sadi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: Allah said:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ - وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

Indeed, Allah conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (the Qur'an), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (the Qur'an) and Al-Hikmah [the wisdom and the Sunnah of the Prophet (i.e. his legal ways, statements, acts of worship, etc.)], while before that they had been in manifest error.

Allah, The Most High, said:

وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ -

And remember Allah's Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith), and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, Allah makes His Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.,) clear to you, that you may be guided.

Allah, The Most High, said: [**أَلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا** - This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion].

Allah, The Most High, said: [**وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ** - And who is better in judgement than Allah for a people who have firm Faith].

Whoever utilises sound intellect to examine what the Messengers brought – what they commanded and guided the people to, such as knowledge and awareness of Allah, the worship of Allah alone, turning to Allah in repentance and obedience with true Faith (Islamic Monotheism) and the command to fulfil all the rights based on courteous good will, perfecting one's actions (through sincerity to Allah alone) and treating others with kindness, and that which they (Messengers) forbade; then he examines what those who have deviated from the upright path call to, he will know that good, success, sound rectification of the hearts and deeds, (sound rectification of) the worldly affairs and (sound rectification of the religious affairs and their end results in the afterlife) are all in agreement with what the Messengers called to. On the other hand, he will know that the call of those who have deviated from the upright path is designed to do away with good manners, whose end result is nothing but complete chaos and a state in which one goes along with lust until the animals become more noble and useful than humans. This is no doubt their state of affairs – clearly manifested by what they are upon and what they proclaim with their tongues. Among the most amazing of affairs is that many contemporary writers and politicians seek to remedy the many social ills and try to do so do from many angles, however as for the problem of deviation from Allah path– whose surge has carried away the majority of young people, they have not hastened to stop it by returning to sound Iman and certainty; rather they have been abandoned to wander blindly in their misguidance and wavering in beguilement, and thus the social ills they seek to remedy gives birth to other social ills- because if the path to remedying social ills is not based on Iman and religion, they will increase and become worse. (10)

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "Everyone with a modicum of (sound) intellect knows that the corruption of the world and its ruin occurs due to giving precedence to opinion over the divine revelation and (vain) desires over sound intellect. These two corrupt motives are not entrenched in a heart except that its destruction becomes inevitable nor in a nation except that its affairs are completely corrupted". (11)

Comprehension

Imam Muhammad Ibn Saalih Al-Uthaymeen, may Allah have mercy upon him, stated in Al-Usool Ath-Thalatha: The levels of comprehension are six: [Al 'Ilm – Knowledge], which is to comprehend the reality of something as it truly is, with certainty. [Al Jahlul Baseet- slight ignorance], which is the absence of full comprehension. [Al Jahlul Murakkab-, Aggravated/compounded ignorance], which is to comprehend something in a way contrary to its true reality. [Al Wahm – Delusion], which is to think that one comprehends something despite the presence of that which should cause you to realize that you are incorrect. [Ash Shakk- Doubt], which is to think that you comprehend something, yet you are aware of something contrary to it which you think has the same possibility of being the truth. [Dhann – Preponderant belief], which is the comprehension of something, despite the presence of something that is contrary to it, but which is less likely to be true. (12)

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "If you contemplate the statements of the people of falsehood, you will find them clothed with expressions and presented in a good light with sophisticated terms that are quickly accepted by those deprived of sound discernment to the extent that the wicked sinners would give (good) names to the greatest types of wicked deeds". (13)

Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "It is incumbent that the expression conveys the intended meaning through the appropriate terminology. Should the term be explicit or evident, the objective is achieved. However, if the term possesses dual interpretations—one valid and the other erroneous—the intended meaning must be clarified. In instances where the term suggests a flawed interpretation, it should only be employed with an explanation that mitigates any potential misunderstanding. Furthermore, if the term may mislead certain listeners into grasping an incorrect meaning, it should not be used if it is known to carry such implications, as the primary aim of communication is clarity and understanding. Conversely, if the term accurately reflects the intended meaning but some individuals remain unaware of its significance without any negligence on the speaker's part, the responsibility lies with the listener, not the speaker". (14)

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: “The basis of Bani Adam’s misguidance stems from ‘General Terms’ and ‘Ambiguous Meanings’ (terms, meanings, statements) that can be interpreted as either truth or falsehood when not clearly defined). This issue is exacerbated when they interact with a confused mind, particularly when coupled with misguided desires and enthusiasm. Thus, seek the guidance of the One who stabilises hearts, asking Allah to strengthen your heart in His Religion and protect you from falling into this darkness”. (15)

He, may Allah have mercy upon him, also said: “If the speaker falls short in his clarification and addresses the listener with vague terms that may encompass various interpretations, and the listener remains uncertain of the intended meaning; if this arises from the speaker’s inability, the listener is given from the speaker’s inability rather than his intent. If the speaker possesses the ability and he does not do so while it is obligated to him to do so, he gives the listener from his evil intent”. (16)

The Erroneous Identification of Beneficial Knowledge

Imam As-Sadi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said:

Due to two extreme viewpoints, many individuals have incorrectly determined what is that sound knowledge to be sought after. The first viewpoint is held by people who restrict knowledge to certain religious sciences, such as knowledge pertaining to the rectification of beliefs, morals, and acts of worship; however, their understanding is not founded on what the Qur'an and Sunnah have made known about knowledge encompassing both Shariah and worldly sciences. This viewpoint is held by a group of people who did not fully comprehend the Shariah, but they are now beginning to repudiate their previous viewpoint after seeing the enormous advantages of the sound worldly sciences and after many of them learned about the Shariah's justifications for them.

The second viewpoint is that of a people who limit knowledge to the contemporary worldly sciences, and this viewpoint arises from their deviation from Islam, its sciences, and its values. This is a huge mistake since they denied the sound religious sciences, which the contemporary sciences do not ascribe to in any way, and thus they were deceived by the industries and inventions that arose from these modern worldly sciences.

These are the people referred to in Allah's statement:

فلما جاءتهم رسلهم بالبينات فرحوا بما عندهم من العلم وحاق بهم ما كانوا به يستهزئون] - Then when their Messengers came to them with clear proofs, they were glad (and proud) with that which they had of the knowledge (of worldly things): And that at which they used to mock, surrounded them (i.e. the punishment)]. [Surah Ghafir. Ayah 83]

They rejoiced due to their knowledge of the material world, which made them haughty; as a result, they mocked the knowledge of the Messengers until they were overwhelmed by the truth they had been mocking, and the punishment they had been promised for having belied the Messengers finally came to pass. They received their punishment in this world by having a seal placed on their hearts, ears, and eyes, which prevented them from the truth. [ولعذاب الآخرة] - أشد وأبقى - And the torment of the Hereafter is far more severe and more lasting (Surah Taa Haa. Ayah 127)]

As for what constitutes beneficial knowledge and how to define it, the Qur'an and the Sunnah both specify that it is any knowledge that leads to lofty objectives that produce positive outcomes. Knowledge is useful when it directs people in the right direction - promotes sound beliefs, morals, and deeds. Islam placed the sciences into two categories: Al-Maqaasid (the objectives of the sciences) and Al-Wasaa'il (the methods by which those objectives can be attained). The objectives serve the various (uncorrupted) divine laws, and the methods are the things that help to achieve those objectives, such as the Arabic language and its various sciences, the sciences that are associated with phenomena in the universe whose fruitful outcome leads to knowledge and awareness about Allah, His Oneness and Perfection, and acquaintance with the truthfulness of His Messengers (due to realities they have conveyed from their Lord).

The benefit of the worldly sciences is that they are utilised as an aid to worship Allah alone, express gratitude to Allah, and establish the religion. That is because Allah [The Exalted] informed us that He has subjected this universe to our service, commanded us to reflect on it and derive both religious and worldly benefits from it. A command concerning an affair is both a command to fulfil the affair and a command to use the means necessary to fulfil the command; so, as a result, since we are unable to reap their benefits on the spot, we must seek them out through research, reflection, and experience. This in and of itself is an urge to comprehend the worldly sciences, which are the means through which what Allah has subjugated to us is extracted. Allah [The Exalted] said:

وأنزلنا الحديد فيه بأس شديد ومنافع للناس

And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind. [Surah Al-Hadeed. 25]

These benefits cannot be attained without familiarity with the sciences of the physical world that produce them (by the Will of Allah). (17)

Al-Allamah Rabee Bin Hadi Al-Mad'khali, may Allah preserve him, said: If medicine, engineering and chemistry are not placed below the knowledge which the Prophets brought, they become nothing; (rather) they will only increase the people in corruption. The knowledge brought by the Prophets is rectification for the people, a guide for them towards the right path and removes them from the darkness they are living in – the darkness of kufr and ignorance. As for the knowledge of the philosophers and the heretics, then what Allah has stated truly applies to it:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ] -Then when their Messengers came to them with clear proofs, they were glad [and proud] with that which they had of the knowledge [of worldly things]: And that at which they used to mock, surrounded them [i.e. the punishment]. [Surah Ghafir' 83]

It is the knowledge which the people boast about nowadays, whether it is medicine, engineering, astronomy, [modern] politics and economics. After the Prophets came to them – to remove them from the darkness of ignorance and enter them into the light of the knowledge and Iman- they became glad and boastful with the knowledge they possess, [just as Allah has stated]:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ] -Then when their Messengers came to them with clear proofs, they were glad [and proud] with that which they had of the knowledge [of worldly things]: And that at which they used to mock, surrounded them [i.e. the punishment]. [Surah Ghafir' 83] (18)

Dr. Shaikh Abu Iyaad, may Allah preserve him, stated: "Today, they rejoice with their speculative sciences and the greatest of them is Darwinian evolution which they have fused into and made inseparable from and made the very foundation of their biological sciences. And this is what is at the heart of what they are doing today, and these people are the Malthusian Eugenicists, International Bankers and Elites of the Kuffar and Mushrikeen. They are using the scam and fraud of virology to start the transformation from what is now taking place of the collapse of democracy into the new tyrannical system they desire, and they are starting with the Western social democracies first as most of the groundwork has already been laid in these societies. Darwinian evolution is what they use to deny creation and resurrection". (19) [Footnote a]

The Absence of Taqwa

Allah said:

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

Is it then he, who laid the foundation of his building on piety to Allah and His Good Pleasure, better, or he who laid the foundation of his building on an undetermined brink of a precipice ready to crumble down, so that it crumbled to pieces with him into the Fire of Hell. And Allah guides not the people who are the Zaalimoon [polytheists and wrong doers]. [Surah At-Tawbah. 109]

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said:

Whoever wants his building to be elevated, then it is incumbent upon him to strengthen and fortify its foundation because the elevation of the building is based on the firmness and fortification of its foundation. Deeds are a building and Imaan is their foundation. If the foundation is strong, it carries and elevates the building, and if a part of the building is damaged, it is easy for it to bear the (damage); but if the foundation is not firm, neither will the building be elevated nor will it be firm. If something from the foundation is damaged, the building will either collapse or close to that. Therefore, the duty of a knowledgeable person is that he makes the foundation sound and fortified. As for the ignorant person, he elevates (the building) whilst building upon other than a (strong) foundation, thus his building does not remain. The foundation of deeds is like the physical strength of a person; if the strength is vigorous, the body will be able to withstand burden and repel many harmful things; but if it is weak, the body's ability to withstand burden is weakened and harm quickly overcomes the person. Therefore, support your building (i.e. your actions and deeds) with the foundation of Iman for if something from the top of your building decays and falls down, it would be much easier for the (building) to bear (the damage), rather than the destruction of the foundation. This foundation (Iman) is based on two affairs: (I) Sound knowledge and awareness of Allah, His Commandments, Names and Attributes. (II) Complete submission to Allah alone. This is the firmest foundation upon which a servant of Allah establishes his building (actions and deeds). (20)

The Divine Limits

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said:

One of the most noble and beneficial sciences is the knowledge regarding the hudood [the appropriate limits], especially the divine limits-the commands and prohibitions [ordained by Allah (The Most High) and His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.. The most knowledgeable people are those who have the most knowledge regarding those divine limits, hence they neither include- within those limits- that which is not from them nor remove that which is included in them. Allah [The Most High] said: [الأعراب أشد كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا وَأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ] – The bedouins are the worst in disbelief and hypocrisy, and more likely to be in ignorance of the limits (Allah’s Commandments and His Legal Laws, etc.) which Allah has revealed to His Messenger]. Therefore, the most just, balanced and upright people are those who stay within the limits of the Akhlaaq, actions and the deeds legislated in the Islamic legislation- in knowledge and practice. (21)

Imam Ibrahim Bin Ad’ham, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: Zuhd (Abstinence) from the worldly life is of three types: obligatory abstinence, the abstinence that is of a superior virtue and the abstinence that is safety. As for obligatory abstinence, it is abstinence from the unlawful; the abstinence that is of superior virtue is to abstain from the unnecessary things of the worldly life, and the abstinence that is safety is to abstain from the doubtful matters. (22)

We ask Allāh:

اللَّهُمَّ أَصْلِحْ لِي دِينِي الَّذِي هُوَ عِصْمَةُ أَمْرِي
وَأَصْلِحْ لِي دُنْيَايَ الَّتِي فِيهَا مَعَاشِي
وَأَصْلِحْ لِي آخِرَتِي الَّتِي فِيهَا مَعَادِي
وَاجْعَلِ الْحَيَاةَ زِيَادَةً لِي فِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ
وَاجْعَلِ الْمَوْتَ رَاحَةً لِي مِنْ كُلِّ شَرٍّ

O Allah! Rectify my religion for me, which is the safeguard of my affairs; rectify my worldly [affairs], wherein is my livelihood; and rectify my Afterlife to which is my return; and make life for me [as a means of] increase in every good and make death for me as a rest from every evil. [Saheeh Muslim Number: 2720]

[Footnote a]: Benefit from this very useful article by Shaikh Abu Iyaad, may Allah preserve him: Understanding the Two Definitions of 'Science' in Operation: <http://www.aboutatheism.net/articles/juvtbpd-understanding-the-two-definitions-of-science-and-scientific-enquiry.cfm>

[1] Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2956]

[2] Sharh Saheeh Muslim 18/74. Daar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah. 1st Edition 1421AH (2000)]

[3] <https://binothaimeen.net/content/8835>]

[4] An Excerpt from 'Al-Manaahiy al-Laf'dhiyyah: page: 117. slightly paraphrased]

[5] Seerah As-Salaf As-Saaliheen. 1/1073. Chapter: A mention of the At'baa At-Taabi'een

[6] A'laam Al-Muwaqqi'een 1/67-69

[7]<http://www.shariah.ws/articles/suokooj-there-is-no-safe-limit-in-the-consumption-of-alcohol-and-the-prohibition-of-alcohol-in-the-quran.cfm>]

(8) An Excerpt from "Ad-Deenus Saheeh Yahillu Jamee al-Mashaakil (The right religion is the answer to every problem- pages 3-5

(9) An Excerpt from "Ad-Daa'u Wad-Dawaa" pages 119-120

(10) An Excerpt from "Al-Adillatul Qawaatiq" pages 40-41

(11) I'lam Al-Muwaqqi'in 1/67

(12) Sharh Usool Ath-Thalaatha- Explanation of the three fundamental principles. English Translation pages 37. By Shaikh Abu Talhah (may Allah have mercy upon him and his wife Aameen)]

(13) An Excerpt from "As-Sawaa'iq Al-Mursalah" 2/438

(14) Ar-Radd Alaa Al-Bakri 702-703

(15) As-Sawa'iq Al-Mursalah 3/927

(16) As-Sawa'iq Al-Mussalah 2/503

(17) An Excerpt from Ad-Deenus Saheeh Yahillu Jamee al-Mashaakil (The right religion is the answer to every problem- page 6.

(18) Marhaban Yaa Talibal Ilm. page 100

(19) Telegram Message Dated: Jumada Al Oula 20, 1443AH (24/12/21)]

(20) An Excerpt from 'Al-Fawaa'id: page 154. slightly paraphrased]

(21) An Excerpt from 'Al-Fawaa'id page 207- 209]

(22) Jaami'ul Uloom Wal Hikam page 310