



the

TREE

of

Faith

التوضیح والدلیل الصحیح
الإيمان

By Al-'Allamah 'Abdur-Rahman al-Sa'di
(d. 1376 H.)

"Do you not see how Allah sets forth a metaphor of a good word: a good tree whose roots are firm and whose branches are in the sky? It bears fruit all the time by its Lord's permission. Allah sets forth metaphors for people so that hopefully they will pay heed."
[Ibrahim (14): 24-25]

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by *al-'Allāmah* 'Abdur-Raḥmān bin Nāṣir al-Sa'di
(d. 1376H).

Translated by Abū Rumaysah

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Transliteration Table

Consonants,

‘	’	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	‘	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short:	اَ	a	يَ	i	وُ	u
Long:	اَآ	ā	يِي	ī	وُو	ū
diphthongs:			اِي	ay	اُو	aw

Biography of the Author

He is Abū 'Abdullāh 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Naṣir bin 'Abdullāh bin Naṣir Āli Sa'di from the Tamimi tribe. He was born in the city of 'Unayzah, Qasim on the 12th Muḥarram, 1307H. His mother passed away when he was but four years old and his father when he was seven. Hence he grew up as an orphan but despite this he had a goodly upbringing.

He was extremely intelligent and had memorised the Qur'an by the age of eleven after which he devoted himself to studying under the scholars of his land. He strove in his studies until he excelled in all of the various Islāmic sciences and by the age of twenty-three he was already teaching. He devoted himself entirely to learning and teaching until he became the leading religious authority in the land, with students of knowledge flocking to him from all regions.

He studied under a host of the leading scholars of his time, from amongst whom was Shaykh Ibrāhīm bin Ḥamd bin Jāsir, the author would praise him for his extensive memorisation of ḥadith, his piety and his love of the poor. Many times he would witness a poor person coming to Shaykh Ibrāhīm, and the shaykh removing an article of his clothing and giving it to him, despite he himself needing it and being quite poor. He also studied under Shaykh Muḥammad bin 'Abdul Karīm al-Shibl, Shaykh Ṣāliḥ bin 'Uthmān – the Judge of 'Unayzah, Shaykh Ṣa'b al-Quwayjiri, Muḥammad al-Amin al-Shanqīti and others.

The author, may Allāh have mercy upon him, was known for his piety, excellent manners and humility before the young, the old, the rich, and the poor. He would always spend some of his time in meeting those who wished to meet him and was kindly to the poor, orphans, and strangers; helping them to the best of his ability. He was an excellent teacher and speaker and would give presents to those of his students who memorised the texts that were taught to them. Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymin said, 'the deceased, may Allāh have mercy upon him, was exceptional with regards his excellent conduct and his humility to both young and old. He was a person of worship, abstinence and scrupulousness, as well as a *faqīh*, *muḥaddith*, exhorter, orator, linguist and author. He combined within him a variety of sciences.'

The author was an expert in *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, initially he was Ḥanbali in *madh-hab*, as were all of his teachers; his first work on *fiqh* was written in poem form upon the Ḥanbali School which he also commented upon. He studied the works of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim extensively and benefited enormously from them. As he progressed in his studies he no longer restricted himself to the Ḥanbali School but rather followed the course he believed to be proven by the strongest evidences. However, he would never censure or look down upon those who followed a particular school of thought.

Shaykh 'Abdul 'Azīz bin Bāz said, 'He – may Allāh have mercy upon him – had a great concern for *fiqh* and, in issues involving differences of opinion, paid attention to knowing the stronger opinion along with its respective proof. He hardly spoke unless there was a benefit; I sat with him on more than one occasion in Riyādh and Makkah and he only spoke sparingly, except in issues of knowledge. He was humble and had an excellent character; whoever reads his books will realise his virtue, knowledge and concern for the textual proofs. May Allāh bestow vast mercy upon him.'

He was also an expert in *tafsir*, having read many works of *tafsir* and studied it under his teachers; and he actually authored a *tafsir* himself. All who heard him speak when explaining the Book of Allāh would wish that he never stop due to his inspiring manner of speech and the great benefits that he derived from its verses.

He authored a number of works amongst which were *Taysir al-Karīm al-Rahmān*, which he completed in the year 1344H, and *Taysir al-Laṭīf al-Mannān* in *tafsir*; *al-Qawā'id al-Hisān li Tafsir al-Qur'an* in principles of exegesis; *Hāshiyah 'alā al-Fiqh* and *Irshād Uli-l-Albāb* in *fiqh*; *al-Haqq al-Wāḍiḥ al-Mubīn*, *Tawḍīḥ al-Kāfiyah al-Shāfiyah*, *al-Qawl al-Sadīd fī Maqāṣid al-Tawhīd* in belief; *Bahjatu-l-Qulūb al-Abrār*, *ad-Durratu-l-Fākhira* in morals, manners and *sulūḳ*.

The author passed away in 'Unayzah in the year 1376H, may Allāh have mercy upon him.

Author's Introduction

All praise and thanks are due to Allāh Who planted the tree of faith in the hearts of his chosen servants; Who watered it and nourished it with beneficial knowledge, truthful cognisance and dedication to His remembrance night and day; Who made it to give forth its fruits and blessings unremittingly and assiduously – the fruits and blessings of goodness and abundant, fulsome grace.

I testify that none has the right to be worshipped save Allāh Alone, the One, the Compeller, the Kind, the Most Merciful, the All-Forgiving. I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger, the Chosen and Preferred.

O Allāh send peace and blessings upon Muḥammad, upon his family and righteous, elect Companions.

The subject of this book is faith (*imān*) which is the most important topic of this religion and the greatest principle of truth and certainty. [The content] is derived entirely from the Noble Book of Allāh, which analyses these principles completely, and from the Sunnah of His Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ), which conforms to the Book and serves to further explain it: giving detail to its general and unrestricted statements.

Allāh, the Exalted says,

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً
كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

تُؤْتِي أَكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ
 لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

Do you not see how Allāh sets forth a metaphor of a good word: a good tree whose roots are firm and whose branches are in the sky? It bears fruit all the time by its Lord's permission. Allāh sets forth metaphors for people so that hopefully they will pay heed. [Sūrah *Ibrahim* (14); 24-25]

Allāh has likened the statement of faith, which is the best of statements, with a tree that is the best of trees bearing these noble characteristics. Its roots are firm, it is always growing and maturing, and it bears fruit all the time: directing its numerous benefits and delectable fruits to its owner and others.

This tree varies greatly in the hearts of the believers, changing in accordance to the variation of the qualities that Allāh has described it with. Therefore it is upon the servant to hasten towards acquiring knowledge about it, its descriptions, that which leads to its existence and potency, its roots, and its branches. It is upon him to expend his efforts in actualising this tree in terms of knowledge and action for indeed his portion of goodness and success, happiness in this life and the Hereafter, is dependant upon the extent to which this tree [is implanted in his heart].

CHAPTER ONE

The Foundations of Faith

1.1 The Definition of Faith

The definition and explanation of things serves to clarify and simplify them. Indeed giving a ruling on something can only come about after having correctly conceptualised it. Whoever gives a ruling on something before having understood and conceptualised it such that he can distinguish it, will make serious errors.

As for the definition of faith, it is the firm belief, complete acknowledgement and acceptance of all that Allāh and His Messenger have commanded to have faith in, submitting to it both inwardly and outwardly. It is the acceptance and belief of the heart that includes the actions of the heart and body, therefore it encompasses the establishment of the whole religion.

This is why the Imāms and *Salaf* used to say,

Faith is the statement of the heart and tongue; action of the heart, tongue, and limbs.

Hence it comprises statement, action, and belief. It increases through obedience and decreases through disobedience. It includes the beliefs of faith, its morals and manners, and the actions demanded by it.

Affirming, believing in, and acknowledging the Beautiful Names of Allāh, His Perfect and Lofty Attributes, and His actions that

ensue from His Names and Attributes is from the greatest of the principles of faith. Similarly acknowledging the rights that are due to Allāh – taking Him as god and worshipping Him both outwardly and inwardly is from the principles of faith. Acknowledging everything that Allāh informed of concerning His angels and forces, of what has happened and is to happen, and the narrative concerning the Last Day is from the principles of faith. Having faith in all the Messengers (ﷺ), in all their praiseworthy descriptions and characteristics given of them in the Book and Sunnah is from the principles of faith. From the greatest principles of faith is to believe in the Oneness of Allāh completely and in only His deserving worship, worshipping Him alone without associating any partners with Him, making the religion sincerely for Allāh and establishing the outward laws of Islām and its inward realities.

All of the above form the foundations of faith.

This is why the outcome of faith is the entry into Paradise and security from the Fire, His pleasure, success and happiness.¹

But this outcome cannot come about except by including all we have mentioned above comprising the articles of belief and the

¹ Allāh mentions this fact with His words, “The men and women of the believers are friends and protectors of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, and establish the prayer and pay *zakāt*, and obey Allāh and His Messenger. They are the people on whom Allāh will have mercy. Allāh is Almighty, All-Wise. Allāh has promised the men and women of the believers Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever, and fine dwellings in Gardens of Paradise. Allāh’s good pleasure is even greater. It is that which is the great victory.” [Sūrah *al-Tawbah* (9): 71]

“Those who have faith and do righteous actions – they are the best of creatures. Their reward is with their Lord: Gardens of Paradise with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. That is for those who fear Allāh.” [Sūrah *al-Bayyinah* (98): 7-8]

actions of the heart and limbs. This is because whoever lacks something of this, he would have a deficiency [in faith], lose out on reward, and experience punishment accordingly.

1.2 The Reward Ensuing from True Faith

Allāh, the Exalted, informs us that complete faith leads to the acquisition of the highest station in this world and the most lofty and distinguished level in the Hereafter,

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّٰدِقُونَ

Those who believe in Allāh and His Messengers, such people are the truly sincere. [Sūrah *al-Hadid* (57); 19]²

The truly sincere (*siddiqūn*)³ are those having the greatest ranking among the creation, after the Prophets, in this life and

² The author, said in commentary to this verse, *Taysir al-Karim al-Rahmān*, 'Faith in the view of *Ahl al-Sunnah* is that which is proven by the Book and Sunnah comprising statement of the heart and tongue; and action of the heart, tongue and limbs. Therefore faith encompasses all of the laws of Islām, both the outer and inner. Those who combine all of these matters are the *siddiqūn* and their ranking is above the ranking of the general Muslims but below that of the Prophets.'

³ Their characteristics have been mentioned by Allāh with His words, "It is not piety to turn your faces to the east or to the west. Rather, those with true piety are those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the Prophets, and who, despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives and to the orphans and the very poor, and to travellers and beggars and to set slaves free, and who establish the prayer and pay *zakāt*; those who honour their contracts when they make them, and are steadfast in poverty and illness and in battle. Those are the people who are true, they are the pious and god-fearing." [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2): 177]

"The believers are only those who had faith in Allāh and His Messenger and then have had no doubt, have undertaken *Jihād* with their wealth and themselves in the Way of Allāh. They are the ones who are true to their word." [Sūrah *al-Hujurat* (49): 15]

the Hereafter.⁴ Therefore this verse informs us that the one who realises and actualises faith in Him and His Messengers would attain this station.

This is point is further clarified in the ḥadīth reported by the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* al-Bukhāri and Muslim,

‘The inhabitants of Paradise shall try to see the People of the Chambers in Paradise⁵ in the same way that you try to see the east or west star in the horizon, this due to the great gap in superiority between them.’

They said, ‘Messenger of Allāh, are not those the levels of the Prophets which none shall reach them save them?’

He replied, ‘Rather, by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, [it would be reached] by those who believed in Allāh and sincerely, truly attested to the Messengers.’⁶

Their having faith in Allāh and attesting to the Messengers is done both outwardly and inwardly: in their articles of belief, in their morals and manners, through their actions, and their obedience to Allāh and His Messenger. By their establishing these matters do they realise and actualise this faith in Allāh and true attestation to His Messengers.

⁴ As shown by His words, “Whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger will be with those who Allāh has blessed: the Prophets, the truly sincere, the martyrs and the righteous. What an excellent company such people are!” [Sūrah *al-Nisā’* (4); 69].

⁵ Mentioned in His words, “And the servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk lightly on the earth and who, when the ignorant speak to them, say, ‘Peace’; those who spend the night prostrating and standing before their Lord.... Such people will be repaid for their steadfastness with the Chamber [in the highest Paradise] and they will meet with welcome and ‘peace!’” [Sūrah *al-Furqān* (25); 63-75]

⁶ Al-Bukhāri [#3256] and Muslim [#2831/11] from the ḥadīth of Abū Sa’id al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه). Also see Muslim [#1830/10] from the ḥadīth of Sahl bin Sa’d (رضي الله عنه).

Allāh has ordered us to have this faith described above in His Book just as He has ordered us to the submission which follows on from this. He said in the greatest verse concerning faith,

قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا

أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ

مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَأَنْفِرَ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

Say: we believe in Allāh; and what has been revealed to us; and what has been revealed to Ibrāhim, Isma'il, Ishāq, Ya'qūb, and the tribes; and in what has been given to Musā and 'Isā; and what has been given to all the Prophets by their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them and we have submitted wholly to Him as Muslims. [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 136]⁷

Allāh ordered His servants to have faith in all of these great principles, in all of the books that Allah revealed, in all of the Messengers sent by Allāh, to have sincerity towards Him and to submit to Him Alone, “and we have submitted wholly to Him as Muslims.”

At the end of the same chapter, Allāh has praised those who establish what has been mentioned above,

⁷ The author, said in commentary to this verse in *Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman*, “This noble verse mentions all that is necessary for one to have faith in. Know that faith, which is complete belief in the principles mentioned in this verse along with affirmation and acknowledgement from which ensue actions of the heart and limbs, when understood in this way encompasses the whole of Islām and comprises all righteous actions. Therefore righteous actions are part and parcel of faith and from the fruits of faith. Whenever faith is mentioned unrestrictedly it refers to all that has been mentioned above, the same applies to the word Islām. However when both are mentioned together, faith is taken to refer to that which takes place in the heart of belief, affirmation and acknowledgement and Islām is taken to refer to the outward actions. The same holds true when faith is mentioned alongside righteous actions.’

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ
إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ
وَرُسُلِهِ لَا تَفْرُقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا
وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾

The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to Him and the believers. All believe in Allāh, His angels, His Books, and His Messengers, [saying], ‘We do not differentiate between any of His Messengers’, [further] saying, ‘We hear and obey, forgive us our Lord! To You is the journey’s end.’

[Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 285]

He informs us that the Messenger and the believers with him have faith in these principles. They do not differentiate between any of the Prophets, instead they believe in them all and in what they brought from Allāh. They firmly adhere to the obedience of Allāh, ‘we hear and obey’ and they ask their Lord to allow them to realise this and to overlook their deficiencies in fulfilling some of the rights of faith. He informs us that the journey’s end for the whole creation is Allāh Who will proceed to recompense them in accordance to their establishment of the rights of faith.

Allāh, the Exalted, says concerning the followers of the Prophets, Prophets such as ‘Isā and others, that they said,

رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا بِمَا أُنزِلَ وَأَتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ
الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

Our Lord, we have faith in what You have sent down and have followed the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses. [Sūrah *Al-‘Imrān* (3); 53]

Hence they believed in their hearts and adhered firmly to this faith both in their hearts and upon their limbs. They then proceeded to ask Allāh to write them down among those who have witnessed His *Tawhīd* and that He allow them to establish it in speech, action and belief.

1.3 The Description of the Believers

Allāh, the Exalted says,

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

The believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allāh is mentioned, whose faith is increased when His Signs are recited to them, who put their trust in their Lord, those who establish the prayer and give of what We have provided for them. They are the believers in truth. They have high ranks with their Lord and forgiveness and generous provision. [Sūrah *al-Anfāl* (8); 2-4]⁸

⁸ The author, said in commentary to this verse, *Taysir al-Karim al-Rahmān*, “whose faith is increased when His Signs are recited to them” because they pay careful attention to it and their hearts are present and aware when contemplating it, hence their faith increases. This is because contemplation is from the actions of the heart, and upon contemplation, meanings that were previously unknown to them will be discerned, they will remember that which they had forgotten, a desire to strive after the good would be inculcated in their hearts, a yearning to attain the blessing of their Lord will be created, a fear would be attained of His punishment and of sins. All of this serves to increase faith. “who put their trust in their Lord,” their hearts depend upon their Lord in order to procure the good and repress the harm – both worldly and religious – and they have absolute trust that Allāh would indeed do this. *Tawakkul* is the vessel that carries all actions, they cannot exist or be perfected except by virtue of it... “They are the believers in truth,” because they combined Islam and faith, outer and inner actions, knowledge and action, fulfilling the rights of Allāh and the rights of His servants. The actions of the hearts were mentioned first because they are the source of bodily actions and better than them. This verse also comprises proof that faith increases and decreases, increasing with actions of obedience and decreasing with actions of disobedience. This verse also shows that it is upon the servant to tend to his faith and to that which would increase it, the first step towards which is contemplation of the book of Allāh.’

Allāh has described the true believers with these characteristics that encompass the enactment of the foundations of this whole religion as well as its branches, both inwardly and outwardly.

He describes them with such faith as manifests itself in their beliefs, statements and actions – both the inner and outer. He further describes them as increasing in faith each time the verses of Allāh are recited to them, their fear and dread increasing each time Allāh is mentioned. These are those who truly and completely put their trust and reliance in Allāh, depending upon Him in all their affairs, relegating them to Him. Moreover they establish the obligatory and optional prayers, perfecting it both inwardly and outwardly. They give in *zakāt* and spend in that which is obligatory upon them as well as recommended.

Know that whoever meets these descriptions, there is no more good that is left to be sought just as there is no more evil that remains to be feared, such are the believers in truth! Their reward? Forgiveness which comprises the eradication of all evil and matters to be wary of, high ranks with their Lord, generous provision comprising such blessings as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined.

Allāh, the Exalted, says,

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

The believers are successful. Those who are humble in their prayer, those who turn away from worthless talk, those who pay the *zakāt*, those who guard their private parts – except from their wives or those they own as slaves, in which case they are not blameworthy; but those who desire more than that are people who have gone beyond the limits – those who honour their trusts and contracts, and those who safeguard their prayers. Such people are the inheritors who will inherit *al-Firdaws*, remaining in it timelessly, forever.

[Sūrah *al-Mu'minūn* (23); 1-11]⁹

So Allāh explained faith to comprise all of the matters mentioned in these verses, first by stating that the believers are successful then by describing their qualities with His words, 'Those who are humble in their prayer...'

Therefore the one who fulfills these characteristics is a believer in truth. The general import derived from these verses is one of establishing the obligations, both outwardly and inwardly, as well as avoiding the prohibited and detested matters. Through ones completing faith, one deserves to inherit *al-Firdaws* which is the highest garden of Paradise as a fitting reward for their completing the loftiest objective.

This then explicitly tells us that faith comprises beliefs, its ensuing morals and manners, and actions: both the outer and inner. Following on from this we conclude that faith increases with the increase and actualisation of these components and decreases with their decrease. We also learn that people are of differing levels of faith, differing in accordance to the strength or weakness of these components. This is why people are generally divided into three categories:

- i. *Sābiqūn al-Muqarrabūn*, the forerunners, those brought near. They are those who establish the obligations and recommendations, they leave the prohibited and disliked

⁹ Imām al-Bukhāri mentioned these verses in the chapter, 'The matters making up faith' in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

matters, and they also leave excessively doing the permissible matters.¹⁰

ii. *Muqtaṣidūn*, those who take a middle path. They are those who establish the obligations and leave the prohibitions.¹¹

iii. *Zālimūn li Anfusihim*, those who wrong themselves. They are those who leave the performance of some of the obligations and commit some of the unlawful matters.¹²

Allāh says,

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ
 الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ
 مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ
 الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٢﴾

Then We made Our chosen slaves inherit the Book, but some of them wrong themselves, some take a middle course, and some outdo each other in good by Allāh's permission. That is the great favour. [Sūrah *Fāṭir* (35); 32]

Sometimes Allāh mentions righteous actions alongside faith, other times *taqwā* and yet other times patience (*ṣabr*) so that one does not think that what is present of faith in the heart suffices alone. In the Qur'ān, how many times does Allāh say,

Those who believe and do righteous actions¹³

¹⁰ They are also referred to as *al-Muḥsinun*, *al-Muqarrabun*, 'Ibad Allāh, 'Ibad al-Raḥmān.

¹¹ Also referred to as *al-Abrār*, *Aṣḥābu-l-Yamin*, *al-Muttaqun*, *al-Ṣāliḥīn*.

¹² Also referred to as *Ahlu-l-Kabā'ir* and *Fāsiq al-Millī*.

¹³ Refer to *al-Baqarah* (2): 25, 82, 277; *Āl-'Imrān* (3): 57; *al-Nisa'* (4): 34, 122, 124, 173; *al-Mā'idah* (5): 93; *al-A'rāf* (7): 42; *Yūnus* (10): 4; *al-Anbiyā'* (21): 94; *al-Hajj* (22): 14, 23, 50, 56; *al-Nūr* (24): 55; *al-Shu'ara* (26): 227; *al-Ankabūt* (29): 7, 9, 58; *al-Rūm* (30): 15, 45; *Luqman* (31): 8; *al-Sajdah* (32): 19; *Saba'* (34): 4; *Fāṭir* (35): 7; *Ghāfir* (40): 58; *Fuṣṣilat* (41): 8; *al-Shūrā* (42): 22, 23, 26; *al-Jāthiyah* (45): 21, 30; *Muḥammad* (47): 2, 12; *al-Fath* (48): 29; *al-Ṭalāq* (65): 11; *al-Inshiqāq* (84): 25; *al-Burūj* (85): 11; *al-Tin* (95): 6; *al-Bayyinah* (98): 7; *al-Aṣr* (103): 3

and then proceeds to tell us something about them. Righteous actions are part of faith, from the necessary implications of faith and serve to actualise faith. Whoever claims that he is a believer, yet does not do what Allāh and His Messenger have ordered him to do of the obligations and leaving the prohibitions, is not truthful in his claim.

Allāh, the Exalted says,

الْآيَاتِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
 ﴿٦٣﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Yes, the friends of Allāh will feel no fear and will know no sorrow: those who have faith and *taqwā*...

[Sūrah Yūnus (10); 62-63]

mentioning the complete faith: that which takes root in the heart of beliefs and good and pure intentions combined with righteous actions. But this will never be complete for the believer until, and when, he erects a barrier between himself and all that would displease Allāh comprising things such as disbelief, sin and transgression. This is why Allāh says about the true believers, ‘...and *taqwā*’.¹⁴

¹⁴ May Allāh have mercy upon the famous *Ṭābi*’i, Ṭalq bin Ḥabīb who said upon being asked about *taqwā*, ‘That you perform the obedience of Allāh upon a light from Allāh, hoping for the reward of Allāh. You leave disobedience to Allāh upon a light from Allāh, fearing the punishment of Allāh.’

Reported by Ibn al-Mubāarak, *al-Zuhd* [#473]; Abu Nu’aym, *al-Ḥilya* [3/64]; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaf* [#10405, 17009], *al-Īmān* [#99] with a *ṣaḥīḥ isnād*.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Risālah al-Ṭabūqīyyah* [p. 27] said, ‘This is the best that has been said concerning the definition of *taqwā* for indeed every action must have a beginning cause to it and an objective. An action can never be considered to be obedience and a cause to draw one closer to Allāh until its point of commencement and cause be unadulterated faith, not habit, not base desires, not the wish for praise and position nor other such things. Its objective must be the reward that lies with Allāh and His good-pleasure, this being the definition of *iḥtisāb*. >

Allāh further says, while mentioning the elite of his creation,

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ
 الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ ﴿٧﴾
 فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٨﴾

However Allāh has given you love of faith and made it pleasing to your hearts, and has made disbelief, transgression and disobedience hateful to you. People such as these are rightly guided. It is a great favour from Allāh and a blessing. Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [Sūrah *al-Hujurat* (49); 7-8]¹⁵

This is the greatest of favours – that Allāh grant the servant love of faith, adorn it for him in his heart and allow him to relish its sweetness with his limbs complying to the laws of Islām. Moreover Allāh makes him detest the unlawful actions, truly He is the All-Knowing of those who deserve this blessing and All-Wise in His placing this blessing in its correct and befitting place.

1.4 The Components of Faith

It is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from the ḥadīth of Anas (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

There are three qualities, whoever has them will relish the sweetness of faith: that Allāh and His Messenger be more

This is why we often find the combined mention of these two foundations such as in his (ﷺ) saying, “Whoever fasts the month of *Ramādān* out of faith and *iḥtisāb*...”.

His saying, ‘upon a light from Allāh’ points to the first foundation which is faith. His saying, ‘hoping for the reward of Allāh’ points to the second foundation which is *iḥtisāb*.’

¹⁵ This verse is one of the proofs that complete faith comprises actions as well as beliefs, this is because faith has been mentioned and so too has its opposite: disbelief, transgression and disobedience. Refer to al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Kabīr* [10/102].

beloved to him than anything else; that he love a person and not love him except for the sake of Allāh; that he dislike leaving his religion in the same way that he dislikes being thrown in the Fire.¹⁶

The root foundation of faith has been mentioned which is the love of Allāh and His Messenger, however just a general love is not sufficient; rather this love must take precedence over all other loves. Moreover this love is the cause for other loves such that one loves for the sake of Allāh and hates for the sake of Allāh, when one does this he has attained the pinnacle of faith. Therefore one loves the Prophets, the truly sincere, the martyrs, and the righteous because they undertake that which Allāh loves and because He chose them from amongst His creation. Furthermore the quality which would repress anything that negates and contradicts this faith has been mentioned: that one hate leaving his religion and consider it to be the most abhorrent thing to him, more so than being thrown in the Fire.

This ḥadith informs us that faith has a sweetness that is perceived by the heart, when the servant relishes it, all worldly loves and objectives slip away and a good and pure life ensues.

¹⁶ Bukhārī [#21] and Muslim [#67].

Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Mufhim* [pp. 214-215] said, 'This ḥadith shows us that the believer's love which leads to relishing the sweetness of faith is only that love which is sincerely and wholly for Allāh, the Exalted, unadulterated with worldly goals or selfish objectives. Indeed if ones love is like this, it comes to an end when the goal is achieved or he quickly despairs of ever attaining it whereas the believer's love is a perpetual routine and tendency, achieve he some worldly benefit or not. Because the type of love that is most frequently found is that love which emanates from some worldly purpose, rarely do people relish the sweetness of faith, indeed there could be no sweetness present at all. This is especially true of this day and age where many features of faith have been lost. In summary, the believer's love is from amongst the actions of worship that require sincerity and good intention.'

Whoever loves Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) naturally inclines to making mention of them, devotes himself to this purpose, and exerts himself in following the Messenger (ﷺ). People naturally make frequent mention of things that they love. He gives precedence to this following over everybody else and over the desires and goals of his own soul. Whoever is in this state, his soul is in a state of tranquility and peace, delighting in obeying its Lord and the servant is granted light from his Lord. Many believers do not attain this dignified rank,

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَةٌ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا

All have ranks according to what they did. [Surah *al-An ām* (6); 132]

1.4.1 *The Ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah* (ﷺ)

It is established in the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Faith has seventy-odd branches, the highest of them is the statement that none has the right to be worshipped save Allāh, and the least of them is removing that which is harmful from the road. Modesty is a branch of faith.¹⁷

This ḥadīth explicitly tell us that faith comprises statement of the tongue, actions of the limbs, beliefs and morals, establishing the rights of Allāh, and displaying beneficence to the creation.

This ḥadīth mentions the highest branch of faith which forms the foundation and root, the statement that none has the right to be worshipped save Allāh, said by way of firm belief and sincerity. It mentions the lowest branch which is the removal of things such as bones, thorns and other harmful things from the road; hence definitely other more important actions of beneficence are from the branches of faith. Modesty has been mentioned because through modesty faith is given life, through it the servant leaves

¹⁷ Al-Bukhāri [#9] and Muslim [#58].

all vile actions and through it ensue all good morals and manners. Allah knows best.

Therefore these branches mentioned in the ḥadīth gather together all the requirements of this religion, inward and outward.

This ḥadīth also explicitly tells us that faith increases and decreases in accordance to the potency of these branches. It is well-known that people are of greatly differing levels of faith, whoever thinks that faith does not increase and decrease has ended up opposing not only the texts but also physical experience.

The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned Islām and faith in the famous ḥadīth of Jibril wherein Jibril asked him about faith in the presence of his Companions to which he replied,

That you believe in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and the divine decree.¹⁸

He explained Islām to be the five pillars. This is because if faith is mentioned alongside something else [such as Islām], faith then takes the specific meaning of beliefs and Islam, or righteous actions, refers to the outward laws. However when faith is mentioned on its own, unrestrictedly, then it refers to both belief and actions.¹⁹

1.4.2 *The Ḥadīth of Anas* (ﷺ)

It is established in the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* from Anas (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

None of you [truly] believes until I am more beloved to him than his father, child, and the whole of mankind.²⁰

¹⁸ Muslim [#8] from the ḥadīth of Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما).

¹⁹ Ibn Rajab, *Jamī' al-'Ulūm wa l-Hikām* [1/59] discusses this principle in depth while commenting upon the famous ḥadīth of Jibril.

²⁰ Al-Bukhāri [#15] and Muslim [#70].

Al-Qurtubī, *al-Mufḥim* [1/225] said, 'This ḥadīth, despite its brevity, mentions all the different categories of love. These are: 1) the love emanating from respect and honour such as the love of ones >

If two loves are found conflicting with each other and precedence is given to ones love of the Messenger (ﷺ), such a person is truthful in his faith, otherwise he has deficient faith. Allāh, the Exalted says,

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا
فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿١٥﴾

No, by your Lord, they are not believers until they make you their judge in the disputes that break out between them, and then find no resistance within themselves to what you decide and submit themselves completely. [Surah *al-Nisā'* (4); 65]

Allāh has taken an oath that they cannot be believers until they take the Messenger as judge and there remain no resistance or dislike to his ruling and they completely submit to it. This includes his ruling with regards the foundations and branches of this religion.

It is also recorded in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs from Anas (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

None of you [truly] believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.²¹

father, scholars and other noble people. 2) The love emanating from mercy and compassion such as the love for ones child. 3) The love emanating from those who share the same general characteristics and one appreciates such as the rest of mankind.

The love of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) must be greater than, and take precedence over, all of these types of love. This is because Allāh has granted him a perfection not granted to anyone else of the same species. He has honoured him over the rest of mankind due to the excellent qualities He bestowed him, both inwardly and outwardly, his noble manners, qualities and virtues.'

²¹ Al-Bukhāri [#13] and Muslim [#45].

Al-Kirmāni said, 'Also from faith is to hate for his brother what he hates for himself of the evil. This has not been mentioned in this >

This ḥadīth dictates that one implement the rights of his brother Muslim, both the specific and general, for this is from faith. Whoever does not do this, not loving for his brother what he loves for himself, has neglected an obligatory part of faith. Indeed his faith is defective and the degree of this defectiveness varies in accordance to the obligatory rights that he has neglected.

1.4.3 *The Ḥadīth of al-'Abbās (ﷺ)*

Muslim records the ḥadīth of al-'Abbās bin 'Abdul Muṭṭalib (ﷺ) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

The one who is pleased with Allāh as his Lord, Islām as his religion, and Muḥammad as his Prophet will have tasted the sweetness of faith.²²

Being pleased, and content with, this necessitates having delight in it and displaying joy at Allāh's Lordship over him and with His excellent regulation and organisation of his affairs. Likewise being pleased, and content with, Islām as ones religion dictates having

ḥadīth because the love of something necessarily implies the hatred of its opposite, hence there was no need to explicitly mention it. Allāh knows best.' Quoted by Ibn Ḥajr, *Fathu-l-Bāri* [1/58].

Al-Nasā'i and others mention an additional wording to this ḥadīth having a *ṣaḥīḥ isnād*, 'from the good.' This is an important addition for it serves to precisely define the meaning of the ḥadīth for the word 'good' encompasses all actions of obedience, all permissible affairs and excludes all the prohibited matters. Refer to al-Albāni, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* [1/155].

²² Muslim [#56]. The wording 'Prophet' has been mentioned by al-Tirmidhi [#2623], Muslim has the word, 'Messenger.'

Al-Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ said, 'Meaning that his faith will become correct, his soul will find peace and tranquility and it will permeate his inward. This is because his pleasure is a proof of firm cognisance, ... This is because when one is pleased, and content with something, it becomes easy for him. Therefore, when faith enters the heart of the believer, obeying Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) becomes easy for him and he relishes it.' Quoted in al-Ṭībi, *Sharḥ al-Mishkāt* [1/122].

delight in it and praising Allāh for this immeasurable favour whereby He has chosen him, conferred upon him this religion, and granted him the divine accord to live by it. Being pleased, and content with, Muḥammad (ﷺ) as Prophet because he is the most perfect of creation, actualising the peak of every lofty quality and trait and his nation is the best of nations, having the highest ranking in this life and the Hereafter. Being pleased with the Prophethood of the Messenger (ﷺ), his message and his followers is from the greatest factors that lead to the fruition of faith and causing one to taste its sweetness.

Allāh, the Exalted says,

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 ﴿١٦٤﴾

Allāh showed great kindness to the believers when He sent a Messenger to them from among themselves to recite His Signs to them, purify them and teach them the Book and Wisdom, even though before that they were clearly misguided.

[Sūrah *Āl- Imrān* (3); 164]

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ
عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering is distressing to him; he is deeply concerned for you; he is gentle and merciful to the believers.

[Sūrah *al-Tawbah* (9); 128]

How can the believer not be pleased with this noble, gentle, merciful Messenger? How can he not love him and follow him?

Loving him is a sign of ones love for Allāh, and through following him does one actualise this love and faith,

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ
فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

Say: If you love Allāh, follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. [Sūrah *Āl-'Imrān* (3); 31]

1.4.4 The *Ḥadīth* of Sufyān (ﷺ)

Muslim records the ḥadīth of Sufyān bin 'Abdullāh al-Thaqafī who said,

'I said to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ): tell me something about Islām such that I would have no need to ask anyone else after you.' He said, "Say: I believe in Allāh then remain firm and steadfast upon this."²³

In this comprehensive advice the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) clarified that when the servant acknowledges faith both inwardly and outwardly, then remains steadfast on it in terms of speech and

²³ Muslim [#62].

Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī said in commentary to "remain steadfast as you have been commanded" [Sūrah *Hūd* (11): 112], "This steadfastness that one has been commanded to is difficult for it includes being steadfast upon ones beliefs, actions and manners. In beliefs it means to avoid the extremes of likening Allāh to His creation and denying Him His Names and Attributes. In actions it means to beware of them changing [for the worse]. In manners it means to avoid the two extremes of neglect and excess.' Quoted in al-Ṭibī, *Sharḥ al-Mishkāt* [1/135].

Al-Munāwī, *Fayd al-Qadīr* [4/685] said, 'These two statements are from the jewels of his (ﷺ) concise and comprehensive sayings because they succinctly bring together all the meanings of faith and Islām. This is because Islām is *tawḥīd*, which is mentioned in the first sentence, and obedience in all of its various forms, which is mentioned in the second sentence. *Istiḳāmah*, remaining firm and steadfast, is to implement all that is ordered and avoid all that is forbidden.'

action - that which he does and that which he abandons - his affair is completed and perfected and he has become firm in his traversing the Straight Path. It is hoped that such a person be included amongst those about whom Allāh has said,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ
 الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ
 الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
 الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُى أَنْفُسُكُمْ
 وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ نَزَّلْنَا مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

The angels descend on those who say, 'Our Lord is Allāh' and then remain firm and steadfast. 'Do not fear and do not grieve but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised. We are your protectors in the life of this world and the Hereafter. You will have there all that you could wish for and you will have everything you demand. Hospitality from One who is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' [Sūrah *Fussilat* (41); 30-32]

1.4.5 The Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه)

The Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* record the ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) concerning the delegation of 'Abd Qays wherein they said to the Prophet (ﷺ),

'Give us a comprehensive order which we can inform those we have left behind and through which we may enter Paradise.' They also asked him about drinks and he commanded them to four and prohibited them from four. He ordered them to faith in Allāh Alone and asked them, "Do you know what it means to have faith in Allāh Alone?" They replied, 'Allāh and His Messenger know best.'

He said, "The testification that none has the right to be worshipped save Allāh and that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger; to establish the prayer; to give in *zakaāt*; to fast *Ramaḍān*, and to give one-fifth of the war-booty."

He prohibited them from four: *al-ḥantam*, *al-dubbā'*, *al-naqir* and *al-muzaffat*. Then he said, "Preserve these and inform those who you have left behind of them."²⁴

This ḥadīth is also explicit that the outward legislated actions are part of faith such as the prayer, *ṣalāh*, fasting and giving one-fifth of the war booty. All of this serves to explain faith to us in a way that leaves no doubt, clarifying that just as faith includes articles of belief, it also includes bodily actions.

Everything that serves to draw one closer to Allāh of speech, action and belief is part and parcel of faith.

1.4.6 The Ḥadīth of Abū Umāmah (ﷺ)

Abū Dāwūd records the ḥadīth of Abū Umāmah (ﷺ) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

Whoever loves for the sake of Allāh, hates for the sake of Allāh, gives for the sake of Allāh, and prevents for the sake of Allāh, has perfected faith.²⁵

The place for love and hate is the heart, the place for giving and preventing is the limbs. The single condition that encompasses all of these is sincerity which is the spirit and essence of faith.

²⁴ Al-Bukhārī [#54] and Muslim [#24]. The things he (ﷺ) prohibited them from were vessels in which alcohol was stored.

²⁵ Reported by Abū Dāwūd [#4681] and others.

It is *ṣaḥīḥ* due to witnesses, refer to al-Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* [#380].

Refer to the authors' comments to this ḥadīth in *Fatāwā al-Sa'diyyah* [pp. 23-24].

Al-Munāwī, *Fayd al-Qadīr* [6/38] said, 'Some said that the reason that these matters perfect faith is that the religion revolves around four principles – two which are internal and two which are external. The internal are love and hate and the external are performing and abstaining. Hence whoever's intention becomes steadfast and firm such that he loves, hates, performs and abstains for the sake of Allāh, has perfected the different stations of faith.'

To love for the sake of Allāh means to love Allāh; to love what He loves of things such as actions, times, periods and circumstances; and to love those He loves such as the Prophets and their followers.

To hate for the sake of Allāh means to hate everything that Allāh hates of things such as disbelief, sin and transgression, it also means to hate those who commit these or call to these.

Giving includes the servant performing all that he has been enjoined to as mentioned in His saying,

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ ۝۵ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۝۶ فَسَنبِئْهُهُم بِرِيسْرَىٰ ۝۷

As for him who gives and has *taqwā* and confirms the Good, We will pave his way to ease. [Sūrah *al-Layl* (92); 5-7]

This verse refers to the servant giving everything he has been ordered with, not just property and wealth for this is but a portion of ‘giving’. The same applies to its opposite, preventing.

Through these four matters does the servant perfect his faith and religion.

1.4.7 The Ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ)

Al-Tirmidhī and al-Nasā’ī record the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

The believer is the one to whom the people would entrust their blood and property.²⁶

This ḥadīth proves that correct faith leads a person to be careful of those things entrusted to him and prevents him from treachery, to the point that the people feel safe around him and would entrust him with the most precious things they own – their blood and property.

²⁶ Al-Tirmidhī [#2627], al-Nasā’ī [8/104] and others.

Al-Būṣayrī, *al-Zawā’id* said, ‘Its *isnad* is *ṣaḥīḥ*.’ The ḥadīth is *ṣaḥīḥ* as per al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* [#6710].

The affair is as al-Hasan said, 'Faith does not come about by mere wishful thinking and idle desire, rather it is something that takes firm root in the heart and is testified to by actions.'²⁷

Therefore outward and inward actions confirm, and testify to the truth of, faith and actualise it. Allāh, the Exalted says,

مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ

Whoever has faith in Allāh, He will guide his heart.

[Sūrah *al-Taghābun* (64); 11]

So the servant, when he is afflicted with a calamity and believes that it is from Allāh, that Allāh is the All-Wise and Most Merciful, that He knows best what is good for His servant, Allāh will guide His heart with the specific guidance that would lead to his being content and patient, accepting [the decree] and being in a state of peace and tranquility.

Allāh, the Exalted says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ

Those who believe and do righteous actions, their Lord will guide them by their faith. [Sūrah *Yūnus* (10); 9]

The thing that they will be guided to has been left unmentioned so as to generalise and include guidance to all good things and leaving all evil things. This is all by virtue of their faith. Therefore actions are part and parcel of faith when they are looked at from a particular perspective, and also from the necessary products and fruits of faith when looked at from another perspective. Allāh is the One who grants the divine accord.

²⁷ Reported by Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Iqtiḍā' al-'Ilm al-'Amal* [#56] and it is *ḥasan*.

Allāh, the Exalted says,

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ
لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

Allāh would never let your faith go to waste, Allāh is All-Kind,
Most Merciful to mankind. [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 143]

Many of the exegetes explained faith here to mean the prayer that they used to offer when the qiblah was towards Bayt al-Maqdis before its abrogation [to the Ka'bah]. Some of the Muslims died before the change of the *qiblah*, because of this many Muslim were confused as to what would happen to them. As a result Allāh revealed this verse.²⁸

This is because their prayer towards Bayt al-Maqdis at that time was their adherence to obeying Allāh and His Messenger, and that is faith.

This verse contains the great tidings that Allāh would never let the faith of the believers go to waste, regardless of whether that faith be modest or great. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* there is the ḥadīth,

Allāh would remove from the Fire all those who had the least
mustard seeds weight of faith.²⁹

This verse also gives glad tidings to one who performed an action desiring thereby to act in obedience to Allāh and His Messenger, having made an incorrect interpretation or mistake or that action being abrogated. This is because he only performed that action out of his faith in Allāh coupled with the desire to obey Him, however he made a mistake in his interpretation [of texts] or he simply made a mistake, his mistake is forgiven him and he gets

²⁸ Refer to al-Bukhārī [*Kitāb al-Īmān, Bāb al-Ṣalāh mina-l-Īmān*] and *Fath al-Bārī* [1/95-98].

²⁹ Al-Bukhārī [#7439] and Muslim [#302] from the lengthy ḥadīth of Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه)

the reward of his intention, his desiring Allāh and His obedience. Allāh would not let his faith go to waste. This is why Allāh said about the believers that they said,

رَبَّنَا لَا تَأْخُذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا

Our Lord! Do not take us to account if we forget or err.
[Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 286]

and He said upon the tongue of His Prophet (ﷺ),

I have done so.³⁰

In the authentic ḥadith it is mentioned,

When the ruler strives to pass a ruling, if he is correct he gets two rewards, but if he is incorrect he gets one reward and his error is forgiven him.³¹

Similarly when one intends to do a righteous action, being desirous of performing it, but something prevents him from doing it such as sickness, or travel or incapability or the likes, what he intended will be recorded for him. Muslim records the ḥadith of Abū Mūsā (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Whoever becomes ill, or undertakes a journey; the actions he would have normally performed were he healthy and resident are recorded for him.³²

Included in the meaning of this ḥadith is old age preventing one from doing those actions he would have normally done.

1.5 Faith Increases and Decreases

Now that the meaning of faith has been established through texts of the Book and Sunnah, and it is known that faith is a comprehensive

³⁰ Muslim [#200] from the ḥadith of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه).

³¹ Al-Bukhārī [#7352] and Muslim [#1716] from the ḥadith of 'Amr bin al-ʿĀṣ (رضي الله عنه) and Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) without the words 'his error is forgiven him.'

³² The ḥadith is not recorded by Muslim, rather by al-Bukhārī [#2996].

term referring to the laws of Islām, the foundational beliefs, and the requirements of beneficence and its offshoots, indeed it is a term referring to the whole of the religion, its is also understood that it increases and decreases, strengthens and weakens.

This is an issue that has no doubt surrounding it, not from the perspective of the legal texts, or from a logical standpoint, or from experience.

The texts of the Book and Sunnah are explicit that it increases and decreases. Allāh says,

لِيَزِدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ

...thereby increasing their faith with more faith.

[Sūrah *al-Fath* (48); 4]

وَيَزِدَادُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا

...and those who have faith may increase in their faith.

[Sūrah *al-Muddaththir* (74); 31]

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدِ جَمَعُوا كَيْدًا بِمَا كَفَرُوا فَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ
فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿٧٧﴾

...those to whom the people said, ‘The people have gathered against you, so fear them.’ But that merely increased their faith and they said, ‘Allāh is enough for us and the Best of Guardians.’ [Sūrah *Āl-‘Imrān* (3); 173]

وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً فَعِنْتُهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ أَيْتُكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ
إِيمَانًا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

Each time a chapter is revealed there are some among them who say, ‘Which of you has this increased in faith?’ As for those who have faith, it increases them in faith and they rejoice at it. [Sūrah *al-Tawbah* (9); 124]

and other such verses.

Similarly the logical standpoint and experience shows us this. With regards the sciences of faith and its minutiae, its morals and manners, and its actions – inward and outward, people differ greatly in terms of the strength and plentitude of this as well as the existence of the resultant effects etc.

The believers who have complete faith possess such knowledge of faith and its minutiae, and do such actions as cannot be compared to the knowledge and actions of the generality of Muslims. Many Muslims are beset with such doubts and base desires as would weaken their faith, indeed you could find believers varying greatly just in their knowledge, a person could be well grounded in knowledge having no doubts and another could have weak knowledge beset with doubts and suspicions that only serve to further weaken his faith.

The morals and manners of faith are also seen to vary greatly from person to person, characteristics such as forbearance, patience and good manners. The same can be seen in the outward actions of worship such as prayer, one person could offer a prayer, fulfilling all of its inner and outer requirements, worshipping Allāh as if he saw Him - for even if he cannot see Him, He sees him - whereas another could offer a prayer without even thinking about it.

This is why the believers are of three general categories:

- i. The Forerunners, those brought near.
- ii. Those who take a middle path.
- iii. Those who wrong themselves.

The people falling in each of these categories in turn differ greatly amongst themselves in terms of faith.

The believing servant finds in himself times and occasions in which his actions are plentiful and potent and other times he finds the opposite. All of this is based upon the increase and decrease of faith and its strength and weakness. The best of this nation used to carefully monitor their faith and exert themselves in trying to

increase and strengthen it along with repressing all that would oppose and decrease it. They would ask Allāh to establish their faith and increase them in it, its sciences, actions and conditions.³³

We ask Allāh that he increase us in knowledge, certainty, serenity with Him and His remembrance, and in truthful faith.

The best of this creation would also compete with each other in trying to attain the station of *'ayn al-yaqīn* after having *'ilm al-yaqīn* and then trying to attain the station of *ḥaqq al-yaqīn*.³⁴ Allāh informs us about Ibrāhīm (*'alayhi al-salām*),

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أُولَٰئِكَ
تُؤْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ
الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا
ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

When Ibrāhīm said, 'My Lord show me how You bring the dead to life.' He asked, 'Do you not then believe?' He replied, 'Indeed I do! But so that my heart may be at peace.' He said, 'Take four birds and train them to yourself. Then put a part of them on each mountain and call to them; they will come rushing to you. Know that Allāh is Almighty, All-Wise. [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 260]

³³ Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Īmān* [#107] and Abul-Qāsim bin Sallām, *al-Īmān* [#20] report via an *isnād* meeting the conditions of al-Bukhārī and Muslim from al-Aswad bin Hilāl, 'Mu'adh used to say to a man from amongst his companions, "Sit with us and let us devote ourselves to faith for an hour" and they would sit performing the *dhiḥr* of Allāh and praising Him.'

Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Īmān* [#104] reports via a *ḥasan isnād* from 'Alqamah that he used to say to his companions, 'Walk with us and let us increase in faith.'

³⁴ *'Ilm al-yaqīn*: refers to that knowledge one acquires through listening, making analogy and researching. *'Ayn al-yaqīn* refers to that knowledge one acquires through seeing and witnessing something. *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* refers to that knowledge that comes about through actual experience.

CHAPTER TWO

The Matters That Would Develop Faith

This section is of great benefit and is much needed, indeed necessity calls for having knowledge of this and concerning oneself with it. Through faith does the servant achieve perfection, and through it does he raise in rank in this life and the Hereafter. It is the cause and route to attaining all temporal and everlasting good. However this can never be achieved without first knowing those matters that would serve to develop faith along with the routes to actualising them. Allāh, the Exalted, has placed a cause to, and a route leading to the acquirement of, all objectives. Faith is the greatest and the most important of objectives and He has appointed great methods that would strengthen it and promote it just as there are a number of causes that would weaken it. Those things that would strengthen it are of two categories, general and specific.

As for the general then it consists of:

- i. Contemplation of the signs of Allāh recited in the Book and the Sunnah
- ii. Contemplating upon the signs of Allāh in His creation
- iii. Desiring to learn the truth, the fulfillment of which is the purpose of ones creation
- iv. Acting upon this truth.

As for the specific then the greatest of them is:

2.1 Knowledge of the Beautiful and Perfect Names of Allāh

Those that occur in the Book and the Sunnah, having an ardent desire to understand their meanings and to worship Allāh through them. It is established in the Two *Sahīhs* that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Allāh has ninety-nine Names, one hundred less one, whoever memorises and understands them will enter Paradise.

meaning by this: whoever memorises them, understands them, believes in them and worships Allāh by means of them, shall enter Paradise. None shall enter Paradise save the believers, hence we come to know that this principle is the greatest well-spring allowing one to attain faith, to strengthen it and to cause it to persevere.

Knowledge of the Beautiful and Perfect Names is the foundation of faith and faith in turn depends upon it. Through knowing them, one also actualises the three categories of *Tawhīd*,

1. *Tawhīd al-Rubūbiyyah*
2. *Tawhīd al-Ilāhiyyah*
3. *Tawhīd al-Asmā' wa l-Ṣifāt*

These categories constitute the essence of faith, its foundations and goal. Therefore each time the servants' knowledge of the Names of Allāh and His Attributes increases, so too does his faith and his certainty becomes firmer. Hence it is desired for one to expend his efforts in acquiring knowledge of these Names and Attributes.

Know that this knowledge must be free from the sickness of *ta' tīl*¹ and *tamthil*² which has afflicted many of the People of Innovation, those whose path opposes the way of the Messenger (ﷺ). Instead

¹ Divesting Allāh of his Names and Attributes.

² Likening Allāh to His creation.

this knowledge should be taken from the Book and the Sunnah and that which has been reported from the Companions and all those who followed them in good. If one does this, he has acquired beneficial knowledge which would always cause one to increase in faith, to strengthen in certainty and attain peace and tranquility in all of his affairs.

2.2 Contemplating upon the Qur'ān

The one who contemplates upon it will always benefit from its sciences and minutiae such as would serve to increase his faith. Allāh says,

إِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

When His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith and they put their trust in their Lord. [Sūrah *al-Anfāl* (8); 2]

Similarly, whoever considers its content and composition, will come to know that each part is in harmony with the other, it contains no contradiction or inconsistency, and he will come to realise with certainty that it is truly revealed by the All-Wise, the Praiseworthy. Falsehood cannot approach it from any direction and had it been from other than Allāh, one would have found in it much discrepancy and contradiction.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا
فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾

Will they not ponder the Qur'ān? If it had been from other than Allāh, they would have found many inconsistencies in it. [Sūrah *al-Nisā'* (4); 82]³

³ The author, *Taysir al-Karīm al-Raḥmān*, said in commentary to this verse, 'Allāh the Exalted ordered us to ponder over the Qur'ān, meaning to carefully consider its meanings, to devote ones mind to this, to contemplate the beginning and end of its discourses and their >

This principle is from the greatest matters that strengthen ones faith. Just by mere recitation of the verses of Allāh does the believer attain great benefit with respect to his faith, this being complemented by his understanding the truth of its narrative and its wise and just legislation. How then would one benefit if he were to ponder over it carefully and come to understand the intent, objective and details of the discourse? This is why the only course left to the true and complete believer is to say,

ensuing implications. Through this does the door to knowledge and cognisance opens and by virtue of it is all good attained, faith increased and its tree firmly established. The servant comes to know his Lord, His perfect Attributes and all that is negated from him of deficiency; he comes to know the path that leads to Him, the characteristics of those who traverse this path and what lies in store for them when they meet Him; he comes to know the enemy, the true enemy, the path that leads to punishment and the characteristics of those who traverse this path and what lies in store for them.

The more the servant ponders upon the Qur’ān, the more his knowledge, action and faith increase. This is why Allāh has ordered and encouraged this and informed us that this was the purpose of its revelation.

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“It is a Book We have revealed to you, full of blessings, so let people of intelligence ponder its Signs and take heed.”

[Sūrah *Ṣād* (38); 29],

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَنِ قُلُوبِ أَقْفَالِهَا

“Will they not then ponder the Qu’rān or are there locks upon their hearts?” [Sūrah *Muḥammad* (47); 24].

From the benefits of pondering over the Qur’ān is that it leads the servant to attaining the station of certainty and sure knowledge. He comes to realise that it is truly the words of Allāh because he sees that each part complements and affirms the other. You will see points of wisdom, stories and narratives repeatedly mentioned in a number of places, all of them in complete harmony with each other. Hence one knows with surety the perfection of the Qur’ān and that is has come from One Whose knowledge encompasses all things.’

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ
ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا

Our Lord! We heard a caller calling us to faith: 'Have faith in your Lord!' and we had faith. [Sūrah *Āl-'Imrān* (3); 193]

2.3 Knowledge of the *Aḥādith* of the Prophet (ﷺ)

All of the *aḥādith* of the Messenger (ﷺ) serve to strengthen ones faith. As the servant increases in his knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah, so too does his faith and certainty, so much so that he could attain the level of *'ilm al-yaqīn*.

Allāh has described those firmly grounded in knowledge to be those who have attained complete, well-grounded knowledge such as would repress all doubts and necessitate certainty. This is why such people are the leaders of the believers, Allāh cited them as witnesses and depended upon them as evidence against those plagued with doubt and the obstinate rebels.

هُوَ

الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ
وَأُخَرٌ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ
مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ

إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾

It is He who sent down the Book to you from Him: verses containing clear judgments – they are the core of the Book – and others which are open to interpretation. Those with deviation in their hearts follow what is open to interpretation in it, desiring conflict, seeking its inner meaning. No one knows its inner meaning but Allāh and those firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We have faith in it. All of it is from our Lord.' But only people of intelligence pay heed. [Sūrah *Āl-'Imrān* (3); 7]

So those firmly grounded in knowledge are those who have no lingering doubts and they understand the verses open to interpretation in the light of those that are explicit in meaning and say, ‘We believe in all of it for all of it is from Allāh. Everything that comes from Him is the truth.’

لَٰكِن
الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا
أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ

But those of them who are firmly rooted in knowledge, and the believers, have faith in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you. [Sūrah *al-Nisā'* (4); 162]

شَهِدَ
اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

Allāh bears witness that there is none worthy of worship save Him, as do the angels and the people of knowledge, upholding justice. There is none worthy of worship save Him, the Almighty, the All-Wise. [Sūrah *Āl-'Imrān* (3); 18]

Because of their complete knowledge and correct faith, Allāh cited them as witnesses in this life and the Hereafter,

قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ
لَقَدْ لَبِثْنَا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ
وَلَا كُنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

Those who have been given knowledge and faith will say, ‘You tarried in accordance with Allāh’s decree until the Day of Rising. This is the Day of Rising, but you did not know it.’ [Sūrah *al-Rūm* (30); 56]

Allāh has informed us in many verses that the Qur'an is a sign for the believers and those possessing certainty. This is because through reciting it and pondering it, they attain such knowledge, faith and certainty as Allāh wills, and then continuously increase in this knowledge, faith, and certainty. Pondering the Qur'an is one of the greatest routes that lead to the increase and strengthening of faith,

كُنْتُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكًا لِيَذَّبَ وَأُتَىٰ آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو

الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾

It is a Book We have revealed to you, full of blessings, so let people of intelligence ponder its Signs and take heed.

[Sūrah Sād (38); 29]

Extracting the blessings of the Qur'an, the most important of which is the attainment of faith, is done through pondering its verses and signs. Pondering stops the obstinate denier in his tracks and prevents the transgressor committing his transgression. Allāh, the Exalted says,

أَفَلَمْ يَذَّبُوا الْقَوْلَ

Do they not ponder these words?

[Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23); 68]

meaning that if these people, [talked about in the context of these verses], had truly pondered over the Qur'an as it deserves to be pondered, it would have prevented them from disbelieving and rejecting; necessitated faith for them and following of the one who came with it (ﷺ).

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ

No, the fact is that they have denied something which their knowledge does not embrace. [Sūrah Yūnus (10); 39]

meaning that had their knowledge embraced the Qur'an, this would have prevented them from rejecting and necessitated their acceptance of faith.

2.4 Knowledge of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Knowing his sublime morals and manners and perfect characteristics. Whoever comes to really know him would never doubt his truthfulness and veracity and would willingly believe in all that he came with: the Book and the Sunnah - the religion of truth,

أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ

Or is it that they do not recognise their Messenger and therefore do not acknowledge him?

[Sūrah *al-Mu'minun* (23); 69]

meaning that through knowing him (ﷺ), the servant would quickly embrace faith if he did not previously have it, or increase in faith if he had previously embraced it.

Allāh, the Exalted says,

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعِظُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَنْ
تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مِثْلَ نَفْسِكُمْ وَأَمَّا بِيضَاحِكُمْ
مِنْ جَنَّةٍ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْوَاظِعُ عَلَيْكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٤٦﴾

Say: 'I exhort you to do one thing alone, to stand before Allāh in pairs and on your own and then reflect. Your companion is not possessed. He is only a warner come to you ahead of a terrible punishment.' [Sūrah *Saba'* (34); 46]

Allāh, the Exalted, has taken an oath by the perfection of this Messenger, his exalted manners, and that he is the most perfect of creation,

ت وَالْقَالِمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ﴿١﴾ مَا أَنْتَ بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢﴾
وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

Nūn. By the Pen and what they write down! By the blessing of your Lord, you are not mad! You will have a wage which

never fails. Indeed you are upon an exalted standard of character. [Sūrah *al-Qalam* (68); 1-4]⁴

He (ﷺ) is the greatest of things that engenders faith through his praiseworthy attributes, sublime qualities, truthful and beneficial words, and rightly guided and guiding actions. He is the greatest *imām* and the best of examples,

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allāh.

[Sūrah *al-Aḥzāb* (33); 21]

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

Whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it and whatever He forbids you, forgo. [Sūrah *al-Hashr* (59); 7]

Allāh has mentioned those firmly endowed with knowledge, those who are the elite of creation, as saying, ‘Our Lord! We heard a caller’ meaning this Messenger, ‘calling us to faith’ through his statements, morals, manners, actions, religion, and all of his affairs. ‘and we had faith’ a faith that is not open to any doubt.

Because faith is one of the greatest matters through which one draws close to Allāh, and from the greatest means of approach to Allāh, they sought the means of approach to Him through their

⁴ The author, *Taysir al-Karīm al-Raḥmān*, said in commentary to this verse, ‘His exalted standard of character can be summarised by the statement of ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), “His character was the Qur’ān.” Hence Allāh, Exalted is He, says about him, “Make allowances for people, command what is right and turn away from the ignorant” [Sūrah *al-A’ rāf* (7); 199], “It is a mercy from Allāh that you were gentle with them” [Sūrah *Āl- Imrān* (3); 159], “A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering is distressing to him; he is deeply concerned for you; he is gentle and merciful to the believers” [Sūrah *al-Tawbah* (9); 128]. There are other such verses that show us his great morals and manners, indeed every single verse that encourages us to one or another good manner, he (ﷺ) fulfilled it in the best and most perfect of ways – every single one of them found its pinnacle in him.’

faith that He forgive their sins and gift them with the most lofty objectives,

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ
 ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا
 سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾

Our Lord! We heard a caller calling us to faith: 'Have faith in your Lord!' and we had faith. Our Lord forgive us our wrong actions, erase our bad actions from us and take us back to You with those who are pious. [Sūrah *Al-Imrān* (3); 193]

This is why a just person, who truly desires to follow the truth, merely by hearing his words will quicken towards accepting faith in him (ﷺ) and then not have any doubt. Indeed many of them, just by seeing his face would know that he was not a liar. It was asked of some of them, 'Why have you believed in Muḥammad?' They replied, 'He never ordered anything to which the intellect would say, "If only he had prohibited it" and he never prohibited anything to which the intellect said, "If only he had ordered it." ' So this intelligent person depended upon the excellence of his laws and his agreeing to the sound intellect in his acceptance of faith.

It was upon a similar premise that the leader of Rome, Heraclius, depended when he heard the description of the Messenger (ﷺ) and what he ordered and prohibited, to come to the conclusion that he (ﷺ) was the greatest of Messengers and believed in him completely. However leadership and power prevented him from following him (ﷺ).⁵ Such factors prevent many from accepting faith.

As for those of insight and sound intellects, they see such preventative factors disintegrate in the face of the truth, such truth as would beget felicity in this life and the Hereafter.

⁵ Reported by al-Bukhārī [#7] and Muslim [#1773].

It is because of this great cause that those who devote themselves to the Qur'ān and the authentic *aḥādith* predominantly have greater faith and better actions than those who do not.

2.5 Pondering upon the Creation

Pondering upon the creation of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, upon the amazing variety of creation, and the creation of man himself is a potent invigorator of faith. This is because the greatness of this creation points to the greatness of the Creator and His Omnipotence, its conformity and harmony points to the vastness of Allāh's Knowledge and His All-Encompassing Wisdom, its innumerable blessings and plentiful bounties point to the expanse of Allāh's Mercy, His Generosity and Kindness. All of these factors lead one to exalt its Creator, give thanks to Him, resort to His remembrance and make the religion sincerely for Him Alone. This is the essence and very spirit of faith.

Pondering over the impoverishment and need of the whole creation of its Lord for everything, the fact that it cannot survive without Him for even the blink of an eye, especially that which you witness in yourself, leads the servant to humbly submit before Him, to frequent supplication of Him in order to promote all that would benefit him with regards this world and the Hereafter and repress all that would harm him. It leads one to have complete reliance upon, and absolute trust in his Lord along with total belief in His promise and an ardent desire for His beneficence.

Through all these matters does one actualise faith and strengthen his worship for indeed supplication is the essence and spirit of worship.⁶

⁶ Allāh says, "In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and day, and the ships which sail the seas to people's benefit, and the water which Allāh sends down from the sky – by which He brings the earth to life when it was dead and scatters >

2.6 Pondering over the many favours of Allāh

Not for a blink of an eye is any object of creation free of His favours and pondering over them leads one to have faith. This is why Allāh called the Messenger and the believers to display thanks to Him,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

You who have faith! Eat of the good things We have provided for you and give thanks to Allāh if you worship Him Alone [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 172]⁷

Faith incites one to give thanks to Allāh and giving thanks to Allāh revitalises and increases faith, both matters go hand in hand.

2.7 Frequently making the *Dhikr* of Allāh

Making the *dhikr* of Allāh and supplication which is the essence of worship. The remembrance of Allāh implants the tree of faith in

about in it creatures of every kind – and the varying direction of the winds, and the clouds subservient between heavens and earth, there are Signs for people who use their intellect” [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 164], “Among His signs is that He created you from dust and here you are now, widespread human beings!” [Sūrah *al-Rūm* (30); 20]

⁷ The author, *Taysir al-Karim al-Rahmān*, said in commentary to this verse, “This verse proves that the one who does not give thanks to Allāh has not worshipped Him Alone just as it proves that the one who does thank him has worshipped Him and enacted what he has ordered. This verse also proves that eating of the good things is a means towards performing righteous actions and having them accepted. The command to give thanks comes after mention of His blessings because gratitude preserves and safeguards the blessings that are already present and promotes the fruition of blessings that are not yet existent. Similarly showing ingratitude prevents new blessings appearing and removes the existing blessings.’

the heart of the servant, it nourishes it and causes it to grow. The more the servant makes the *dhiḳr* of Allāh, the stronger his faith becomes. Whoever loves Allāh would frequently make mention of Him, the love of Allāh is from faith, indeed it is its essence.⁸

2.8 Knowing the Excellent Qualities of the Religion.

The Islamic Religion in its entirety is good, noble and pure. Its beliefs are the most correct of beliefs and the most beneficial. The morals and manners that it promotes are the best and most beautiful. The actions it requires and regulations it legislates are the best of actions and laws and the most just.

Through pondering over these matters, Allāh adorns faith in the heart of the servant and makes it beloved to him,

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَبٌ إِلَيْكُمْ لِأَلَيْمَنِ وَزِينَةٌ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ

However Allāh has given you love of faith and made it pleasing to your hearts. [Sūrah *al-Hujurat* (49); 7]

Hence the faith in ones heart becomes the most beloved and most beautiful thing to him. Therefore the inner adorns itself with the principles of faith and its realities just as the outer adorns itself with the actions of faith.

In the famous supplication it is mentioned,

O Allāh! Adorn us with the adornment of faith and make us rightly guided and rightly guiding.⁹

⁸ Allāh says, "...remember Allāh much so that hopefully you will be successful" [Sūrah *al-Jumu'ah* (62); 10], "Only in the remembrance of Allāh can the heart find peace" [Sūrah *al-Ra'd* (13); 28], "...men and women who remember Allāh much, Allāh has prepared forgiveness for them and an immense reward" [Sūrah *al-Ahzāb* (33); 35].

⁹ An authentic ḥadith reported by Aḥmad [4/264], al-Nasā'ī [3/54], al-Ḥākim [1/524] who declared it *ṣaḥīḥ* with al-Dhahabi agreeing.

2.9 Exerting oneself to acquire the level of *Ihsān*

Acquiring *ihsān* in ones worship of Allāh and showing *ihsān* (benevolence) to the creation. One exerts himself in the worship of Allāh until it is as if he sees Him and witnesses Him. If he cannot reach this level, he brings to mind that Allāh Sees him and therefore strives in perfecting his worship. The servant should never stop striving to attain this exalted station so that his faith and certainty increases taking him to the level of having *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* which is the highest level of certainty. The servant then tastes the sweetness of his worship and sees the fruits of his dealings with creation. This is complete faith.

2.10 Beneficence to the creation in speech and action.

Beneficence also with regards to property, honour and other such things of benefit, all of these are part of faith and from those matters that serve to strengthen it. The reward is of the same category as the action, so just as the servant shows beneficence to the servants of Allāh, treating them well to the utmost of his ability, Allāh in turn bestows His beneficence on him.

From the greatest aspects of this beneficence is that He strengthens his faith, his desire to perform good, his efforts in drawing closer to his Lord and his sincerity. Through this does the servant actualise sincerity and sincere advice to Allāh and His servants, the whole religion is sincerity and sincere advice. Whoever has been granted the divine accord (*tawfiq*) to reach the level of *ihsān* in his worship, and *ihsān* in his dealings with the creation, he has realised this sincerity and sincere advice.

This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

None of you truly believe until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself.

Reported by al-Bukhāri and Muslim.

2.11 The Believers are indeed Successful

Allāh, the Exalted says,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ
فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَى
أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾
فَمَنْ ابْتَغَى وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
لِأَمْنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ
يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ
الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾

The believers are indeed successful. Those who are humble in their prayer, those who turn away from worthless talk, those who pay the *zakaah*, those who guard their private parts – except from their wives or those they own as slaves, in which case they are not blameworthy; but those who desire more than that are people who have gone beyond the limits – those who honour their trusts and contracts and those who safeguard their prayers. Such people are the inheritors who will inherit *al-Firdaws*, remaining in it timelessly, forever. [Sūrah *al-Mu'minūn* (23); 1-11]

Eight characteristics are mentioned herein and all of them inculcate faith and strengthen it just as they are also part and parcel of faith, the explanation of this has preceded.

The presence of heart in the prayer, the one praying striving to the utmost to have presence of mind with regards to what he says and does of recitation, remembrance, supplication, standing, sitting, bowing and prostrating, all of these are from the causes that lead to the increase of faith and its strengthening. We have previously

mentioned that Allāh, the Exalted has called the prayer faith with His words,

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ
لَرُءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

Allāh would never let your faith go to waste, Allāh is All-Kind, Most Merciful to mankind. [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 143]

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ

Establish the prayer; prayer precludes indecency and wrongdoing and the remembrance of Allāh is greater still. [Sūrah *al-Ankabūt* (29); 45]

Therefore prayer is the greatest barrier preventing all indecent and evil actions which in turn negate faith. Prayer also includes that *dhikr* of Allāh which in turn nourishes and strengthens faith,

وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ

and the remembrance of Allāh is greater still.

Giving in *zakāt* also strengthens and increases faith, the obligatory and optional. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Giving in *sadaqah* is a proof.¹⁰

meaning a proof of the faith of the one who gives it.

Turning away from worthless talk, meaning any speech containing no benefit and indeed any actions containing no benefit, leaving all evil in speech and action, without doubt is from those matters that are part of faith and serve to strengthen it. This is why the

¹⁰ A portion of a ḥadith reported by Muslim [#223].

Companions, when they sensed negligence in themselves, or they sensed a disarray in their faith, they would say, ‘Sit with us and let us devote ourselves to faith for an hour,’ and they would sit, performing the *dhiḳr* of Allāh and making mention of His worldly and religious favours, thereby renewing their faith.

Abstaining from indecent actions, especially fornication, is from amongst the greatest matters that strengthen and increase faith. This is because the true believer, because of his fear arising from the station he is to take before his Lord, prevents the soul from submitting to its base desires.

Honouring trusts and contracts and sticking fast to them is from the signs of faith. In the ḥadith there occurs,

There is no faith for the one who possesses no honesty and trustworthiness¹¹

hence if you wish to know the faith of a person and his religiosity, look to his condition, does he tend and look to his trusts and contracts – those related to property, words and the rights of others and his Lord. If you find him fulfilling these then he is a person of faith and religion. If not, his faith is defective in proportion to his negligence of the above matters.

The verses conclude by mentioning preserving the prayers, i.e. with respect to their regulations, their rights, and their times. This is because preserving these is like preserving the water that nourishes a resplendent garden, that garden being the garden of faith. The tree of faith is in need of being constantly tended to and nourished with water. This water is preserving the actions of obedience and worship that a servant does through the day, removing all that would inhibit and harm this of the weeds that grow around the tree – the weeds of sins in speech and action. When this happens, the tree sprouts its diverse fruits.

¹¹ Reported by Aḥmad [3/135, 154, 210, 251], Ibn Ḥibbān [#47] and Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Īmān* [#7] and it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

2.12 Calling to Allāh and His Religion

Enjoining one another to the truth and enjoining one another to patience, calling to the foundations of the religion and to the adherence of its laws through enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. Through this does the servant become complete and complete others.

Allāh, the Exalted, has taken an oath that the whole of mankind is in a state of loss, with the exception of those who bear four characteristics: faith and righteous actions which lead one to attain completion; enjoining one another to truth which is beneficial knowledge and righteous actions; and enjoining one another to having patience upon this truth – through these two does the servant complete others.

This is because the action of calling to Allāh and sincerity and sincere advice to His servants, in and of itself, is from the greatest matters that serve to strengthen faith.

The reward is of the same type as the actions, therefore when the caller strives to complete the servants through sincerely advising them and enjoining them to the truth, and is patient upon this, Allāh will recompense him with a corresponding reward and aid him with a light from Him: the spirit and strength of faith and the strength of absolute reliance. Through faith and absolute reliance upon Allāh does victory against the enemy devils and *jinn* come about. Allāh, the Exalted says,

لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطٰنٌ

عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

He has no authority over those who have faith and put their trust in their Lord. [Sūrah *al-Nahl* (16); 99]

Furthermore the caller has embarked upon aiding the truth and whoever does this, for sure Allāh would open for him the doors of knowledge and faith in accordance to the extent of his sincerity and veracity.

2.13 Disciplining the soul to combat all that would oppose faith

Such as the branches of disbelief, hypocrisy, sin, and transgression. This is because just as it is necessary to enact all routes that would lead to strengthening faith, it is also necessary to remove or repress all barriers that obstruct this goal. These barriers are repressed through feeling remorse for any sins committed and seeking forgiveness for them; preventing the limbs from performing sins; combating doubts with knowledge, and base desires with the desire for faith. This is because desires, the principle cause of which is the intent for, and love of, good can only truly come about by leaving all desires that oppose this. Hence the base desires of the soul are abandoned and its inclinations towards evil are combated.

When the servant prevents himself from falling prey to the trial of doubts and base desires, his faith becomes complete and his certainty strong. He then becomes the true depiction of the garden of faith,

جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ
فَعَانَتْ أَكْلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلُّ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾

...a garden on a hillside, when heavy rain falls on it, it doubles in produce; and if heavy rain does not fall, there is dew. Allah sees what you do. [Surah al-Baqarah (2); 265]

However if the opposite occurs, if the soul inciting evil conquers him and he falls prey to doubts or base desires, he becomes the living depiction of the following parable,

أَيُّودٌ أَحْدَكُمُ أَنْ تَكُونُوا
لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ

فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضَعَفَاءُ
فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

Would any of you like to have a garden of dates and grapes, with rivers flowing underneath and containing all kinds of fruits, then to be stricken with old age and have children who are weak, and then for a fierce whirlwind containing fire to come and strike it such that it goes up in flames? In this way Allāh makes His signs clear to you so that hopefully you will reflect. [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 266]

Therefore, in summary, the efforts of the believing servant, the servant to whom Allāh has granted His divine accord, expends his efforts towards two things,

1. Actualising the foundations and branches of faith in terms of knowledge, action, and condition.
2. Repressing all that would negate this or diminish it of trials – both the inner and outer – curing any violation of this second point or any omission of the first point through sincere repentance and trying to rectify the matter before it comes to its conclusion.

Allāh, The Exalted says,

إِن
الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا
فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠١﴾

As for those who have *taqwā*, when they are troubled by visitors from Satan, they remember and immediately see clearly. [Sūrah *al-A'raf* (7); 201]

CHAPTER THREE

The Benefits and Fruits of Faith

Many indeed are the fruits and benefits of correct faith, both temporal and everlasting, in body, heart and spirit, in this life and the next. Plentiful indeed are the ripe, mature fruits of this tree of faith. Its delectable harvest, perpetual food and enduring good contain matters that cannot be enumerated and benefits that cannot be restricted.

By way of summary, all goodness in this life and the next, and the repression of all evil ensue as the fruits of this tree. This is because when this tree is implanted firmly, its roots become strong, its branches distend and blossom and its fruits ripen, it brings benefit both to its owner and those around it.

From the greatest of these benefits is:

3.1 The *Wilāyah* of Allāh

The greatest of all matters that is to be competed for is this and the most noble of all matters to be acquired by those granted the divine accord is this. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

الْآيَاتِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

Yes indeed, the friends of Allāh will feel no fear and will know no sorrow: those who have faith and show *taqwā*. [Sūrah *Yūnus* (10); 62-63]

Therefore every pious, God-fearing believer is a *wali* (friend and protector) of Allāh, being gifted with the specific, special *wilāyah*. Allāh says about such people,

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

Allāh is the friend and protector of those who have faith, He brings them out of the darkness into the light.

[Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 257]

i.e. he leads them out of the darkness of disbelief into the light of faith, from the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge, from the darkness of sin into the light of obedience, from the darkness of negligence into the light of alert wakefulness; from the darkness of all evil to that which would remove it of the light of good.

However they only deserve this precious gift by virtue of their correct faith and their actualising it through *taqwā* for *taqwā* is from the completion of faith as has been previously discussed.

3.2 The Pleasure of Allāh

Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ

أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضُهُمْ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ

وَرَسُولَهُ أَوَّلَ لَيْلَةٍ نَّبِيَّكَ سَبِّحُوا لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا

الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكَنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ

وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٧٧﴾

The believing men and women are friends and protectors of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, and establish the prayer and pay the *zakāt*, and obey Allāh and His Messenger. They are the people on whom Allāh will have mercy. Allāh is Almighty, All-Wise. Allāh has promised the believing men and women Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever, and fine dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. Allāh's good pleasure is even greater! That is the great victory.
[Sūrah *al-Tawbah* (9); 71-72]

Hence they secure the pleasure of their Lord and His mercy and victory through the acquirement of these fine dwellings by virtue of their faith. This faith of theirs by which they perfected themselves and others around them by obeying Allāh, His Messenger and enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

3.3 Security from the Fire

Faith, even if it be little, prevents one from eternity in the Fire. Whoever has complete faith such that he fulfills the obligations and leaves the prohibitions will not enter the Fire. This has been narrated via *mutawātir* reports from the Prophet (ﷺ) just as it is reported from him that none would remain eternally in the Fire who has even little faith in his heart.¹

3.4 Allāh defends the believers

He represses from them all that they would dislike and delivers them from all hardships. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

¹ Such as the ḥadīth reported by al-Bukhārī [#44] and Muslim [#193] on the authority of Anas that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever says, 'There is none worthy of worship save Allāh' and has in his heart the likes of a grain of barley of good, will leave the Fire. Whoever has in his heart an atoms weight of good shall leave the Fire.' The meaning of good in this ḥadīth is faith as explained by Ibn Ḥajr, *Fath* [1/105].

اللَّهُ يَدْفَعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

Allāh will defend those who have faith. [Sūrah *al-Hajj* (22); 38]

He will defend them by saving them from all that they would dislike, the evil of the devils and men and from the attacks of their enemies. He will defend them by repressing harm from afflicting them or lightening it or removing it after it has afflicted them.

When Allāh, Exalted is He, mentioned what happened to Yūnus and that he,

فَكَادَى فِي الظُّلْمَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي
كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

...called out in the pitch darkness: 'There is none worthy of worship save You! Glory be to You! Truly I have been one of the wrongdoers.' [Sūrah *al-Anbiyā'* (21);87]

Allāh responds by saying,

فَأَسْتَجِبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ
مِنَ الْعَمْرِ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

We responded to him and rescued him from his grief, that is how We rescue the believers. [Sūrah *al-Anbiyā'* (21); 88]

'That is how We rescue the believers' when they are afflicted with hardship in the same way that We rescued Yūnus. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

The supplication of my brother Yūnus, none who is facing hardship employs it except that Allāh would relieve him of his distress, 'There is none worthy of worship save You, glory be to You, truly I have been one of the wrongdoers.'²

² Recorded by Aḥmad [1/170] and al-Tirmidhi [#3505]. Al-Ḥākim [1/505, 2/383] declared it *ṣaḥīḥ* with al-Dhahabi agreeing.

Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

Whoever has *taqwā* of Allāh, He will give him a way out
[Sūrah *al-Ṭalāq* (65); 2]

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

Whoever has *taqwā* of Allāh, He will make things easy for
him [Sūrah *al-Ṭalāq* (65); 4]

Therefore the pious, God-fearing believer will find that Allāh makes his affairs easy, makes ease easy for him to attain and makes him to avoid the difficulty. He will alleviate his every distress and provide a way out from every difficulty and provide for him via means he could never have imagined.

3.5 A good life in this world and the next

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِمَّنْ ذَكَرَ
أَوْ أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ
أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer,
We will give them a good life and We will recompense them
according to the best of what they did.
[Sūrah *al-Nahl* (16); 97]³

This is because faith engenders peace and tranquility of the heart, contentment with what Allāh has provided one with and his not

³ The author, *Taysir al-Karim al-Rahmān*, said in commentary to this verse, 'Faith is a pre-requisite for actions to be correct and be accepted. Indeed actions cannot be considered righteous unless they are accompanied by faith. Faith is that firm belief that sprouts deeds of the limbs – the obligatory and recommended.'

being dependant on any other. This is good life in the truest sense of the word.

3.6 Faith and sincerity are what determine the potency and correctness of actions

This prerequisite which comprises the foundation of all actions has been mentioned many times by Allāh, Exalted is He, such as in His saying,

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ
لِسَعْيِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَنُوبٌ ﴿٩٤﴾

“As for anyone who does righteous actions and is a believer, his striving certainly does not go unthanked.”

[Sūrah *al-Anbiyā'* (21); 94]

meaning that ones actions will not be rejected nor allowed to go to waste, instead they will be multiplied in accordance with the strength of his faith. He also says,

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ
الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ
سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا ﴿١٩﴾

“But as for anyone who desires the Hereafter, and strives for it with the striving it deserves, being a believer, the striving of such people will be gratefully acknowledged.”

[Sūrah *al-Isrā'* (17); 19]

Striving for the Hereafter implies enacting all that would draw one close to it comprising all those actions that Allāh has legislated upon the tongue of His Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ). However if these actions are missing the essential component of faith, even

if one were to devote himself to performing deeds day and night, they are unacceptable. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَنْثُورًا ﴿٢٣﴾

“We will advance on the actions they have done and make them scattered specks of dust.” [Sūrah *al-Furqān* (25); 23]

The reason for this is that their deeds were founded on other than the belief in Allāh and His Messenger, the spirit of which is to have sincerity towards the worshipped and to follow the Messenger. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

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

“Say: ‘Shall I inform you of the greatest losers in their actions? People whose efforts in the life of this world are misguided while they think they are doing good.’ Those are the people who reject their Lord’s signs and the meeting with Him. Their actions will come to nothing and, on the Day of Rising, We will not assign them any weight.” [Sūrah *al-Kahf* (18); 103-105]

These people, because they lacked faith in Allāh, replacing it instead with disbelief in Him and His signs, their actions were rendered null and void. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

لَٰئِنِ اشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبِطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ

“If you associate others with Allāh, your actions will come to nothing.” [Sūrah *al-Zumar* (39); 65]

وَلَوْ اٰشْرَكُوا لَحِطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ

“If they had associated others with Him, nothing they did would have been of any use” [Sūrah *al-An‘ām* (6); 88]

Hence apostasy from faith destroys all righteous actions just as entering the fold of Islām wipes out any previous sins, even if they be great, just as does repentance.

3.7 Allāh guides one to the Straight Path

He guides him towards learning the truth, acting by it, accepting all beloved things with gratitude and facing trials and hardships with contentment and patience. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ

“But as for those who have faith and do right actions, their Lord will guide them by their faith.” [Sūrah Yunus (10); 9]⁴

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ
مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ، وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

“No misfortune occurs except by Allāh’s permission. Whoever has faith in Allāh – He will guide his heart. Allāh has knowledge of all things.” [Sūrah al-Taghābun (64); 11]

Some of the *salaf* said in explanation to this verse, ‘It refers to one who is afflicted with a misfortune but knows that it is from Allāh and therefore is content with it and accepts it.’

⁴ The author, *Taysir al-Karim al-Rahmān*, said in commentary to this verse, ‘Meaning those who combine faith and the establishment of what faith dictates of righteous actions; actions of the heart and limbs by way of sincerity and compliance to the Messenger (ﷺ). “Their Lord will guide them by their faith” Allāh will reward them with the greatest of rewards – guidance. He will teach them what will benefit them and bless them with the actions that arise from that guidance. He will guide them to ponder over His signs and guide them in this world to the Straight Path and in the Hereafter, along the path leading to Gardens of eternal bliss.’

3.8 One is comforted at the onset of calamity and hardship

One is faced with trials and difficulties in every moment of life, but having faith and certainty serves to comfort and console one of them. Strong faith, reliance upon Allāh, hope in the reward of Allāh and desire for His beneficence are the basic constituents that help bring this state about. The sweetness of the reward lessens the bitterness of patience. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا
تَأْلَمُونَ^ط وَرَجُونَ مِنْ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ^ق

“If you feel pain, they too are feeling it just as you are, but you hope for something from Allāh which they cannot hope for.” [Sūrah *al-Nisā'* (4); 104]

This is why you can find two people who have been afflicted with the same calamity, or almost the same calamity; one of these two having faith and the other not; and there is a huge difference between the states of the two and the way that it affects them, inwardly and outwardly.

Just as faith consoles one at the onset of calamities, it also consoles one when he does not attain, or loses, what he desires. Therefore if the believer loses his beloved, be it his family, son, property, close friend etc., he is comforted by the sweetness of faith. Faith is the best replacement that the believer has for anything he loses, and this is something clearly seen and experienced. In reality losing something beloved is counted amongst the calamities.

It was the faith of Jacob that allowed him to bear the losing of his son, Joseph, despite his immense love for him. When his brothers asked him to allow Joseph to come and play with them he said,

إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ

“It grieves me to let him go with you” [Sūrah *Yūsuf* (12);

13]

thereby informing them that the cause of his grief, preventing him from letting him go, was that he would not be able to bear being away from him for even a mere hour. However they argued with him until they were able to convince him

وَلَكِنْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا

“...so that Allāh could settle a matter whose result was preordained.” [Sūrah *al-Anfāl* (8); 42]

So if this was his state, having this intense love that cannot be expressed in words, is it possible to imagine that he could have born this separation for so many years? Rather one would expect that the pain of parting with him would have soon rent asunder his liver! However it was the strength of his faith and his hope in Allāh that allowed him to restrain himself for all these years until Allāh brought about the relief that He has promised the believers.

The mother of Moses, when the river bore him away, felt the loss of her son so acutely that it overcame her heart, and were it not for the fact that Allāh established faith in her heart and her sure knowledge that the promise of Allāh was true, she would surely have openly broadcast her calamity. However her faith kept her firm at the onset of calamity, consoled her, and strengthened her.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said in his great legacy [to Ibn ‘Abbās],

Know Allāh in times of ease, He will know you in times of hardship.⁵

Meaning know Allāh through faith and the actions demanded by faith, while you are healthy and strong, Allāh will know you in times of hardship. He will strengthen you at the onset of hardship and help you through it, to treat it. The greatest hardship that afflicts the believer is the hardship of death and the throes of death.

⁵ Recorded by al-Tirmidhī [#2516] and Aḥmad [1/293, 303, 307] and it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

This ḥadith constitutes glad tidings for every believer who knows Allāh at times of ease, for He will aid them with His relief and mercy at times of need, hardship, weakness, and at times when the attacks of the devils become severe against him. There is no might or motion except with Allāh.

3.9 Love of Allāh

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ
الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا ﴿١٦﴾

“As for those who have faith and do righteous actions, the All-Merciful will bestow His love on them.”

[Sūrah *Maryam* (19); 96]

Because of their faith and their doing the actions demanded by faith, Allāh loves them and places love of them in the hearts of the believers.

Whoever is loved by Allāh and is loved by the believers, he will find victory, success and many benefits – commendation, supplication for him while he is living and after his death, people following his example, and his attaining leadership in the religion - this being from the greatest fruits of faith. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْتَدُونَ
بِأَمْرِنَا الْمَاصِرُونَ وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

“We appointed leaders from among them, guiding by Our command when they were steadfast and when they were certain about Our Signs.” [Sūrah *al-Sajdah* (32); 24]

So through patience and certainty which are from the most important constituents of faith; and from its perfection; did they attain leadership in the religion.

3.10 The raising of ranks

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

“Allāh will raise in rank those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge.”

[Sūrah *al-Mujādilah* (58); 11]

Allāh raises the people of faith and knowledge in this world and the Hereafter, they have the greatest ranking with Allāh and in the sight of His servants. It was only through their correct faith, knowledge and certainty that they attained this ranking, and knowledge and certainty are from the foundations of faith.

3.11 Attaining the gifts of Allāh

Securing the gifts of Allāh and complete, total security. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

...and give glad-tidings to the believers

thereby generalising the glad-tidings so as to encompass them all, those of this life and the Hereafter. The glad-tidings have also been mentioned in a specific way such as in His, Exalted is He, saying,

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ

تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

“Give the good news to those who have faith and do right actions that they will have Gardens with rivers flowing under them...” [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 25]

Therefore they have both unrestricted glad-tiding and restricted glad-tidings. They also have been granted security as mentioned in His saying,

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ

وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

“Those who have faith and do not mix their faith with any wrongdoing, they are the ones who are safe; it is they who are guided.” [Sūrah *al-An’ām* (6); 82]

They also have a specific form of security that has been mentioned in His saying,

فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“As for those who have faith and put things right, they will feel no fear and will know no sorrow.” [Sūrah *al-An’ām* (6); 48]

Hence Allāh negated that they would feel any fear of what lies in the future nor would they feel any remorse for what had happened in the past. Through this is their security completed.

The believer has complete security in this world and the Hereafter, he is secured from the displeasure of Allāh and His punishment just as he is secured from all that he would dislike and all evil. Such a person has been given glad-tidings of all good,

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

“...there is good news for them in the life of this world and in the Hereafter.” [Sūrah *Yūnus* (10); 64]

These glad-tidings are further clarified in His saying,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ
 الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ
 الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَآؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
 الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا نَشْتَهَىٰ أَنفُسُكُمْ
 وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ تَزْلَمُنَّ عَفْوَ رَحِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

“The angels descend on those who say, ‘Our Lord is Allāh,’ and then go straight: do not fear and do not grieve but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised. We are your

protectors in the life of this world and the Hereafter. You will have there all that your selves could wish for. You will have everything you demand. Hospitality from One who is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [Sūrah *Fuṣṣilat* (41); 30-32]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَمُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ
نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

“You who have faith! Fear Allāh and have faith in His Messenger. He will give you a double portion of His mercy and grant you a Light by which to walk and forgive you. Allāh is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [Sūrah *al-Hadid* (57); 28]

As a consequence of faith, theirs is a reward that is doubled and a perfect guiding light by which they walk through the life of this world and will walk on the Day of Judgement,

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ
بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ
هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

“On the Day you see the men and women of the believers, with their light streaming out in front of them, and to their right: ‘Good news for you today of Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever. That is the great victory.’” [Sūrah *al-Hadid* (57); 12]

Therefore the believer is one who walks through the life of this world by the light of knowledge and faith and on the Day of Judgement, when all lights have been extinguished, he will traverse the Bridge guided by his light and enter the abode of perpetual bliss.

3.12 The attainment of victory

He will have his sins forgiven hence securing himself from the Fire and thereby attaining the greatest of rewards.

Victory and success is defined by the attainment of all objectives and safety from all that is feared. It is the grant of guidance which is in itself the best and most noble means towards victory. Allāh, Exalted is He, says after mentioning those who believe in that which was revealed to Muḥammad and that which was revealed before him, those who have faith in the unseen and establish the prayer and give the *zakāt*,

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

“They are the people guided by their Lord. They are the ones who have success.” [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 5]

Hence there is no way to guidance and success – the keys to righteousness and bliss – except by having complete faith in all the Books that Allāh revealed and in every Messenger that He sent.

3.13 Benefiting from admonition and taking heed of the Signs

Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ يُنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

“And remind them for truly the believers benefit from being reminded.” [Sūrah *al-Dhāriyat* (51); 55]

فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

“...there is certainly a sign in that for the believers.”
[Sūrah *al-Hijr* (15); 77]

Faith leads a person to adhere firmly to the truth and follow it at all times, both in terms of knowledge and action, because of this there is nothing preventing him from accepting exhortation and taking note of the Signs that lead one towards the truth and there is nothing preventing him from acting by it. Likewise faith serves to preserve the *fītrah* and keep the intention sound, whoever is like this will benefit from the Signs.

Whoever does not have these qualities then it is not strange to find him rejecting the truth and not following it. This is why Allāh, Exalted is He, tells us that it is disbelief itself that prevents the disbeliever from believing in the Messenger and the truth he came with. The truth is clear and plain, His Signs are obvious, yet despite this disbelief prevents one from seeing it and following it.

3.14 Gratitude in times of ease and patience at times of adversity

It is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Amazing indeed is the affair of the believer, all of it is good; if he is in times of ease, he shows gratitude and this is good for him; when he is in times of adversity, he is patient and steadfast and this is good for him. This only applies for the believer.⁶

Gratitude and patience gather together all good and the believer is acquiring this goodness at all times and profiting in all circumstances. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* it is recorded that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

The believer is not afflicted by any concern, worry or harm except that it would be a means for Allāh expiating his sins.⁷

⁶ Muslim [#2999].

⁷ Al-Bukhārī [#5641, 5642] and Muslim [#2573].

So at times of ease the believer attain two blessings: the blessings of having that time of ease and the blessing of being grateful for it. The latter is the greater blessing. At times of adversity the believer attains three blessings: the expiation of his sins, being patient, and the adversity being made easy for him to face. This is because when he knows that he will have his reward with Allāh, the matter becomes easy for him to bear.

3.15 Doubts are laid to rest

Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا

“The believers are only those who have had faith in Allāh and his Messenger and then have had no doubt...”

[Sūrah *al-Hujurat* (49); 15]

Doubts plague many people and end up being a detriment to their religion, however correct faith represses all doubt, indeed it effaces it altogether. Faith combats the doubts that are implanted by the devils amongst man and *jinn* and by the lower soul inciting towards evil. There is no cure for these destructive diseases except the actualisation of faith. This is why it is established in the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

People will persist in asking questions until it will be said, ‘Allāh created the creation, [so who created Allāh?].’ Upon this say, ‘I believe in Allāh’, desist and take refuge with Allāh from Satan.⁸

He (ﷺ) mentioned three ways to cure this destructive disease,

1. Desisting from continuing these whispers of Satan.

⁸ Al-Bukhāri [#3276] and Muslim [#112] and the wording is his but without the addition, ‘desist and take refuge with Allāh from Satan’ for this is wording of al-Bukhāri and another narration of Muslim [#214].

2. Taking refuge from the evil of the one who implanted them.
3. Holding firm to the protection of correct faith, whoever seeks protection with it will be from those made secure.

The core reason for this is that falsehood is unveiled via many ways, the greatest of which is the sure knowledge that it contradicts the truth,

فَمَا ذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالَةُ

“...and what is there after truth except misguidance?”

[Sūrah Yūnus (10); 32]

3.16 Faith is the recourse of the believer

It is his recourse in all that he faces of joy, sorrow, distress, fear, security, obedience, disobedience and other such matters.

At times of joy and acquiring what they desire, they recourse to faith by praising Allāh and employing His favours to do that which He loves.

At times of distress and difficulties they recourse to faith by taking comfort and consolation with it, and by taking comfort with the ensuing reward. They face distress and anxiety with an open heart and by returning to the dictates of a goodly life such as would dispel their circumstances.

At times of fear they recourse to faith and gain assurance through it and thereby they increase in faith, firmness, strength, and courage; through this the fear that they were facing is dispersed. Allāh, Exalted is He, says concerning the choicest of creation,

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ
فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٧﴾

“...those to whom people said: ‘The people have gathered against you, so fear them.’ But that merely increased their

faith and they said, 'Allāh is enough for us and the Best of Guardians.'" [Sūrah *Āl-'Imrān* (3); 173]

Fear dispersed from their hearts leaving behind it strong faith and its sweetness, strong reliance upon Allāh, and trust in His promise.

At times of security they recourse to faith and do not allow these times to make them arrogant, instead they humble themselves, knowing that this is from Allāh, from His beneficence. Therefore they thank Him and know that if they gain victory over the enemy and authority, it is by the might and movement of Allāh and His beneficence, not by their strength nor by their motion.

At times of obedience, they recourse to faith, acknowledging the favours of Allāh granted them by allowing them to perform these actions and that these favours are greater than the favours of provision and good health. They desire to perfect these actions and do all that they can to ensure that they are accepted, not rejected or diminished. They ask the One who granted them the divine accord to perform these actions to complete His favour by accepting them and that He perfect them for them.

When they are tried with times of disobedience they recourse to faith by rushing to repentance and performing all the righteous deeds they are able to do in order to make up for their sin. Allāh, Exalted is He, says,

إِن
الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَافٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا
فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

"As for those who have *taqwā*, when they are bothered by visitors from Satan, they remember and immediately see clearly." [Sūrah *al-A' rāf* (7); 201]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

The example of the believer is that of a horse tied to its noose, it roams wherever it wishes but always returns to its noose.⁹

Similarly the believer wanders into sins and negligence but then quickly returns to faith upon which his entire life is built. Therefore the believers, at all times in their lives, recourse back to their faith and continuously try to actualise it and repress all that would negate it. This is naught but the beneficence of Allāh upon him.

3.17 Faith prevents the servant from committing the destructive sins

It is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

The fornicator does not fornicate except that at that time he is not a believer; the thief does not steal except that at that time he is not a believer; none drinks alcohol except that at that time he is not a believer.¹⁰

Whoever falls into committing such transgressions, it is because of the weakness of his faith, the loss of its light, and the removal of the sense of shame in the heart that prevents one doing something that He has prohibited in the knowledge that He is watching.

Correct, true faith is accompanied by a sense of shame and modesty from Allāh, love of Him, a potent hope in His reward, fear of His punishment as well as being accompanied by light that dispels all darkness. All of these matters, which constitute the perfection of faith, for sure direct the one who has them towards all good and prevent him from committing any vile action. Therefore when a believer is tempted to commit such deeds, the light of his faith prevents him from falling prey to them.

⁹ Aḥmad [3/38, 55] and Ibn Ḥibbān [#616]. The *isnād* is *ḍa'īf*.

¹⁰ Al-Bukhārī [#3810] and Muslim [57].

The light that accompanies true faith, the sweetness of faith and modesty from Allāh (which is one of the greatest branches of faith without doubt) prevents the believer from falling prey to these vile sins.

3.18 The Example of the believer

It is established in the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* on the authority of Abū Mūsā (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

The example of the believer who recites the Qur'an is like that of a citron, its taste and scent is sweet. The example of the believer who does not recite the Qur'an is like that of a date, its taste is sweet but it has no scent.¹¹

These two categories of creation are the best out of the four categories that exist:

1. One who is good in and of himself and disseminates this goodness to others.

This is the best category, this is the person who recited the Qur'an and learns the various sciences of the religion. Such a person brings benefit to himself and disseminates this benefit to others, he is blessed wherever he may be. Allāh, Exalted is He, says concerning Jesus,

جَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ

“...He has made be blessed wherever I am...”

[Sūrah *Maryam* (19); 31]

2. One who is good in and of himself only

This is the believer who does not possess any knowledge such that it may benefit anybody else. These two categories are the best of creation and their goodness in turn is dependant upon the faith that they possess.

¹¹ Al-Bukhāri [#5427] and Muslim [#797].

3. The one who possesses no good but does not harm others
4. The one who brings evil to himself and to others.

This is the worst level of creation,

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ جُنُودٌ مُقَاتِلَةٌ أَفَّكَرْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِئَلَّيْتُمْ إِذَا تُرِيتُمْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ يَبْغُونَكُم مَّا تُرِيدُونَ

“As for those who were disbelievers and barred access to the way of Allāh, We will heap punishment on top of their punishment because of the corruption they brought about.”
[Surah *al-Nahl* (16); 88]

Therefore all good is based upon faith and its offshoots and all evil is based upon the absence of faith and being described with its opposite. Allāh is the One Who grants the divine accord.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allāh than the weak and in both there is good.¹²

Thereby dividing the believers into two categories:

1. The one who has strength of action, faith and brings great benefit to others.
2. The one who is weak in these matters.

Both of these categories are good because faith and its resultant effects are all good even though the believers may possess them in varying degrees. In a similar vein the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

The believer who mixes with the people and bears their harm with patience is better than the believer who does not mix with the people and does not bear their harm with patience.¹³

¹² Muslim [#2664].

¹³ Ahmad [2/43, 5/365] and al-Tirmidhi [#2507] and it is *ṣaḥīḥ*; refer to *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* [#393].

The understanding of these explicit authentic texts is that the one who has no faith possess no good. This is because either a person is entirely evil and brings harm upon himself and society, or he possess some good but this is drowned by the ocean of his evil. Anything good that is totally submerged in corruption is considered to be corruption because the good that is there suffices to combat some of that evil, after that good is spent all that remains is evil.

Whoever considers the reality of creation will find matters exactly as described by the Prophet (ﷺ).

Conclusion

From what has preceded it becomes clear that this tree – the tree of faith – is the most blessed of trees, the one that brings about most benefit, and the most enduring of them. Its roots are faith, its sciences and its aspects of cognisance. Its trunk and branches are the legislated laws of Islām, righteous actions, and sublime morals and manners – all of these being coupled with, and aided by, sincerity to Allāh and compliance to the way of the Messenger (ﷺ). Its fruits are goodly silence, beneficial guidance, devotion to the *dhikr* of Allāh, displaying gratitude to Him, praising Him, and bringing benefit to His servants to the maximum possible degree – the benefit of knowledge, sincere advice, physical and material benefit, and other such matters.

The reality behind all of this is the establishment of the rights of Allāh and the rights of His creation.

The size and firmness of this tree varies greatly from heart to heart of the believers, varying in accordance to how much they have taken on board its various characteristics. Their ranking in Paradise is also determined in accordance to the size and firmness of this tree.

It also becomes clear that this grace is entirely given by Allāh,

بَلَىٰ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَيْتُمُوهَا لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

“No indeed! It is Allāh who has favoured you by guiding you to faith if you are telling the truth.” [Sūrah *al-Hujurat* (49); 17]

The inhabitants of Paradise, after having entered it and taken their places therein, will acknowledge the grace of their Great Lord,

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا
وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلًا مِنَّا بِالْحَقِّ
وَنُودُوا أَنْ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

“...they will say: ‘Praise be to Allāh who has guided us to this! We would not have been guided, had Allāh not guided us. The Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth.’ It will be proclaimed to them: ‘This is your Garden which you have inherited for what you did.’” [Sūrah *al-Aʿrāf* (7); 43]

In this verse they acknowledge the grace that Allāh granted them that led them to enter the Lofty Stations and praise Him for it, they also mention the cause that allowed them to attain this by the grace of Allāh – righteous actions which is naught but faith and its actions.

We ask Allāh that He favour us with true faith and that He not leave us to ourselves for even the blink of an eye, that He not cause our hearts to deviate after having guided us, and that He inundate us with His mercy for He is al-Wahhāb.

Abundant peace and blessings be upon Muḥammad, his family and his Companions.

‘Abdur-Raḥmān bin Nāṣir bin ‘Abdullāh bin Nāṣir al-Saʿdī
may Allāh forgive him, his parents and all the Muslims.
8 Dhūl-Hijjah, 1374H

APPENDIX ONE

An Explanation of the Parable Concerning the Tree of Faith

Allāh, the Exalted, propounds a metaphor for faith, saying,

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

“Do you not see how Allāh sets forth a metaphor of a good word: a good tree whose roots are firm and whose branches are in the sky? It bears fruit all the time by its Lord’s permission. Allāh sets forth metaphors for people so that hopefully they will pay heed.” [Sūrah *Ibrāhim* (14); 24-25]

Allāh, Glorious and Exalted is He, has likened a good word to a good tree because just as a good tree produces beneficial and delicious fruits, so too does the good word produce righteous actions. This metaphor then corresponds with the exegesis of the majority who said, “The good word is the testification that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh.”¹⁴ This is because this testification sprouts all inward and outward righteous actions,

¹⁴ i.e. *Lā ilāha illa Allāh*.

Refer to al-Ṭabari [13/203]; al-Baghawī [4/40]; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr* [4/75].

hence every single righteous action one could perform, which pleases Allāh, the Mighty and Magnificent, results as a fruit of this statement.

'Ali bin Abū Ṭalḥah reports from Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) that he explained the verse thus,

'A good word' the testification that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh. 'A good tree' the believer. 'Whose roots are firm' the statement 'None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh' taking root in the heart of the believer. 'Whose branches are in the sky' wherewith the actions of the believer are raised to the sky.¹⁵

Al-Rabi' bin Anas said,

'A good word' is the metaphor for faith (*imān*). Faith is 'a good tree whose roots are firm' from which sincerity (*ikhhlās*) is never absent. 'Whose branches are in the sky' the fear of Allāh.¹⁶

Allāh, Glorious is He, has likened the tree of *tawḥid* which implants itself in the heart to a good tree whose roots are firmly established, its branches distend far into the sky and it produces fruit all the time.

When you carefully consider this metaphor you will find that it completely corresponds to the tree of *tawḥid* implanted firmly in the heart. Its branches are the righteous actions that ascend to the sky and it continuously produces these in accordance to the degree of firmness in which the [statement of *tawḥid*] has been lodged in the heart, the amount of love that the heart has for it, the intensity of sincerity it has for it, the level of knowledge it has of its true reality, and the extent to which it establishes its rights and duties. So when this statement takes firm root in ones heart and it in turn clothes and adorns itself with it, it will be dyed with the dye

¹⁵ Ibn Kathir [2/530]; al-Ṭabari [13/203].

¹⁶ Al-Ṭabari [13/203-204].

of Allāh besides which there is no better dye.¹⁷ Then the servant will come to know the true mannerisms and traits that he should display to Allāh which would be testified to by his tongue and attested to by his limbs. He would also negate this for any besides Allāh, the Mighty and Magnificent, and his tongue would follow his heart in this negation. The limbs would willingly submit to one who testifies to His Oneness and would traverse the path to their Lord in complete submission and humility, removed from any desire that would deviate them from this goal or make them desire anything else - in the same way that the servant would never desire to take another as his object of worship. There is absolutely no doubt that this statement ensuing from such a heart upon such a tongue would produce its fruits comprising righteous actions that rise up to Allāh, the Exalted.

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ

“The good word rises to Him and all righteous actions raise it.” [Sūrah *Fāṭir* (35); 10]

Therefore Allah, Glorious is He, informed us that the righteous actions raise the good word¹⁸ and that the good word bears the fruit of righteous action for the one who articulates it and holds to it, all the time.

The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate that the statement of *tawḥid*; when testified to by the servant, knowing its meaning and reality by way of negation and affirmation, adorning himself

¹⁷ Allāh, the Exalted says, “the dye of Allāh – and what dye could be better than Allāh’s?” [Sūrah *al-Baqarah* (2); 138].

¹⁸ Al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshāf* [2/302], said, ‘The good word – none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh – from Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) who said, “Meaning that this statement will not be accepted nor raised to the sky and recorded where the righteous actions are recorded, “the book of the righteous is in *Illiyūn*” [Sūrah *al-Muṭaffifin* (83): 18], unless it is accompanied by righteous actions that serve to actualise it and testify to it, hence raising it.”’

with its necessary implications, establishing these in his heart, upon his tongue and on his limbs; is implanted firmly in the heart: its branches distend to the sky and it bears fruit all the time.

Some of the *Salaf* said that the good tree was the date-palm tree¹⁹ and this is proven by the authentic ḥadīth of Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) being reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.²⁰ Others said that it refers to the believer himself - Muḥammad bin Sa'd said; my uncle narrated to me; my father narrated to me; from Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) who said,

“A good tree” the believer. “Whose roots are firm” in the earth
“and whose branches are in the sky” the believer speaks and
performs actions on the earth and these reach the sky.²¹

'Aṭīyah al-'Awfi said,

This is the metaphor of the believer, good words and righteous actions ensue from him all the time and then rise to Allāh.²²

Al-Rabī' bin Anas said,

This is the metaphor of the believer being put forward of his sincerity to Allāh alone and his worshipping Him alone with no partners. “Whose roots are firm” the foundations of his actions are firmly established on the earth. “and whose branches are in the sky” his mention in the sky.

There is actually no contradiction between these two opinions for the intended object behind this metaphor is the believer and the date-palm tree has been compared to him and he to it. Therefore if

¹⁹ Al-Ṭabari [13/204]; al-Baghawī [4/40]; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr* {4/358}.

²⁰ Al-Bukhārī [1/130] and Muslim [4/2165] with the wording, “There is a tree which resembles the Muslim, it does not shed its leaves in winter or summer and it bears fruit all the time, tell me what it is?” Ibn 'Umar said, “I thought of the date-palm tree but felt shy to answer when I saw that Abū Bakr and 'Umar did not answer.” Thereupon the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, ‘It is the date-palm tree.’

²¹ Al-Ṭabari [13/204]

²² Ibid.

the date-palm tree is the good tree, the believer is more deserving of having the same quality since he has been compared to it. Those of the *Salaf* who opined that it refers to a tree in Paradise²³ [also did not contradict the above two opinions] for the best of trees in Paradise is the date-palm tree.

This metaphor contains such inner meanings, knowledge and information as one would expect from the knowledge and wisdom of the One who articulated it, Glorious is He. A tree must have a trunk, roots, branches, leaves, and fruits; and in order for the metaphor to stand so too must the tree of faith. Its roots are knowledge (*ilm*), cognisance (*ma'rifah*), and certainty (*yaqin*). Its trunk is sincerity (*ikhlas*) and its branches are righteous actions. Its fruits are all that necessarily ensues from these righteous actions comprising praiseworthy impressions and influence, commendable qualities, superb morals and manners, virtuous silence, and right guidance. So when all these qualities appear in the servant, this is a clear indication that the tree of faith has its roots firmly implanted in the heart and its branches indeed distend to the sky. However, if the opposite happens, it becomes known that in reality a vile tree has been implanted in the heart, uprooted on the surface of the earth having no staying-power.

A tree cannot remain alive unless it is nourished with water such as would allow it grow. When the source of water is cut off, soon will the tree dry and wither away. Similarly the tree of Islām in the heart, if its owner does not persistently nourish it with beneficial knowledge, righteous actions and contemplation, soon would it dry and wither away. It is reported in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad from the ḥadith of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

Indeed faith wears out in the heart as a garment wears out, so renew your faith.²⁴

²³ Al-Khāzin; al-Baghawi [4/40]; Ibn Kathir [2/530].

²⁴ Reported by al-Ṭabarāni and al-Ḥakim and it is *ḥasan*.

Hence, in summary, if this seed is not nurtured by the owner, very soon it will die. Moreover we can now understand the great need that the servant has of performing the actions of worship commanded by Allāh at certain set times, we can also understand the greatness of His mercy, blessing and beneficence towards His servants. This because he has appointed these actions of worship and made them to be the nourishment by which the tree of *tawhīd* is given life.

It is part of nature that weeds grow side by side with plants, if the owner tends to his plants and weeds the garden, the plants would be free to grow strong and sprout more fruit, having better taste. If however the owner abandons the plants, it is feared that they may be overcome by the weeds and wither away, or their roots may be weakened and sprout meager fruits. Whoever does not know this fact with all its details unknowingly loses out on much profit. Hence the believer is continuously tending to these two affairs, he is nourishing the tree and weeding that which grows around it such that it may become complete and strong, Allāh's aid is sought and upon Him trust is placed.

This explanation is but a drop in the ocean of the meaning of this great metaphor...²⁵

²⁵ Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Amthāl fil-Qur'an* [pp. 228-235].