

THE DIVINE GUIDANCE FOR LIFE AND THE CONDITION OF MAN TODAY

M. Karamatullah*

ABSTRACT

In the ocean of possibilities, the best that can be extended to man as a man (the one that has start but not end.), and the supreme succour for him, is to arouse and stimulate him to the perception and consciousness of the significance and real aim of his existence in this world; by seriously expounding to him that the visible realm, whatever its nature and essence may be, is not to exhaust the whole truth; by strenuously driving him to settle in the credo and conception that what occurs to be conducive to his vantage and sui-generis (distinguished) status amongst the creatures is related but to the extra- cosmic or transcendental system of immense wonders and affluences. The only way for man and his sole business in this world remains that he may realise and heartfully embrace the heavenly or religious truth that was alighted to him by Allah through the sacred series of prophets, the last one being Hazrat Muhammad (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him!). But today, if on the one side the Divine guidance and enlightenment for human life is kept before, and on the other side the general condition of man is observed, there is felt an inconsistency which is beyond the limit. It is found that the people, excluding a minor segment, are but an embodiment of all sorts of frailties and frailties. Completely strange and remote from religion, totally bereft of spirituality or moral rectitude, they are practically trapped by the lure of corporeal and material things, wealth, luxury, power, prestige, celebrity, etc. And this all is about the believers or the Muslims; not to speak of those who are unbelievers, apostates and Godless individuals. Also, let alone the low-brows, plebians and vulgars, even the high-brows, owners of herculian mind and immense caliber, are not restless for the clue and clew to the mystery and scrapping nature of existence, nor are they to be disconcerted and tarnished by the imbroglio and imperspicuity that what is going to be the destiny of the stranded mankind with his pitiable plight in the pitch dark night of life. In this paper there is a reflection on the situation.

HOW TO LIVE IN THE WORLD?

The indubitable fact, as enunciated by religion and espoused by devout discretion and pious intuition, is that the human being who is supposed to enjoy the central and unique position in the grand scheme of things, was not created just to be let go in vain; just to sit trifling with his life time; rather he has to feed on the credence that life for him is not merely a concourse of events, it harbors ends that lie beyond the purview of this universe; that there is an order of reality other than the familiar one; i.e, his actual and ultimate house is not this transitory and ephemeral world, but the next permanent and everlasting world wherein there is to be realized what Allah has ordained and destined, out of His eternal will. As, after all, man is not just to be clamouring only for the immediate and ordinary problems of life, rather with far more urge and intensity he is faced by the questions of the ultimate problems which are not limited to religion only, but are lying in other spheres also; as according to Iqbal, "they are common to religion, philosophy, and higher poetry".¹ They are, in his words, such questions as: What is the character and general structure of the universe in which we live? Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe? How are we related to it? What place do we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy?²

So how would it not be that the first and foremost duty and responsibility of man must

* C/o Department of Arabic, University of Karachi. Email: karamatul@gmail.com
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have been to grasp and determine what should be the best possible use of his life span; how to take it; what to do with it; whereas the life of this world is nothing but one inning play, having no other chance; which is not worth an hour's purchase. Allah the Almighty says:

- "The life of the world is but a pastime and game; the home of the hereafter that is life if they but know."³
- "Naught is the life of the world save a pastime and sport. Better far is the abode of the Hereafter for those who keep their duty (to Allah). Have you then no sense?"⁴
- "The life of the world is but a sport and a pastime."⁵
- "The life of this world is but comfort of illusion."⁶
- "Take you pleasure in the life of the world rather than in the Hereafter? The comfort of the world is but little than in the Hereafter."⁷
- "Then, as for him who rebelled, and chose the life of the world, Lo! Hell will be his home."⁸
- "Then withdraw (o Muhammad) from him who fleets from our remembrance and desires but the life of the world. Such is their sum of knowledge."⁹

These few verses are just a specimen, otherwise the issue of the hereafter is actually the thesis or subject-matter of the Quran. All its contents, rules of creeds, commands and the admonitions and exhortations, etc, are ultimately directed towards that single fact.

Similarly, the Messenger of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) has said:

- "This world is house of that person who has no house, property of that person who has no property, and only those people try for it who have no sanity (wisdom)."¹⁰
- "This world is jail of the believer and paradise of the unbeliever."¹¹
- "If this world could be equal to the wing of a mosquito, in the sight of Allah, He would not have given to the unbeliever even one draught from it."¹²
- "This world is travelling going, and this Hereafter is travelling coming, and for each of the tow there are sons; so if it is possible for you not to be from the sons of the world, you must do, because today you are in the abode of action and there is no account, and tomorrow you are in the Hereafter and there is no action".¹³

There are hundreds of thousands of Prophetic traditions, which explicitly and implicitly, avowedly and impliedly denote that the real and actual place for man is the next world, and here in this world, only that life is valuable, meaningful, significant and useful which is spent for the cause of the next world, for attaining the ultimate success and eternal felicity. Thus with the belief and notion of the hereafter, the life of this world is utterly and definitely worthy of no favour and attention; but suppose there is no other life than this one, still it is not entitled and fit to be given any value, because it is a temporary shadow of no surety. If some importance could have to be attached to it, that would be merely due to the life hereafter, with relation to that only, for its being a means to that end; as it is case with everything which is not absolutely or intrinsically valuable. So even if there were not any narrated instruction and admonition of the Quran and Hadith, enjoining to despise and shun this world, its very nature could play that purpose before the human intellect and inner voice. How a temporary life and its temporary things, maya and illusions, can give place to satisfaction or optimistic tendency! What a poet has said:

اشد الغم عندى في سرور
تيقن عنه صاحبه انتقالا

(The greatest grief, in my sight, is in the happiness when the owner of that happiness is sure that it has to go away).

Take only the matter of death; should it need for its being what it is, any proof and credential? or such explanation as "Whether it comes sooner or later, the prospect of death and threat of non-being is a terrible horror".(an infidel philosopher)

In such a situation and perspective, the only enterprise and discipline for man, to be inevitably devised and declared for him, is that he may fully devote and dedicate himself to the universal or divinely cherished goal; and mobilize his capacities towards the upright and well-rounded pattern which may go to guarantee and procure for him a shower of the blessing of Allah; i.e, to really fructify his life moments, whereupon he will definitely have ingratiated before Allah; will have attained the salvation; will have been granted to relish the greatest share of bounties and joys in the unending life of the hereafter; as with this devotion and commitment, man is needed to possess a stirring self that must keep him forced to tackle the concept " better than the best" in every phase and aspect of life; living out to the full extent of his competence and potency; working only at the tasks which can call out the full stretch of his faculties; as unless he has ceased to see his prospect and real future at stake, he has no right to rest content, feeling enthralled by the majesty and glamour of the panorama of nature. In other words, he has to seek the pleasure of Allah, willy-nilly, by showing obedience and submission to Him, inwardly and outwardly; totally ,not partially; in substance as well as in form; with all his inguinities and dexterities. Only here can be the answer to the question as to what is actually worth-while for man, and what is there that counts for nothing in his case.

GENERAL SITUATION OF THE PEOPLE

But it is poignant to see that humanity of the day is but lost in the vilest form of depravity and perversion, being involved in various kinds of atrocious and nefarious practices. People on the whole, in nine cases out of ten, are failing to stand up even to the minimum demands and stipulations of the Divine guidance; showing no probity and integrity in their actions, conducts, characters, behaviours and thoughts, etc. Having imbibed only the worldly doctrines, and having taken up only with a materially ratified stance, they are shamelessly trampling down the spiritual and theological considerations. Instead of soul, they are trying and aspiring to uplift and furnish the flesh. They are slaves of untamed passions and the desires of Nafs, not bothering that by submitting and surrendering to its alluring inducement, they may become the lowest of the low; not haunted by the fear that such tendency and style may bear on qualities of undoubted evil; Surrounded by fool-dominated societies, their minds are the arena of mischiefs, filled with all forms of devilish rubbish, which do fritter away their actual energy. The purpose of life and its only justifying factor is being impotently denied its true value and import. It seems that only wealth, power, prestige, and lust have been decided upon as the ends of the human endeavor; as only in such things, there has been revealed to them the meaning and telos of life. All their affairs and various activities revolve around them. What exists for them is matter only, not something like spirit, religion, etc.

They are found to presume upon the paltry objects and tarshy goals which they seriously attempt to realize. Servitude to silly and frivolous desires, precarious wishes and petty aims has blunted their apprehension of reality, and their indulgence in trifles and trivails has stultified their prudence from discerning the challenges of life and the crux of problem. They are seen to have been robbed of the norms which are central to their essence and position, as determined and projected by the religious or heavenly lead. They are thus blind of their destination and eventually do not vacillate to sacrifice the

ultimate for immediate, eternal for temporal, and means for ends. They have taken the matter easy, and look quite satisfied as if nothing can adversely occur.

The impression and message that is conveyed from them is that it is the matters of this world only which are to absorb and engross their concerns and interests; which are to remain objects of their expressions and speculations, and contents of their ideas and consciousness; it is only the world-based wants and desires which are jostling for preference and satisfaction; it is only the worldly life to which they are sensitive and alive, being badly anxious if something is amiss with its organism; it is only this in which all about them is grounded. With regard to it, they are certainly found to be full of energy, zeal, zest, vigour, hey-day, potential, diligence, intelligence, vigilance, creative vision, and all kinds of talent; as for its sake they seriously and gravely manage to be equipped and furnished with suitable tools and appliances; as in-dept knowledge, sure ingenuity, exquisite manipulation and rewarding career, etc. In the worldly things, wherein they are found severely chary and cautious, they do want quality and the highest standard, not to take up only with what be available. Here they do not let any need or desire remain ungratified. Being devoid of the Divine enlightenment or religious necessity, all their creativities, proficiencies, excellences and various approaches are confined to this world of matter; here is to be traced their start and their end. In Iqbal's words:

توم کہ فیضانِ سماوی سے ہے محروم حد اس کے کمالات کی ہے برق و بخارات

(The people who are deprived of the heavenly bounty (revelation), the limit of their achievements and accomplishments is electricity and vapours.)

Lacking the prescribed and necessary vision and outlook, they do not know how to pass the time? What to do with it? So they just kill the time.

Their general attitude and deportment is certainly such as there is no concept of "death", or it is very far, forgetting that:

ماقادیجی قریب لکن الموت من ذاک اقرب

(Every coming thing is near, but the death is more near than that.)

Upon the whole, today the human beings are only worldly, worldly-minded, having only worldly wisdom, immersed in worldliness from top to toe, knowing nothing except the world and its contents; as if they are destined to be living for the world and dying for the world. This is the result that is bound to ensue.

As far as the issues and affairs of the next world are concerned, they are just out of fashion before them, holding no place in their intentions and plannings. They do not even mention them or with extreme indifference and levity, presenting no indication that with the problem of 'Akhira' there is no justification for remaining careless and remiss; as in the case of religious requirements, their attitude is of paying a deaf ear, showing there the worst form of negligence, recklessness, indolence, frigidity, procrastination, weariness, listlessness, and what not. It looks that in the matter of this world they cannot endure any handicap and loss, whereas in the case of the Hereafter they are prepared to incur the greatest misfortune; as they do not feel any need to know and remove their religious and spiritual ailments and maladies, whereas in the state of physical diseases and indispositions, they leave no stone unturned.

It is above suspicion that in the real sense they have no desire and will for the Hereafter; and if some of them desire it, neither they make the necessary (or well-directed) effort for it, nor comply to the requirements; while the Quranic proclamation in this regard is so:

"And who desires the Hereafter and strives for it with the effort necessary, being a believer; for such, their effort findes favour (with their Lord)".¹⁴

As many of them, if they try to act upon some Islamic orders, or observe some duties, they do not trouble to employ the prescribed ways and procedures, and do not follow the necessary wisdom and techniques, and pursue not the required steps.

The main tragedy is that in their hearts there is no sign of 'Taqwa', the gist and kernel of Deen, which should impel and compel them to do the good and abstain from the evil.¹⁵

It is also not hidden that today the Muslims in a very great many cases, though not in all, are blindly imitating the West, but in evils and negative qualities and acts; not in virtues and positive things.

As to the nature of the religion Islam, so Islam, which is the name of restraints and restrictions, is basically a whole having various ingredients or integral parts. These component parts or branches, which encompass the different aspects and walks of human life and its relations, are the systems of beliefs, devotional acts, behaviours of morality or good manners, and matters of contractions and social intercourses, etc. Every branch and element has its own principles and particulars. Man is bound to keep in practice all these branches and their essentials; not merely some branches or some sections and portions of them.

It can also be pointed out here that some persons happen to be heroes in the field of idea and theory, but in the domain of deed they are less than zero, being the least prone to work; as some may be found to have good resolves and commitments for changing and improving themselves, but all in vain; since they do not tend to realize them the least; whereas "the strongest of resolves is futile without practice". In the Quran wherever there is talk of believing and keeping faith, that is immediately followed by talk of performing the prescribed actions. Also this thing is too obvious to need emphasising that some individuals try to achieve their bad ends and evil objectives in the veil of religion; as many of them are inclined to make parade of their piety and sanctimony.

Now it is evident that in this sublunar life, a variety of deadly vices and wickednesses would have been in the former periods also, but the general situation of the present era, which is being mourned and rued here, is a different thing. Here the case is of extremeness and limitlessness. Rogan Bacon (who was long before us) has also lamentingly depicted his age, comparing it with the past of that; as Bertrand Russell quotes his words:

"For more sins reign in these days of ours than in any past age....Let us see all conditions in the world, and consider them diligently everywhere, we shall find boundless corruption."¹⁶ Comparing with it the pagan sages of antiquity, he says: "Their lives were beyond all comparison better than ours, both in all decency and in contempt of the world, with all its delights and riches and honours; as all men may read in the works of Aristotle, Seneca, Tully. Avicenna, Alfarabi, Plato. Socrates, and others; and so it was that they attained to the secrets of wisdom and found out all knowledge".¹⁷

There are in history cases of individuals whose attitude towards the world was such as this line of a persian poem reflects:

بریکے برداشت چیزے راز اسبابِ جہاں من ازیں دنیاے فانی دست را برداشتم

(Every one lifted something from the goods of the world; I lifted hand from this mortal world.)

They boldly left the world out of account, as they had opportunely perceived the wiles of this slippery, cunning and fascinator demon. An Arabic poet tells about the state of such wise and Godly personalities:

ان لله عباد افطنا طلقوا الدنيا وخافوا الفتنا
نظروا فيها قلبا عرفوا انها ليست لحي ووطننا
جعلوها لجة واتخذوا صالح الاعمال فيها سفنا

Translation: (There are some wise servants of Allah. They divorced (abandoned) the world and feared the seductions. They looked into the world; so when they came to know that it is not an abode of a living person, they declared it a deep sea, and made the pious deeds boats in it).

A great saint (wali) and Pushto poet Abd-ur-Rahman Baba says:

دا دنیا په احقانو دودانه دانانه کاپه دنیا بانو غرض

(This world is running by stupid people; the wise person does not have concern and business with the world).

Actually they were people whose sole aspiration and ambition or heart's desire was to assimilate the divine attributes and submit to the will of their Creator with utmost purity and deepest sincerity. They were to show self-abnegation and lose their substantial incompleteness and weakness in the absolute perfection and omnipotence of Allah, whereby to be found the haven of refuge, and the only way to hope, peace and repose. As lovers of the world and philistine type masses take pains for more and more mundane fortunes, trying to maximize the bank balance of the place of this sojourn and indurable dwelling, these noble and devotee figures would long and crave for more and more blessings of Akhirah, striving to increase the bank balance (Thawab) of that permanent and eternal world, for which they could not bear to miss any chance and opportunity; as keeping before them the truth of a Hadith that the people of Paradise will not have any regret and repentance, except for the moments which they will have passed in Gafalah (without God's remembrance and worship).

This world had to remain odious, disdainful and worthy of scorning in their eyes, from all respects, but mostly and particularly on the ground that it could become obstacle and hinderance to the cause of the Hereafter; as this world and the Hereafter have been likened to two wives of a man; if one of them is made happy, the other becomes unhappy; and as Jesus Christ (A.S) is reported to have said that love of this world and love of the Hereafter cannot combine together in the heart of believer, just as water and fire cannot combine in one pot.

The grievance of such people was not things as poverty, physical disabilities, want of name and fame, failing to satisfy the urge to dominate, or outwit and outshine the others, etc; rather the cause of their vapidness, disflavor, despondence, disgust and brokenness was that they would see the dreadful picture of the future events, i.e, death, grave, resurrection,

accounting of the doom's day, and the matter of Paradise and Hell, being badly apprehensive and anxious about them. Here was the frame of reference for them. Here was the centre of their flinchings, fears, forebodings, premonitions, as well as of their avidities, expectations, ideals and dreams, etc. Having truly realized the issue of the next world, they believed and never lost sight of the fact that "progress" is not the progress of this world; as "success" or "gain" is not what the people think and consider to be, i.e, the worldly success; rather it is that which will be in the Hereafter; as the Quranic instruction is: "Whoso is removed from the Fire and is made to enter Paradise, he indeed is successful".¹⁸⁻¹⁹

It was quite impossible for them to be acclimated to a concept or prospect other than this one.

For them the place of all possible pleasures, satisfactions and enjoyments was only and only the Paradise, wherein there will be all that is desired; as the Quran says: "There you will have (all) that your souls desire, and there you will have (all) for which you pray."²⁰ "...and therein is all that your souls desire and your eyes find sweet, and you are immortal therein."²¹

They had kept in mind that if an effort and action could be called as fruitful or result-oriented, that would be inclusively with regard to Akhirah; as they duly remained preoccupied as to what will be their status and position on the Day of Judgement. Rumi has said:

ان جمله علمها اين است و اين كه بدانى من كيم در يوم دين

(The soul of all knowledges is this and only this that you may know who are you on the Day of Judgement!)

Indeed they were tied with the next world, for which they had devoutly let their thoughts, outlooks, actions and behaviours to be pregnant with the required meaning and demanded efficacy; and for the sake of which they could forget and forgo the unsurmountable difficulties and the favourite favors and joys of this world; and for which they had known what to do and what not to do, and how to do and when to do; as for instance, they would keep silent, but when they were to speak, they would try to make their words better than silence.

IN THE FIELD OF MATERIAL WEALTH

Now it is to be noted that the prevalent aberration or eccentric and erratic behaviour of the people has permeated every walk of life, but the material or economical field has not escaped it even in the minimum degree. So here the condition is that the people know nothing but thinking and struggling for amassing and accumulating the wealth by adopting every possible means.(even by committing any kind of evil, and avoiding any type of goodness). To them wealth is not merely an object of need but a fetish, for which they are ready to offer any cost and sacrifice. They are but intent upon avarice and grasping rapacity, which excites them to further vivacity and vitality for more and more riches and properties; as they are amply obsessed by the desire to increase and promote their possessions to an infinite limit. It does not bother them that the way they earn money and the way they spend it, is far removed from the established and prescribed standards and values. Where certainly their basic avocation is display or ostentation, a heartfelt hobby for them is competition and attempting to supersede each others in the material or financial fields; as William, Gertrude says: "In America it is generally accepted that you ought to try and go one better than your father, and the man who, by daring experiment and readiness to break with the past, increases his material wealth, is

the one on whom the stamp of social approval is set".²² And this is a trouble which undoubtedly arises, as Russel points out with regard to the situation of his age, "from the generally received philosophy of life, according to which life is a contest, a competition, in which respect is to be accorded to the victor",²³ when there is no fear of the effect and implication that "this view leads to an undue cultivation of the will at the expence of the senses and the intellect".²⁴

It is fairly obvious that the people look only at the apparent face of the wealth, not caring that not only it cannot provide the real or fundamental happiness, but also the detriments and negative effects it may occasion on the other side are countless. There is no doubt that opulence or abundance and luxury, accompanied and entailed by its love and affection, is something injurious, noxious and pestilent. It can stunt the growth of soul; it can surely cause to deprive of the very sense of reality; of the idea of good and bad; of the faith and religion. The facts are facts in this connection. A.K. Brohi delineates quite accurately:

'Is it not also true that the affluent society which we are eager to build here and now, in a significant sense, is the chief enemy of the creative spirit? A man who serves no other purpose except to accumulate wealth is obstructed in his career in life by the burden of his possessions. He is all the time anxious to preserve his wealth and if possible to increase its volume. And this is, for him, such a full-time job that he has no time for anything else, not even for living. A man who has too much wealth, falsely believes that he has the means available at his disposal for satisfying all the deeper urges and cravings of his life. I grant that the cravings of the flesh, like food and sex, can be satisfied by health, but there is yet another kind of gnawing hunger in man which is constantly clamouring for satisfaction, but which, alas ! can never be responded to adequately, by you, no matter how much wealth you possess. A man who is wealthy in the sense I have described eventually comes to sustain a false relationship with the world in which he lives. He cannot see it for what it is worth, namely, a thing of beauty, of joy constituting as it does the supreme expression of the Divine grace, power and wisdom. Such a one only comes to regard it as though it were there for him for no other purpose than that of exploiting other people's labors, other people's capacities, other people's talents for pandering to the evil forces of his vanity, personal glory and aggrandisement. In the context of the false relationship no real growth of personality is possible".²⁵

As the people are madly eager and wistful to get with genuine interest as good a wealth and money as they can, their outlook seems to be such as if wealth is substantially and intrinsically good and worthy of serious attention and deep aspiration. Hence they feel no need to ask or to be asked what other grounds can be adduced to love and worship it.

It is clear that today wealth is the foundation for mutual assistance and professing the friendship and detestation; as this thing is out of question that wealth is the basis or criterion of respect and dignity. Consequently, the person who is poor, keeping low economical status or weak life-style in society; no matter how nice features and excellent position he may have in the ground of religion, etc, neither the other people give him any regard and heed, nor in his own eyes he has some honour and value, but feels mean and inferior. Also he is badly contempted and disparaged. Whereas the person who is wealthy, belonging to a well-to-do class, or is possessor of some post, he is deemed deserving of all forms of reverence, esteem and tribute, though he is next to nothing or the worse-confounded in the religious and moral life.²⁶ A clear cut discrimination exists between the

rich and the impecunious, the haves and haves-nots. On the other hand, there is no hint of the Divine standard that the noblest and the most honourable of the people, in the sight of Allah, is one who is the most Muttaqi (abstainer), the best in conduct.²⁷

An environment has been set up that the so-called worldly progress or wealth is the goal to be desired and achieved. Consciously or unconsciously, all people have adapted themselves to this paradigm and dominant system and structure, which none can dear or even conceive to oppose or stand against. It has been so inculcated and impressed upon the minds that it is quite impossible that a contrary notion and mode, or way of life may be propounded or sustained.

It is the devil of wealth which has given birth to various so-called systems, as Capitalism, Socialism, Communism, etc, all based on material philosophy, having no relation with the principles and demands of religion. As the various schools, colleges, universities, all such institutions and centers of arts and sciences, are nothing but tools for producing and promoting the worldly fortunes, while any formal and informal education is not to bear some other purpose.

According to the Islamic ideology, there is no space for behaviour as loving and indulging the worldly goods and properties. The Quran is replete with teachings and instructions of such content; as there are clear indications that wealth and children type things are not things which can lead to achieving nearness to Allah and success in the Hereafter; rather they prove to be impediments and obstacles to that, being nothing but a test, temptation and enchasement (Fitna)²⁸. Some verses are mentioned here:

- "The day when wealth and sons avail not (any man)".²⁹
 - "And it is not your wealth and your children that will bring you near unto Allah. But he who believes and does good (he draws near)".³⁰
 - "And know that your possessions and your children are a test, and that with Allah is immense reward".³¹
 - "Your wealth and children are only a temptation, whereas Allah! with Him is immense reward".³²
 - "O ye who believe! Let not your wealth and your children distract you from remembrance of Allah. Those who do it, they are the losers."³³
 - "Rivalry in worldly increase distracts you. Until you come to the graves. Nay, but you will come to know! Nay, but you will come to know".³⁴
- Similarly the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) says:
- "For every Ummah there is a Fitna [temptation] and the Fitna of my Ummah is wealth".³⁵
 - "Curse to the servant of Dirham and curse to the servant of Dinar".³⁶
 - "Do not make property, otherwise you will become inclined to the world".³⁷
 - On the authority of Kab bin Mlik (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "If two hungry wolves were left in a folk of goats, they would not harm them so much as love for wealth and love for prestige are harmful to the religion of man."³⁸
 - On the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "There is no poor and rich but he will desire on the Day of Judgement that in the world he should have been given only the food of Living."³⁹

The instruction and meaning set in these Quranic verses and Ahadith, and in innumerable others of this nature, is that wealth, basically a test and temptation for man, must be hated and avoided except for what is religiously required and permitted; as what is to be derived is that the worldly pleasures--property, social status, glory, name and fame, etc--are not things to be declared worthy of praise and commendation; they are abominable, abhorrent, detestable and contemptible; they are to be despised and condemned, not to be valued and extolled; no matter how much the entire humanity may be found to die for them in the last ditch.

And the fact is that if love of the world, which is the root of every evil and sin, can vanish, or the carnal wishes and material aspirations can be reduced to ashes, that is possible only by real spiritual consciousness and fear of death and what is after death; by considering the worldly life just a period of preparation for the Hereafter; as by virtue of strong and profound attachment to Almighty Allah.

History shows that there have always been two parties or categories of people; one has loved the wealth, and the other has hated it. Persons who had no vision and expectation of the Hereafter, their sole aim and goal was to have wealth and other worldly joys only; their heads and minds were totally occupied by them. Whereas the pious and Godly persons, who believed, owing to the shade of their religion, that they had not been created for this world but for the next world, they tried to refrain from and let aside wealth and the people of wealth. In the Quran the story of Qaroon (Korah) has been mentioned in this manner:

"Korah was of Moses's folk but he oppressed them; and we had given him so much treasure that its keys would verily have been a burden for a troop of mighty men. When his own folk said unto him: 'Exult not; lo Allah loves not the exultant; But seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which Allah has given you and neglect not your portion of the world, and be you kind as Allah has been kind to you, and seek not corruption (Fasad).....Then he went forth before his people in his pomp. Those who were desirous of the life of the world said: Ah, would that unto us had been given the like of what has been given unto Korah; Lo! he is lord of rare good fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said; Woe unto you! The reward of Allah for him who believes and does the right is better and only the steadfast will obtain it".⁴⁰

So how great difference there exists between the people of the two opposite outlooks!

The view to be embraced and nursed, as enshrined in the sources of Islamic principles and commands, is that only that wealth and income is allowed which is necessary for satisfying the basic needs, and which is to be spent in the way of Allah, and for the welfare and assistance of the poor, needy and helpless members of society.⁴¹ And it is also a fact that such like wealth is not only allowable, but is rewardful too, being included in the affairs of Deen. Or, it may be said that with having the worldly wealth and property, there must be held Taqwa ; as it is denoted by a Hadith that if there is Taqwa, then no problem in possessing the wealth. Whereas it is evident that a Muttaqi individual can never deviate from the principles and fixed rules about the wealth.

If some of the Companions of the holy Prophet Muhammad (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and many other great pious persons have been found to have wealth, so their wealth was solely for the afore-mentioned purposes; that was to enable them to attain more pleasure of Allah and more rewards of the next world than

what they could attain without wealth. Hence their wealth and the worldly goods were a means to Godliness and getting nearness of Allah; not a source of adopting more wickedness and devilish behaviours.

Just to accumulate and keep the wealth without caring to spend it in the way of Allah and according to the prescribed manners, is nothing but inviting the misfortune and severe punishment of the Hereafter.

"They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (o Muhammad) of a painful doom. On the day when it will (all) be heated in the fire of hell, and their foreheads and their flanks and their backs will be branded therewith (and it will be said unto them): Here is that which you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard."⁴²

On the authority of Abu Zar (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "It is the people of abundance (of wealth) who will be the lowest on the Day of Judgement; save those who spend the wealth this way and this way, and whose wealth is pure."⁴³

A fact is that with trying to completely and practically regard the spirit and nature of religion (Islam), it is quite impossible to attain and sustain any worldly and material progress and prominence.

Some of the condition of the present people was attempted to be brought into light; now the question is that what should be done? Can there be any way? any resort? at least any advice? whereas "advice is seldom welcome, and those who need it the most like it the least".

CONCLUSION

To conclude or sum up, man is not free in this world. He is to be hedged by restrictions at every moment of life. He has to remain completely bound up with the guidance and direction of Allah; to submit totally to Him; to follow His disciplines and commandments in every step he takes. He has been sent to this world for a test and examination, the result of which is to be seen in the next world. So life for him is a great trust entailing enormous responsibilities. But what is seen today is that the human beings, with only a bit of exception, are relentlessly transgressing the limits. They have heartlessly wandered from the right and chosen path, being found to behave as if in their vessel, there lies no sign of any genuine or stimulated virtue. Their various activities and engagements, particularly the affairs of wealth and economic pursuits do not have any conformity and harmony with the religio-moral codes of behaviour, the Islamically fixed lines and modes. They seem as if they are never to be worried or feel depressed by the facts of death, grave, resurrection and the doctrine of reward and punishment. They have ingloriously forgotten that the demands of religion are not a joke and a matter of ignorance, but are imperative and imperious, admitting no remissness, heedlessness and compromise. What is more appalling and pernicious is that they cannot be prepared and incited for any alteration and upturn, or what is called a 'paradigm shift. So what may naturally and indispensably accrue is that the sensitive and religiously vigilant and sincere persons have to wonder, weep, moan and mourn. They can justly be impelled to clamour that the mankind who, according to the revelational divulgence, was to be the most noble of the creatures and vicegerent of Allah in the earth, how and why did it occur to him to go the way he goes? They may feel constrained and obliged to think and consider if there should or can be endeavors and struggles in any possible and reasonable way for the reformation and

regeneration of the people around; for instilling virtue into them; for bringing them out of the darkness of materialism to the light of spiritualism; from the narrowness of this world to the wideness of the next world; from purposelessness to purposefulness; from Hell to Paradise; from other than Allah to Allah!

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- 14- Al-Quran, 17 : 19
- 15- Taqwa which actually is fear of Allah and of His displeasure, is the only way of the other-worldly success and riddance.
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- 17- ibid.
- 18- Al-Quran, 3 : 185
- 19- Hence the good and successful life in this world is that which is spent for attaining the success of the next world.
- 20- 41 : 31
- 21- 43 : 71
- 22- Williams, Gertrude, "Economics of Everyday Life", London, Penguin Books, 1955, p.13
- 23- "The Conquest of Happiness", ibid, p.42
- 24- ibid.
- 25- Introduction to "Testament of Faith", Lahore, Publishers united, 1975, pp-xv-xvi
- 26- There is a Hadith that when a person respects a rich man and shows courtesy before him due to his richness, the two- third of his Faith (Iman) disappears. □ May Allah protect us !
- 27- AL-Quran, 49 : 13
- 28- Here Fitna means anything which may lead to straying from the right path of religion.
- 29- 26:88
- 30- 34:37
- 31- 8 : 28
- 32- 64:15
- 33- 63 : 9
- 34- 102 : 1-4
- 35- "Jami ut Tarmizi", ibid., Vol.2.
- 36- ibid.
- 37- Ibn Majah, Imam, "Sunan-e-Ibn Mjah", Karachi, H.M.Saeed company, p. 315
- 38- "Jami- ut-Tarmizi", ibid, Vol.2.
- 39- ibid, p.59, vol.2
- 40- 28 : 76-80
- 41- This all being about what is called as lawful (Halal) wealth, earned by lawful means; there is no talk of the unlawful one.
- 42- Al-Quran, 9 : 34-35
- 43- Ibn Majah, Imam, "Sunan-e-Ibn Mjah", ibid. p. 314