

CHAPTER 11

Shuruh

COMMENTARIES AND EXPLANATIONS
OF
SAYYID QUTUB'S
MILESTONES

SUPERIORITY OF THE FAITH

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Introduction.....	1
Superiority of the faith is an ever-lasting state.....	1
The Muslim is connected to Allah	3
Superiority above all earthly powers, values and laws	3
Feeling equally superior when weak and few, just as well as when strong and many	5
Superiority of the faith is not a single act of will nor a passing euphoria nor a momentary passion	6
A superiority which is based on the everlasting Truth and which confronts the pressures of this reality.....	7
The comprehension of the meaning of reliance stems from the true understanding of the Divinity of Allah.....	8
A superiority that is based on the values of the Truth aids one to be steadfast when facing the pressures of jahilliya	11
How do I obtain the sense of superiority of the Islamic Faith? What are the factors of this superiority?	15
The first factor: The Believer is backed by a superior authority and source.....	15
The second factor: The Believer is superior in understanding and concept.....	17
The third factor: The Believer is superior in his concept of values and standards.....	18
The fourth factor: The Believer is superior in his conscience and emotions.....	19
The fifth factor: The Believer is superior in his law and system of life.....	19
Great examples of the superiority of the faith.....	20
Attaining a sense of superiority in the current reality of the Islamic call.....	23
The finest fate, regardless of the results in this worldly life.....	23
The blessing of Allah's guidance requires one to have pride in the Truth, be merciful to others and have a strong desire to guide them to Allah's way.....	24
Milestones in the methodology of calling people to Islam.....	25
The Believer sees the reality of jahilliya despite their misleading displays.....	26
Feeling superior due to the Truth does not mean exalting yourself over others	27
Elevating oneself over desires and longing for the Hereafter.....	27
Feeling superior inspite of the mockery of those who ridicule	28
The Believer is allied with the Truth, and what can be beyond the Truth but error?	31

Superiority of the Faith

Introduction

We will now move on to a new chapter of the Milestones, **“Superiority of The Faith,”** which could in essence be considered a completion of the previous chapter. Their topics are connected and this chapter emphasizes and sheds new light on the matters that have been discussed in the previously.

We have grown accustomed to Qutub's extraordinary way of clarifying and elaborating on specific matters from broader issues, thus conveying new concepts and insights that concern the Muslim and the Islamic society on their way to the path of Allah. Here, we find that Qutub discusses new concepts regarding the far-reaching change expected for a Muslim. A change which, as we have stated in the previous chapter, requires great efforts, knowledge, perception, determination and persistence.

The realization and feeling of superiority of the faith is a great matter, for the Islamic faith itself possesses a certain inherent superiority that consequently instills in the Believer an internal sense of superiority. The superiority and greatness that surrounds the Muslim directly stems from this faith.

There are various types of people who feel superior. This sense of superiority is generally due to their wealth, origin, social status, knowledge or strength. There are also those who feel superior in general despite lacking any tangible cause, and at times, this leads them to overconfidence and arrogance. However, feeling superiority due to faith differs to the nature of any other superiority.

This chapter has been titled, **“Superiority of the Faith,”** thus what is the meaning of this title? What are the various fields in which this superiority is portrayed? What are the elements and outcomes of this superiority? No doubt, all of these inquiries are directly linked to the Muslim's faith. In this chapter, Qutub explains how a Muslim can feel superior due to his faith, and how this sense of superiority can manifest in one who is a Believer.

The superiority of the faith is also connected to the duty of leadership and pioneering. The Muslim leaders, pioneers and those who have just embraced the Islamic faith are all entrusted with the task of establishing and spreading the Islamic faith on earth. In the previous chapter, we had discussed the attributes of the Muslim pioneers. Here, we want to clarify that one of the fundamental and obligatory attributes of the Muslim pioneers is the sense of superiority due to their faith. This feeling must be deeply entrenched in Muslim pioneers and advocates before they can take their first step in advocating the Islamic Truth and faith.

Superiority of the faith is an ever-lasting state

This chapter opens with the noble Quranic verse in the chapter of Al-i-Imran. Allah the Almighty declares:

﴿ وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٩]

“Do not weaken nor grieve, and you will be superior if you are true believers.”
(Surah Al-i-Imran 3:139)

Qutub says: **“The first thought which comes to mind after reading this verse is that it relates to the Jihad that is carried out in the form of combat.”** This is because this particular verse was revealed with the Quranic verses that discussed the Battle of Uhud, the defeat and sorrow which the Muslims experienced in that battle, the injuries that were inflicted upon the Messenger (sas) and seventy of his companions, and the return of the Muslims to Medina with great injuries and loss. In the battle of Badr, which was prior to the one of Uhud, the Muslims had attained victory. However, the result was different in the battle of Uhud. Thus this verse was revealed with the Quranic verses discussing the battle of Uhud. “Do not weaken nor grieve, and you will be superior if you are true believers.” Hence it is possible for one who reads this Quranic verse to immediately think that it is referring to Jihad in the form of a battle and the exhortation to maintain a sense of superiority regardless of the outcome of the battle.

Nevertheless, Qutub says: **“...but the reality and depth of this directive and its numerous implications is greater and wider than this particular aspect.”** There is a principle of Islamic jurisprudence which states: “the general wording of a text is taken as a principle, not the specific reason as to why it was revealed.” This means that the specific reason for a verse’s revelation or the specific event or people that it was revealed about does not restrict its meaning. Rather, it is to be understood as having general application. Thus the meaning that we should take from this Quranic verse is not that it was revealed for a particular reason or that it refers to a particular event; rather, the lesson lies in the general meaning of the verse which is that the sense of superiority is not limited to the aspect of battle and Jihad.

Qutub continues: **“...[this directive] indicates the required eternal state of a Believer in terms of spirit, perception and regard of things, events, values and people.”** Thus the sense of superiority is not a short-lived phase that a Believer experiences during combat; rather, it is an eternal state which accompanies him in every aspect of his life. It is because of his faith that a Muslim is superior. This superiority is manifested in numerous aspects which we will elaborate on shortly. However, we would like to stress that the general meaning of this verse indicates an eternal state rather than a short-lived one. It shows the spirit and perception that is required from a Muslim as well as the proper regard which he must have for things, events, values and people.

“It represents the state of superiority which ought to be well established for the Believer when facing everything; every condition, value and person. It also represents the prevalence of the [Islamic] faith and its values above all other values that stem from a source other than that of the [Islamic] faith.”

This ever-lasting state – the state of feeling superiority of the faith – is not one that a Believer struggles to emulate or forcibly adapts himself to. Rather, it is an unforced state which naturally and automatically overtakes the Believer the moment that he comprehends the Truth of Islam, the Divinity of Allah, as well as the proper relation and outlook towards every matter according to the Divine teachings of Allah. Hence it is an unforced superiority and state. It is a natural spirit that is manifested in the Believer’s soul, heart and life which develops in an unforced and natural manner.

In most cases, if not all, forced and insincere feelings can never become truly established in one’s soul, nor will they convince others of the sincerity of that behavior. One who emulates a nature that is not inherent in them will inevitably be exposed.

It is true that many mannerisms and habits first begin by being emulated without them being inherent in the person, and thereafter they become a natural habit and custom. Nevertheless, if those mannerisms do not become natural and inherent over time, it indicates that the person cannot adapt to them. This might be because the person does not comprehend those mannerisms or that he does not truly approve of them. To exemplify, when one emulates the habit of being truthful, and his only reason and purpose for doing so is that he loves honesty and wishes to be honest at all times, this habit becomes ingrained in him over time and it no longer remains a forced habit. Indeed, it becomes a permanent and natural state for that person.

A Muslim's sense of superiority due to his faith is one that must not be forced at any time; rather, it becomes ingrained in him the moment he comprehends the true meaning of 'there is no deity but Allah' and the Divinity of Allah, as well as the moment he realizes that he has moved from one religion to another and one way of life to another; and understands that he has been transferred from the vile swamp of jahilliya to the beautiful meadow of Islam. The moment that he comprehends all of that, this feeling and sense will be instilled in him. Thereafter, it will intensify through great and continuous efforts as well as through living and adapting to the teachings of Islam. A Muslim's sense of superiority must be well established when facing all matters. If this feeling is ever absent, he must reassess his faith.

The Muslim is connected to Allah

The fundamental source of this superiority is the Muslim's sense that he is connected to Allah the Almighty. The Muslim is consumed by this feeling which thus makes him sense that he is at a high status which the disbelievers do not share with him. The chasm and distance between the believers and disbelievers is similar to that between [Al-Haq], the Truth and [Al-Batil], falsehood; as well as between the Divinity of Allah and the state of the rest of His creations. There is a profound contrast between being connected to Allah, the One and true Deity, and being connected to any other false deity who claims the rights of Divinity. When one truly knows Allah, he will feel superior to falsehood and false deities. Thus the feeling of superiority must be established and must intensify the more one comprehends the vast differences between the Truth and falsehood.

No doubt, the chasm between the Truth and falsehood is immense. If a Muslim does not sense it, he has not truly comprehended the Truth. Conversely, the more one senses the great distance between the Truth and falsehood as well as between the Divinity of Allah and the state of all creations, he will sense superiority due to the Truth that he believes in and the Almighty Whom he is connected to.

A Muslim's comprehension of the huge contrast between the Truth and falsehood and between Allah and false deities can be used as a precise measurement of his faith and his understanding of the Truth. Does the Muslim see vast or minor differences between the Truth and falsehood? Does he see vast or minor differences between Allah and false deities? When one comprehends that the distance between them is so large, it is impossible to even compare them, they have truly grasped the Oneness of Allah's Lordship, the oneness of the Truth and the falsehood of all that are contrary to Allah.

Superiority above all earthly powers, values and laws

As Qutub clarifies, one must feel superior to all earthly powers: **"A superiority above all earthly powers that have deviated from the way of the [Islamic] faith, above all earthly values that**

have not been derived from the source of the [Islamic] faith, above all earthly customs that have not been established by the [Islamic] faith, above all earthly laws that have not been sanctioned by the [Islamic] faith, and above all earthly traditions that do not originate from the [Islamic] faith."

Why the earth? This is because humans were created by Allah and will return to Him in the end. Thus in reality, they are guests on this earth and will not be living here eternally. Mankind must never falsely believe that they will live here eternally; rather, they must know that their state on earth is as was described in the Quran:

﴿ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴾ [البقرة: ٣٦]

"...and for you on the earth is a place of settlement and enjoyment for a time."
(Surah Al-Baqara 2:36)

So this earth is a place of short settlement, and man will then return to his first home. Thus one must see this world as a home in which they will live in for a short while, as the Messenger (sas) stated: "Be in this world as if a foreigner or passerby."

Humanity must never forget that they came from Allah and that their return will be to Him. They must never forget the place that they came from nor the one which they will be returning to. On account of the fact that they are living here temporarily, humanity must feel superior to the earthly powers that have deviated from the methodology of the Islamic faith, for they are limited to this earth. Indeed, man must have an aversion to those earthly powers.

The Muslim's faith, his certainty that he will return to Allah, and his keenness to disassociate from the crime of those who have deviated from the Islamic faith; all of these factors must lead him to be filled with superiority in the face of earthly powers.

A Muslim must also remain superior in the face of all earthly values that have not been derived from the source of the Islamic faith, for they are degrading values that stem from the dirt of the earth. A Believer does not allow for himself to be associated with values that are not derived from the source of the faith.

"... [a superiority] above all earthly customs that have not been established by the [Islamic] faith..."

The vicegerent who has been sent by Allah has his own customs that are fit for his responsibility. One must never forget the requirements of being a vicegerent of Allah on earth. There is no doubt that lowly earthly customs turn the lives of humanity into that of animals, whereby they pursue and live for their desires and pleasures in the same manner that animals live to eat, drink and pursue their desires. Animals were created and were not given knowledge of themselves or others. However, man was created and honored by Allah:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ ﴾ [الإسراء: ٧٠]

"We have certainly honored the children of Adam..." (Israa: 70)

Thus they must preserve their honor and refuse the degrading customs that neither conform to nor stem from the Islamic faith.

Qutub continues: “... [a superiority] above all earthly laws that have not been sanctioned by the [Islamic] faith...”

When people become consumed with the worldly life and believe that it is their eternal home, they ordain their own laws to regulate their lives and lose sight of the true purpose that they were created for. Thus they merely live and work for this worldly life.

“...and above all earthly traditions that do not originate from the [Islamic] faith.”

Any tradition which originates from a desire to be consumed in the worldly life rather than originating from the Islamic faith cannot be accepted by the Muslim. This is because a Muslim knows that he will be leaving this earth and returning to his Lord, thus he cannot accept earthly traditions. Rather, he applies the directive of the Messenger (sas): “Be in this world as if a foreigner or passerby.”

Feeling equally superior when weak and few, just as well as when strong and many

Qutub then says: “Feeling superior when weak in strength, few in numbers and poor, just as well as when strong, rich and great in numbers.”

Why is this? This is because none of those factors have any value in the life of a Believer. He will leave this world and all that is in it. It does not matter if he is poor or rich, weak or strong. The weak as well as the strong will both leave this world in the end. The strong and the rich have no more of a right to eternally live on this earth than the weak and the poor. Thus the Believer feels superior on earth regardless of his state; he never feels defeated or weakened. This superiority stems from his adherence to the Truth. This earth has no value based on the Islamic perspective. Allah declares in the Quran:

﴿ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ ﴾ [الكهف: ٤٥]

“And present to them the example of the life of this world like rain We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it, [and then] it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds...” (Al-Kahf: 45)

No doubt, those remnants have no value. Thus if this entire earth and all that it encompasses have no value, a Believer should not be concerned with having great wealth, for remnants, no matter how large, always remain remnants. As for power, there is no true power on this earth as the ultimate form of power belongs to Allah the Almighty. Additionally, any power that a human obtains, it is from Allah, and any weakness he feels, it is due to being distanced from Him, Exalted is He. A Believer ought to feel superior at all times, regardless of the situation. This was the lesson that Allah taught the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud. In spite of their defeat, Allah declared to them:

﴿ وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٩]

“Do not weaken nor grieve, and you will be superior if you are true believers.”
(Surah Al-i-Imran 3:139)

As you can see, the sense of superiority has been directly linked to the presence of faith and belief.

Qutub continues: **“A superiority which does not give in to any aggressive force, social custom, false legislation, or common tradition that is accepted by a community but does not stem from the [Islamic] faith.”**

A superiority which does not give in to an aggressive force; indeed, a Muslim only surrenders and makes himself submissive to Allah. As for all earthly powers and forces, they neither frighten nor weaken him. He always remains unfazed by them. He sees Allah and acknowledges Him to be the only One worthy of being surrendered to.

Strangely, many people are embarrassed by Islam. They are embarrassed by its legislation and directives, and this shows that they have never been true Muslims to begin with, nor did they ever comprehend the greatness of Allah’s Divinity and the reality of the afterlife. As a result, they are weakened by any aggressive force or social custom.

A Muslim is never weakened or defeated. He takes pride in Islam and all that it calls to. The more immersed he is in his faith, the more he is able to stand against any matter that opposes the teachings of Islam.

A Muslim only lowers himself to Allah. He does not feel embarrassed by any Islamic legislation when confronted with Jahili ones, nor by his customs when surrounded by ones that do not stem from the Islamic faith.

The superior one is always the Believer who does not compare the Religion of Allah to that of His servants. He does not compare Allah to Tawagheet and does not compare the Truth to falsehood. He refuses to do so and is offended when others choose to compare Islam to manmade religions and perceptions. The more that a Believer becomes immersed in his faith, the more he feels superior to the reality of jahilliya. He does not give in to any aggressive force, social custom, false legislation, or common tradition that is accepted by a community but does not stem from the Islamic faith.

Superiority of the faith is not a single act of will nor a passing euphoria nor a momentary passion

Qutub states: **“Steadfastness and perseverance on the battlefield is merely one example of the superiority that is encompassed in the Divine decree of Allah; and the superiority of the faith is not merely a single act of will nor a passing euphoria nor a momentary passion...”**

As we mentioned previously, this superiority stems from the Truth and is not something that one simply chooses to adopt for a certain period of time. It is also not a single act of will that is accomplished once and then forgotten, just as it is not a passing euphoria or a momentary passion that fades through time. This feeling is far greater than that. It is a superiority that stems from the nature of the Islamic faith.

As Qutub says: **“It is a sense of superiority based on the permanent Truth centered in the very nature of existence...the ever-lasting Truth that is above the logic of power, the perceptions of society, the norms of culture and the customs of people, for it is joined with Allah, the Ever-Living Who does not die.”**

Thus the sense of superiority due to faith is not a matter which one chooses to embrace just for a period of time. It is not an act of one’s will or momentary passion. It directly stems from the nature of the Islamic faith, and it is a measurement for one’s level of faith. This is because if a Muslim

does not take pride in the Truth and feel sorrow for those who are distanced from Allah, it becomes evident that his faith remains weak.

This superiority is also based on the ever-lasting supreme Truth that is centered in the nature and reality of existence. Who could this ever-lasting supreme Truth be? Indeed, it is none other than Allah. All things other than Him are of His creation and under His decree. The heavens, the earth, the human race and all that exists in this world were created by Allah, the One and only Truth. Thus this superiority is linked to the ever-lasting supreme Truth, Allah, and everything besides Him will cease to exist.

A superiority which is based on the everlasting Truth and which confronts the pressures of this reality

Who could this ever-lasting supreme Truth be? Indeed, it is none other than Allah. All things other than Him are of His creation and under His decree. The heavens, the earth, the human race and all that exists in this world were created by Allah, the One and only Truth. Thus this superiority is linked to the ever-lasting Truth, Allah, and everything besides Him will cease to exist.

Qutub says: **“The ever-lasting Truth that is above the logic of power, the perceptions of society, the norms of culture and the customs of people.”**

If one takes a look at the history of mankind, they will find that there have been countless nations who have had great strength and power, yet ceased to exist; countless transgressors who showed arrogance and acted as they desired, yet succumbed to death in the end; countless civilizations who had set traditions, ideals and ethics, yet disappeared in the end. Thus the superiority of this faith, of this Religion is linked to the ever-lasting and never-ending Truth. Everyone and everything will cease to exist with the exception of Allah the Almighty. Allah declares:

﴿يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ﴾ [غافر: ١٦]

“The day when they will come forth, nothing of them will be hidden from Allah. To Whom belongs the kingdom this day? To Allah, the One, the All-Dominant”

Thus the kingdom belongs to Allah, the ever-lasting Truth and the superiority of the faith is directly linked to this Truth. Therefore, this superiority never wavers or weakens as it is linked to Allah; the One Who never ceases to exist. This sense of superiority is only found through the comprehensive understanding and certainty of the greatness of Allah’s Divinity. The Islamic faith is not merely the acknowledgment that Allah created this existence. The Islamic faith is not a mere theoretical belief or knowledge. It is much greater than all of this. It is a matter which shows man his true position and leads him to comprehend the vastness and magnificence of Allah, the Great Divinity. Certainty of Allah’s greatness and Divinity makes the human sense Allah, depend on Him at all times and feel superior under all circumstances. This is because the human is a slave of Allah.

Qutub states: **“Societies have their own logic and thinking, norms, legislation, overbearing standards and pressure which overpower those who are not protected by a firm entity and support. Prevailing ideologies and common concepts have a power that is difficult to overcome without adhering to a truth as well as a greater, stronger and more superior source whereby those ideologies and concepts lose all value.”**

Realistically, an existing society that has its own authority, army, culture, values, ethics, norms, systems, and organizations exerts a tremendous power and influence. Nonetheless, the Believer is obligated to confront this reality despite its weight and pressure, and if he does not seek support and strength from the right source he will inevitably be defeated. It is extremely difficult to face the fierce, overwhelming and wild flow of jahilliya alone. This jahilliya is aggressive and does not allow for anyone to impede or stand in the way of its hopes and desires. Anyone who attempts to do so will be crushed and devoured by them.

Thus one who wishes to face jahilliya must be strong. He must be connected to a power and source that is higher, stronger and more superior to that of jahilliya. This is the ultimate form of reliance on Allah the Almighty. One starts to rely on Allah when he comprehends the reality and greatness of Allah's Divinity in comparison to the reality of this lowly jahilliya, as well as when he understands the true essence of power, and in whose hand it lies. To Whom does power and strength really belong? To Allah, or to the tawagheet? Who can change this reality and end it all with a single word, Allah, or jahilliya?

The Muslim must remember that everything which jahilliya does, it is only able to do so by the will of Allah. Furthermore, if Allah ever decreed for them to be weakened, they will forcibly stand weak in front of the Believers. Thus if a Muslim seeks support from the power of Allah, he will be connected to a Power that can crush this seemingly overwhelming reality.

The comprehension of the meaning of reliance stems from the true understanding of the Divinity of Allah

It is extremely important to comprehend the meaning and importance of relying on Allah. Essentially, in order for one to rely on another, they must be certain that this person whom they are relying on is attributed with characteristics which make him worthy of this reliance; characteristics which make him worthy of being trusted. Thus one who is relied on must have the power to protect and fulfill the needs of others. A Muslim is certain that Allah is the only One Who has this power. To Allah belongs all power. He does not merely own a fraction of it or even the majority of it; rather, He owns it all as is stated in the Quran:

﴿ اِنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيعًا ﴾ [البقرة: ١٦٥]

“To Allah belongs all power” (Surah Al-Baqara 2:165)

Thus none other than Him have any power, and everything in this universe moves according to His will. Allah states:

﴿ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴾ [المائدة: ١]

“Allah decrees as He wishes” (Surah Al-Maida 5:1)

﴿ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ ﴾ [هود: ١٠٧]

“Your Lord is a doer of what He wills” (Surah Hud 11:107)

A Believer is certain that Allah holds all power, the command and decree are in His hand, and none other than Him can benefit or inflict harm. A Believer is certain that if the nation comes together to harm him, they will not harm him except with what had already been predestined by Allah; and if they come together to benefit him, they will not benefit him except with what had

already been predestined by Allah. A Believer is certain that sustenance lies in the hands of Allah, and that none can prevent sustenance other than Him. If all of the transgressors on earth came together to prevent a single grain of wheat from reaching the Muslim, they would not be able to do so. A Believer is also certain that destiny and fate lie in the hands of Allah, and that He is the One Who decrees them. If all of the transgressors on earth come together to kill a Believer, they will not be able to do so unless it has been predestined by Allah. When the people of the Messenger Abraham came together to burn him in a fire, Allah declared:

﴿ قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴾ [الأنبياء: ٦٩]

“We said to the fire: be a haven of coolness and safety upon Ibrahim” (Surah Al-Anbiya 21:69)

When the Messenger Moses was being chased by Pharaoh and his army, Musa declared:

﴿ قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴾ [الشعراء: ٦٢]

“Never! My Lord is with me and He will guide me” (Surah Al-Shu’ara 26:62)

When the Messenger Muhammad (sas) was being hunted by the disbelievers, and he was hiding in a cave with his companion Abu Bakr, he (sas) stated: “What do you think of two with Allah as their third?!”

This was how the Muslim predecessors relied on Allah. They knew that they had Allah to rely on, and that if the disbelievers attempted to accomplish something that was predestined by Allah, they would succeed in accomplishing it. However, their success would not be due to their efforts and will; rather, it would solely be due to the will and decree of Allah. Indeed, if all of the earthly powers attempted to alter the predestination of Allah, they would utterly fail.

The importance of relying on Allah cannot be overstated. When we sense the pressures of the society, where do we turn? There is no place of safety except by Allah the Almighty. We are certain that He will aid and honor us. We are also certain that He will never abandon His servants nor leave them without support when they have sincerely submitted to Him and chose Him over all others. It is common that when a person chooses someone over others and relies on him, the one who is being relied on will not fail to come through and support that person. Thus what do you expect from Allah, the Glorious and Magnificent? Indeed, He will never abandon His sincere servant.

If a Believer chooses Allah over others, Allah will choose him as well. It has been stated in the Quran:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ [المائدة: ٥٤-٥٦]

“O you who have believed, whoever of you reverts from his religion, Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, who are humble toward the Believers but superior to the disbelievers, who struggle for the cause of Allah without the fear of critics. That is the favor of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills, and Allah is All-Encompassing and Knowing. (54)

Your ally is none but Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed – those who establish prayer and give Zakah and bow in worship.(55) And whoever allies himself with

Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed; indeed the party of Allah will be victorious. (56)” (Surah Al-Maida 5:54-56)

This is the decree of Allah revealed by Him, Exalted is He. Allah also declares:

﴿وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَإِنَّ جُنَدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿١٧٥﴾﴾ [الصافات: ١٧٣-١٧٥]

“And Our word has already preceded for Our servant Messengers; that indeed they are the victorious ones; and that indeed Our soldiers are always victorious.”
(Surah Al-Saffat 37:171-173)

If a Muslim believes that he will be defeated in spite of being one of Allah’s soldiers, his faith remains weak. A Muslim must be certain that he will succeed; that he will be victorious. If he is killed in the path of Allah, his fellow Muslim brothers will succeed after him, and he will attain the blessing of being a martyr. Allah has the power and authority to bring success and victory to His party, even if that party only consists of one individual.

One who faces jahilliya and calls to Islam puts himself in a position that is much more critical and grave than one who calls to any other ideology. This is because the reality of this Divine religion that was brought by all of the Messengers cannot coexist with jahilliya. There can be no land that is shared by jahilliya and Islam, as there is no common ground between them. Allah declares in the Quran:

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾﴾ [النمل: ٤٥]

“And we sent to Thamud their brother Saleh, saying ‘Worship Allah,’ and at once they were two parties at conflict” (Surah Al-Naml 27:45)

When Muhammad (sas) revealed the Message entrusted to him to an elder named Waraqah, the son of Nawfal, that he was a Messenger sent by Allah, Waraqah declared: “I wish I would be alive when your tribe banishes you.” The Messenger (sas) asked: “They would banish me?” Waraqah replied: “None have come with what you have brought without facing hostilities!”

Thus it is not possible for Islam and jahilliya to be at peace with one another. One who chooses Islam must realize that he has chosen to face all earthly powers, and that he will not be able to compromise with jahilliya. This is different to all manmade concepts and ideologies. Buddhists, communists, capitalists, socialists as well as others share a common ground. A communist can share a drink with a capitalist; he can commit adultery or usurp people’s rights and wealth without reverting from his ideology and belief. Furthermore, all of these people have similar ethics, standards and characteristics. When a communist is in a capitalist society, he does not feel different to them except in some details of his belief. Their realities are the same. They drink, eat, dress and act in the same manner. They understand each other. They might differ on a few philosophical beliefs; however, none of them care about the True Religion, about Allah, about the unseen, or about morals and ethics. They can easily coexist peacefully if they put aside the few matters which they differ on.

On the other hand, a Muslim cannot do the same. He cannot participate with jahilliya in their ways; he cannot share in their conduct, dealings, values, ethics, or manners. He is a unique and different entity altogether; his ways and the ones of jahilliya completely oppose each other. The only common characteristic is that they are both humans. Other than that, they differ in every aspect.

Due to this, the jahili society pressures the Muslim a lot more than it pressures individuals with other ideologies. One who chooses to be a capitalist whilst living in a communist society will not face many pressures or difficulties, and if he chose to adhere to communism, he would not have to change much of his life. He would not have to alter his emotions, ethics or conduct, as both manmade ideologies are degrading and animal-like.

As for the Muslim, he is unable to change in a single moment. Even in the unfortunate circumstance that a Muslim was to revert from his Religion and Beliefs, it would take him a lengthy period of time to return to the low life of jahilliya - the one that used to disgust him before he had left Islam.

A superiority that is based on the values of the Truth aids one to be steadfast when facing the pressures of jahilliya

Superiority is a power that instills a great measure of confidence and indifference in an individual when they are facing adversaries. We see that when one takes pride in himself or his tribe, the power of his pride and superiority gives him the ability to go to great lengths for himself or his tribe. He is able to face an entire nation if needed. This was common among the Arabs in the olden times. They would battle each other based on the conflicts between their tribes.

However, when the superiority is one that stems from the Islamic faith, it conforms to the Islamic ethics, goals and means. This is where the difference lies. They are both a form of superiority; nonetheless, one is based on the Islamic faith, connected to the Truth and conforms to the values, goals and means of the Truth. In contrast, the other one is based on falsehood and connected to the low-life of jahilliya.

A Muslim faces a lot of pressures in the society. Therefore, it is mandatory that he connects to a great power and force prior to declaring war on this corrupt and arrogant jahilliya. If the Believer is not reliant on a higher power, he will not be able to hold his ground at all.

This is what happened to many of the Islamic movements of the past; they had not attained the necessary level of superiority, certainty of faith, or a correct belief in Allah, the Hereafter, the Messengers and the Truth. They all collapsed in the face of the forces of falsehood due to a few pressures, a little torture, imprisonment, deprivation of seeing their wives and children, the seizure of their assets and the loss of their freedom. They all eventually collapsed. Why? It is because the pressure that jahilliya exerts is immense, and the individuals of the Islamic movement did not have a sense of superiority. They had enough courage to face jahilliya and tolerate imprisonment for a while; however, they did not have enough to withstand all that followed. They were unable to sacrifice their children, wives, assets, status, freedom, as well as their basic wants and needs for the sake of pleasing Allah and being granted Paradise.

If a Believer does not consider and prepare for all of the aforementioned consequences, he will undoubtedly be defeated. He will give in the moment he hears the cries of his child, or sees tears in his wife's eyes. This is because he does not have sufficient strength to face despair from his child or wife, nor to refrain from giving in to the matters which jahilliya will tempt him with; a high status, luxuries and wealth. If one does not have sufficient strength, superiority and certainty in his faith, he will undoubtedly surrender.

A Muslim carries a great responsibility on his journey towards Allah. He carries the Amanah [Trust] which the heavens, the earth and the mountains declined and feared to undertake, as is mentioned in the Quran:

﴿ إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ﴾
[الأحزاب: ٧٢]

“Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to undertake it and feared it; but man undertook it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant” (Surah Al-Ahzab 33:72)

The heavens, earth, and mountains had a greater perception and comprehension than humans in regards to this Trust. Due to their caution, they chose safety over taking risks and carrying this heavy burden. Mankind – who was unjust and ignorant - chose to carry this task which could lead him to a miserable fate in the Hereafter if he did not succeed in fulfilling it. Thus in the following verse, Allah declared:

﴿ لِيُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ وَيَتُوبَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴾
[الأحزاب: ٧٣]

“[It was] so that Allah may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women and those who associate others with Him, and that Allah may accept repentance from the believing men and believing women. And Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful” (Surah Al-Ahzab 33:73)

This Trust is a great task. A Believer who carries the Islamic faith whilst living in a jahili society must know the gravity of the task which he carries. He must also comprehend its difficulty as well as the consequences that may befall him due to carrying this task. How can a Believer face these consequences? He must rely on the support of Allah, Exalted is He. However, how can a Believer become deserving of the aid and support of Allah? Indeed, he must deepen his faith and piety, and become a sincere and faithful servant to Allah.

Qutub says: “One who takes a stand against the direction of the society, its governing logic, its norms, its values and standards, its ideas and concepts, and its errors and deviations will find himself a stranger, as well as helpless, unless his authority comes from a source that is more powerful than people, more lasting than the earth, and more precious than life.”

How will one feel when he is taken from his home, ridiculed, beaten in public and imprisoned with the possibility of facing torture? Will he feel despair and pain for being ridiculed, and believe that Islam only brought shame and humiliation for him? Will he renounce his belief and abandon the Truth due to these factors? Or will he turn to the firm support and aid of Allah?

There is no doubt that a Muslim faces ridicule at times and feels that he is stranger in this society. This ridicule will make him feel humiliated and ashamed if he is not reliant on a power and source that is much more powerful than all people.

It is mandatory that Muslims strive to connect with Allah while they are well-off and at ease in order to gain His aid and support in times of need. A Muslim must learn about Allah and how he can be connected with Him at all times. One must not only turn to Allah when facing hardships; rather, he must remember Him in every situation. That is the only way in which one will be aided and supported by Allah. A Muslim must have certainty of Allah and His attributes. He must deeply love Allah, truly fear Him and greatly revere Him. He must also fear the Hereafter, as well as the pain of the hellfire. All of these elements are considered to be the Muslim’s weapon when facing disbelievers. If a Muslim is equipped with all of this, how can a

disbeliever ever harm him? Even if a Muslim was to be put through pain in this world, it would shortly end and he will move to Paradise.

This was comprehended by Omair bin Hamam, a Companion of the Messenger (sas) in the battle of Badr. When Omair heard the Messenger (sas) stating, "He who fights, facing the enemy and not turning away will enter Paradise," he tossed away some dates that he had in his hand and rushed to fight. He was unable to take some time to finish eating those dates. This was Omair's outlook and perspective. He was promised that he would be granted Paradise if he fought for the sake of Allah, thus there was nothing that could obstruct his path to attaining it.

From here we can understand that jahilliya is incapable of harming a Believer in any way. At most, they are only capable of killing him which essentially means that he will meet his Lord sooner and be granted Paradise. Thus a Muslim who is connected to Allah is prepared for everything.

"He who takes a stand against the society... will find himself a stranger, as well as helpless, unless his authority comes from a source that is more powerful than people, more lasting than the earth, and more precious than life."

In this quote, we find that the earth has been mentioned once again. This is because the earth is the most firm and lasting thing that man knows. Thus the power which a Muslim relies on and connects to is greater than the earth, for it is the power of Allah. It is also more precious than life, for a life without Islamic Faith and Belief has no value. If a Muslim has to renounce and sacrifice his Faith and Belief, he has renounced and given up the most valuable factor of his life. Essentially, he has lost his honor and dignity. What value does one have if he lacks the Islamic Faith and Belief? He will not be any better than animals that live a life without a purpose or meaning. Thus a Muslim must firmly grasp this honor which makes him a noble human. In addition, one who lacks the Islamic Faith leads himself to a loss in this world and the Hereafter.

If one's authority does not come from a source that is more powerful than people, more lasting than the earth, and more precious than life, he will inevitably feel like a stranger and be helpless when he stands against the society, its governing logic, its common norms, its values and standards, its ideas and concepts as well as its errors and deviations.

Qutub continues: **"...and Allah does not leave the Believer alone to face the pressure, be overwhelmed by its weight and crushed with weakness and grief, Thus He reveals the following message:**

﴿ وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٩]

**"Do not weaken nor grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] Believers."
(Surah Al-i-Imran 3:139)"**

This is an ordinary matter. If a Muslim truly knows Allah, he must place his trust in Him. A Muslim must know that Allah would not abandon a servant who chose Him over others, loved and worshiped Him, fought in His cause and proclaimed His word. The most noble of humans would not do that to anyone; thus how would Allah, the most Noble and Generous of all; Exalted is He? A Believer must be certain that if he chooses Allah over everything, Allah will stand by him. We have been told in the Quran:

﴿ إِنْ تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ ﴾ [محمد: ٧]

“If you support Allah, He will support you and make your foothold firm”
(Surah Muhammad 47:7)

This issue must be very clear: a Muslim is not left alone to face his weakness and isolation. If this thought ever enters his mind, he must instantly remember that he is neither weak nor alone. Rather, he is strong because he is with Allah, and if Allah is with him, he will not have need for anything else. We can now understand the message of the Quranic verse:

﴿ وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٩]

“Do not weaken nor grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] Believers.”
(Surah Al-i-Imran 3:139)

This verse was revealed as the Muslims were returning from the battle of Uhud, when the Messenger (sas) had been injured, his incisors chipped, his forehead cut, and his dearest uncle Hamza killed along with seventy of his Companions. This was a sore defeat by all accounts, yet Allah reveals this message to them: “Do not weaken nor grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] Believers.”

Qutub comments: **“This message was revealed to face and relieve the sense of weakness and grief which are two feelings that overcome one in this situation. It relieves those feelings, not merely through patience and steadfastness, but also through a sense of superiority by which it looks down at the oppressive powers, dominant values, common perceptions, standards, customs, traditions and the masses united in error; as they all seem low.”**

As we mentioned previously, superiority is a tool which leads one to move forward and take actions. It faces the oppressive earthly powers as well as the sense of weakness and grief which overcomes one at times. It looks down on the oppressive powers, fully aware that they have no value, nor a power of their own. Allah is the One Who controls them and is capable of taking all power from them. Throughout history, we have seen countless transgressors who have come to a fall, within a moment, countless nations who have been destroyed in moments. This was due to the will of Allah the Almighty. He has revealed many verses in the Quran narrating the stories of the Messengers Noah, Abraham, Hud as well as many others. Allah has described how He destroyed the arrogant disbelievers of preceding nations with one command:

﴿ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ لِنُبَيِّنَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخَزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَخْزَىٰ وَهُمْ لَا يُنصَرُونَ ﴾

[فصلت: ١٦]

“So We sent upon them a furious wind during days of disaster to make them taste the punishment of disgrace in the worldly life; but the punishment of the Hereafter is more disgracing, and they will not be helped.” (Surah Fussilat 41:16)

﴿ وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَىٰ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ صَاعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴾ [فصلت: ١٧]

“As for Thamud, We guided them, but they preferred blindness over guidance, so the thunderbolt of humiliating punishment seized them for what they used to earn.”
(Surah Fussilat 41:17)

Thus it is a superiority that looks down at the oppressive earthly powers, dominant values, common perceptions, standards, customs and traditions; and views them as lowly factors. This

superiority also looks down at the masses who praise the tyrants and who are then crushed and degraded by them. All of those people are situated in deviation!! They are all in error! This, a Muslim must never forget.

How do I obtain the sense of superiority of the Islamic Faith? What are the factors of this superiority?

One might ask: "How can I obtain this sense of superiority which looks down at deviation from afar and sees its inferiority? How can I feel and become superior?"

Indeed, this cannot be accomplished through mere words. As I stated previously, it is a sense which naturally stems from the Islamic faith. When Allah commands Muslims to feel superior to the oppressive earthly powers and dominant values, they might believe that it is a wonderful directive but difficult to achieve in reality. They might wonder how this can be accomplished. How can one be and feel superior due to his faith? How can one find strength in his faith? How can one face the earthly powers and dominant jahili values? How can one face this reality, while standing his ground and showing strength? Indeed, these are all wonderful ambitions that would be great to achieve, but what are the means to achieving them?

This is an important question that we must all ask ourselves. Most people – when they are well and safe – believe that it will be easy to remain strong during hardships. Nonetheless, when they are faced with tribulations and adversities they discover how much strength they truly have. We have all had that experience at some point in our lives, whereby we thought we would be able to remain steady. However, it is difficult to face tribulations and very few are able to hold their ground. Thus how do we become steadfast and superior?

We have previously explained that superiority is an energy which propels one to face an adversity, remain steadfast and strive to defeat the opposing side. We have also stated that the more the sense of superiority is instilled in someone, the greater their energy will be. When discussing the superiority of the faith, we are referring to the energy and spirit which the Islamic faith and the certainty of the Truth instills in the Believer when he is facing obstacles such as the pressures of the society, its oppressive powers, its traditions, laws, customs and concepts, as well as its masses. This spirit and energy increases the more one deepens his faith. However, it is required that one alters his life and conforms it with the conditions of the Islamic faith in order to attain that superiority.

The first factor: The Believer is backed by a superior authority and source

Qutub describes the first factor which instills superiority in a Believer who truly knows Allah and is keen to be superior in his faith:

"Indeed, the Believer is superior... superior in authority and source. What is [the value of] this entire earth, the people, the dominant values of this earth, the standards common among people, when one receives guidance from Allah, and to Him returns, and to His methodology adheres?"

This is the first factor which instills superiority in a Believer: when he is utterly certain that he is superior in authority and source. He knows that he is connected to Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Thus if he is faced with the pressures and forces of this entire earth, what value and power do they have in comparison to the power of Allah the Almighty. If one is truly

connected to Allah and truly believes in Him and His attributes, what can possibly make him sense weakness and prevent him from feeling superior? If a Muslim is certain that this entire earth is in the hands of Allah, what could ever stand in his way? Allah declares in the Quran:

﴿وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ﴾ [الزمر: ٦٧]

“...the whole earth shall be in His grip on Judgment Day and the heavens rolled up in His right hand...” (Surah Az-Zumar 39:67)

If Allah owns the entire earth as well as the heavens, and my adversary is only a part of this earth; a member of the human race, how can he stand in my way? Even if we are opposed by everyone who lives on this earth, with all their might and force, as well as their injustice and oppression, how can they possibly harm us when we are connected to the One Who created them, and is able to destroy them in an instant, and the entire earth would cease to exist. If you are certain that you are superior in authority and source, what is the significance of this earth, its people, their dominant values and their common standards? You receive guidance from Allah, to Him will be your return, and His methodology is your way of life. Allah states in the chapter of Al-Maidah:

﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ [المائدة: ١٧]

“They have lost faith those who say that Allah is the Christ son of Mary. Ask: Then who could prevent Allah at all if He intends to destroy the Christ son of Mary, or his mother, or everyone on this earth? For to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. He creates what He wills, and He has power over all things.”
(Surah Al-Maida 5:17)

One who reads this Quranic verse will stand in awe, for Allah used His Messenger, Jesus (as) and his mother Mary to affirm this truth: there is nothing and no one who can stand in the way of Allah and His Might. Therefore, a Believer will find confidence when facing jahilliya if he is certain of Allah and His attributes, and is certain that he is superior in authority and source, and that this entire earth has no value. When a Believer knows that he can rely on Allah, he will be reassured. We saw this when the Messenger (sas) was in the cave and his enemies were standing by the entrance of the cave, and his companion Abu Bakr said: “If one of them just looks down at his feet, he will see us!” Abu Bakr was afraid for the Messenger (sas), but the Messenger (sas) reassured him and said: “What do you think of two, who have Allah as their third?”

Similarly, Allah pledged to protect His Messenger Muhammad (sas) in the following verse:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ﴾ [المائدة: ٦٧]

“O Messenger, announce what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not then you have not conveyed His message, and Allah will protect you from the people”
(Surah Al-Maida 5:67)

After this verse was revealed, the Messenger (sas) dismissed his guards, for he realized that he had no need for the protection of his companions which used to be allocated to him when he was at home, in his tent, or when traveling.

We also see this reassurance, confidence and superiority in the Messenger Musa (as) when he was fleeing Egypt with his Muslim companions, and they were being chased by Pharaoh and his army. Allah relates in the Quran:

﴿ فَلَمَّا تَرَأَى الْجَمْعَانِ قَالَ أَصْحَابُ مُوسَى إِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُونَ ﴾ [الشعراء: ٦١]

“And when the two gatherings sighted each other, the companions of Musa said: “We are surely overtaken!” (Surah Al-Shu’ara 26:61)

They were trapped; the sea was in front of them, and behind them was the army of Pharaoh who was charging at them with all their fury and rage:

﴿ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ قَلِيلُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَائِظُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَإِنَّا لَجَمِيعٌ حَاذِرُونَ ﴾ [الشعراء: ٥٤-٥٦]

“These (Musa and the Israelites) indeed are nothing but a small band, and they have enraged us, and indeed we are all alert” (Surah Al-Shu’ara 26:54-56)

Thus the companions of Musa exclaimed: “We are surely overtaken!” However, Musa (as) firmly replied:

﴿ قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴾ [الشعراء: ٦٢]

“No! My Lord is with me, He will guide me” (Surah Al-Shu’ara 26:62)

How would Allah guide him? Musa did not know. Nonetheless, Allah commanded him to face Pharaoh and vowed to protect him, and Musa was certain that Allah would accomplish His will. Immediately, Allah came forth with His aid and declared:

﴿ فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فَرَقٍ كَالطُّورِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴾ [الشعراء: ٦٣]

“Then We revealed to Musa, “Strike the sea with your staff,” then it split and each side was like a great towering mountain.” (Surah Al-Shu’ara 26:63)

The staff was nothing but a tool to connect Allah’s predestination and will to the actions of man. Musa (as) was merely told to strike the sea and observe what happens.

Thus when the Muslim is assured that he is superior in authority and source, there is nothing that can ever worry him. This is one of the factors and means to attaining superiority of the faith.

The second factor: The Believer is superior in understanding and concept

Qutub explains: “The Believer is superior in understanding and concept in regards to the reality of existence. The belief of Allah and His Oneness that was brought by Islam is the most perfect form of understanding the greatest Truth. When this form is compared to the heaps of concepts, beliefs and doctrines - whether they are the ones that were initiated by the greatest philosophers, ancient or modern, or the ones that stem from the distorted beliefs and deviated scriptures, or the ones that are wrongfully derived from the materialistic and grave doctrines - when this bright, clear, beautiful and balanced form of concept is compared to the heaps of deviations, the glory of the Islamic creed shines forth in a manner that has never been seen before. There is no doubt that those who have grasped this knowledge are superior to all others.”

When the Divine concept is compared to all other concepts and philosophies, ancient or modern, as well as the pagan beliefs, distorted scriptures and materialistic doctrines, a Muslim will become certain of the greatness and glory of this Religion, as well as the immense greatness and glory of Allah. Thereafter, all other concepts and doctrines will fall in his eyes, and he will develop a great admiration for Islam, its Truth and its core belief. Consequently, he will firmly grasp this Religion and refuse to renounce it for anything. He will feel superior inside. He is a Muslim, thus he is noble. He is a Believer, thus he is superior. He is with Allah and believes in Him, thus how could he not be superior? This is another factor and means to attaining the sense of superiority.

The third factor: The Believer is superior in his concept of values and standards

Qutub continues: **“He is also superior in his concept of the values and standards by which life, events, things and people are measured. The creed that is based on the knowledge of Allah and His attributes as described by Islam, as well as the knowledge of the true values of this large universe rather than this small earth - this grand creed provides the Believer with a concept of the true values that are superior to and firmer than the various standards made by men who do not know anything except that which is under their feet. These men do not remain stable and hold on to one standard throughout one generation, nor one nation; in fact, even one individual changes his standard from one moment to another.”**

Indeed, a Believer is certain that he is superior in his concept of values and standards by which he measures life, events, things and people. This is because Allah established this creed, and it is He Who established those values and standards by His knowledge, benevolence and mercy. When a Muslim compares the reality of Islam and its core belief to the surrounding jahilliya and its sources, he feels exalted and superior. This jahilliya is limited in their knowledge of the future, thus their laws and systems last for a short period of time, only to be altered and modified once again. They also seek their personal interests and desires thus depriving themselves and others of true benefit and the greater good.

One can easily observe how unstable Jahili individuals are in their legislation and systems, and how often they alter them. There is a time when capitalism would be sought after as it supposedly protects one's freedom and proclaims the individual as a sovereign. Shortly after, communism would become the ultimate ideology as it exalts the community. When one observes this, he will understand that all of these systems are essentially based on human desires. Instability is an inherent part of human nature as they tend to lose interest in their particular state. There is also the fact that everything established by jahilliya is colored with ignorance and lack of true knowledge. Jahilliya does not have certainty in any matter, thus all of their concepts are based on probabilities and inclinations. Even their scientific knowledge is based on probabilities; if a new hypothesis seems more likely than the previous ones, it is deemed established for all practical purposes. However, they can never have any certainty in whether these scientific hypotheses or theories are true facts.

In reality, the entire theory of probabilities and man's uncertainty of knowledge is nothing but a proof of the absolute freedom of Divine will. There really is no such thing as a fixed law in nature, because all events are a direct result of Allah's will. These laws that we rely upon and believe to be unchangeable, whether it is gravity, light, magnetism, attraction and repulsion, or any other law of nature; they all seem fixed laws because the Creator intended to allow life to maintain an expected and stable course, but in reality these laws can be changed by the will of Allah at any chosen time. Thus there can never be a fixed law or certain knowledge discovered by man.

A Muslim knows these facts very well. He also knows that the One Who established a system and methodology for life is Allah, Who has complete and absolute knowledge of mankind and his nature. Allah has established a system and methodology for life with His absolute knowledge, mercy, justice, generosity, uniqueness and perfection. When this system is compared to all other manmade ones, regardless of the age, a Muslim will undoubtedly feel proud and superior as he adheres to this Divine and perfect methodology and way of life. This is another way in which one can attain the sense of superiority due to the Islamic faith.

The fourth factor: The Believer is superior in his conscience and emotions

We will now move on to the fourth factor which instills superiority in a Muslim. Qutub says:

“He is also superior in his conscience and emotions, as well as in his morals and conduct; for his belief in Allah Who has excellent Names and ideal Attributes creates in him a sense of dignity, cleanliness, purity, modesty and piety, and a desire for good deeds, and for rightly representing Allah on this earth. Furthermore, this belief gives him the assurance that the reward is in the Hereafter, a reward through which the troubles of the world and all of its sorrows become insignificant. The heart of the Believer is content with this reward, even if he passes through life without apparent success.”

When a Muslim comprehends the reality of the One Whom he worships, and senses His excellent Names and ideal Attributes, and thereafter observes this Religion directing him to the cleanliness, good morals and high values of Islam, then he will understand that Islam and its methodology leads to the highest level of perfection achievable for mankind. A Muslim will also observe that every manmade system and doctrine degrades man from this high status intended for him by Allah, and situates him in a lifestyle that has been described to be similar to that of animals or even worse. In the Quran, the individuals of this lifestyle have been compared to donkeys who carry huge burdens of books without understanding their meanings. Thus Jahili individuals do not understand the beauty that lies in Islam and its methodology, and they strive to degrade all of mankind until they reach their level. When a Muslim observes this reality and comprehends the beauty of his Religion, he must feel superior due to his Religion, His Lord Who has excellent Names and Attributes, as well as his Muslim society and its wonderful characteristics. He must also feel superior due to his traits and characteristics which he developed after he lived with the methodology and the way of life of Islam. Due to this life, the Muslim becomes truthful, modest, noble and courageous. Meanwhile, Jahili individuals are vile, hypocritical, petty, foul, indecent, and animalistic, and are also attributed with all other heinous traits. Thus a Muslim is certainly superior to those lowly human beings.

The fifth factor: The Believer is superior in his law and system of life

We have now reached the final factor described by Qutub. He says:

“And he is superior in his law and system of life. When the Believer analyzes all that mankind has known, ancient or modern, and compares them to his law and system, he will see them as a child or a blind man’s attempt [at a system], in comparison to the perfect system and complete law of Islam. He will also look from afar at this lost humanity with compassion and sympathy for its misery and wretchedness, and he will find nothing in his heart except a sense of superiority over that wretchedness and deviation.”

One who looks into the law of Allah, and observes this precise yet merciful legislation, will be convinced that Allah's law is indeed superior, and consequently he will feel superior by adopting this law with all its precision, consistency, sublimity, and comprehensiveness. He will also pity this jahilliya that lives under manmade laws as well as laws ordained by tyrants. He will pity its misery and wretchedness and will find nothing in his heart except a sense of superiority over it all.

Great examples of the superiority of the faith

Here, Qutub relays the story of Mughirah bin Shu'bah and Rab'i bin Amir when they went to Rustum, the commander of the Persian army at the time. In his past, Mughirah bin Shu'bah was an audacious outlaw bandit who was also particularly rugged-looking. Rustum on the other hand was glorified by the pre-Islamic Arabs and held in high regard. The Arabs would even prostrate to him when they were in his presence. However, when Mughirah embraced Islam he went to see Rustum and stood in front of him without holding any regard for the royal splendor the Persians customarily showered him. Mughirah was not awed by anything that the Persian leader had and he did not stand humbled. Rather, he approached him in the manner that is shown in the following story:

"Abu Uthman Al-Nahdi narrated: when Mughirah bin Shu'bah crossed al-Qandarah to the Persian court he was told to sit while they ask Rustum for permission to receive him. The court presented in full regalia to show their disdain for the Arabs. Mughirah then arrived to see them wearing their crowns and dresses embroidered with gold thread, sitting at the end of a carpet three to four hundred feet long (done to show how far one must travel to reach such exalted company). He approached, his hair braided in four braids, and promptly decided to sit on the royal throne beside Rustum. Rustum's court immediately pounced and dragged Mughirah to the ground. Mughirah said: "We used to hear about your renowned sensibility, but I have never seen anyone more idiotic than you people. Us Arabs do not enslave each other unless through victory in combat, and I thought you Persians are similar to us in that regard. But if you had told me that some of you are lords over the rest there would have been no need to treat me the way you did. And I did not come on my own volition but you asked for me. Today I realized that your rule is for naught, that you are defeated, and that no rule lasts if based on this character or this mentality"!"

What an amazing approach! How was Mughirah able to respond to them in such a manner when he was alone amidst this large group of people?

Qutub continues: **"Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas sent Rab'i on the days preceding Al-Qadisiyyah to Rustum, the commander and leader of the Persian military. He entered a Persian court resplendent with silk carpets and cushions adorned with sapphire and expensive pearls. Rustum wore his crown and expensive garments and he sat on a bed made of gold..."**

Notice how they derive their value from these materialistic excesses. This is the reality of jahilliya, and it does so in order to awe and fool people into believing in their superficial magnificence. This is exactly what the Messenger of Allah Muhammad (sas) taught his Companions as he showed them how to properly calibrate their value system, as is shown in the following narration:

"A man passed by the Messenger of Allah (sas) and the Messenger asked his Companions: 'What would you say of him?' They replied: 'We would say O Messenger of Allah he is of upper class, worthy of accepting if he proposed to marry, worthy of accepting whoever he intercedes for,

worthy of listening to if he talked...' The Messenger of Allah (sas) did not comment. Then another man passed by, and the Messenger asked again: 'What would you say of him?' They replied: 'we would say O Messenger of Allah, he is one of the poor Muslims, worthy of denying if he proposed to marry, worthy of rejecting his intercession, and if he talked none would listen...' To this the Messenger said: 'The latter is worth more than a world full of the former.' "

Note how the Companions still had remnants of Jahili values in their system as they described each of the two men's worth in society. Thus the Messenger (sas) used to teach them the Islamic values and standards. Disbelievers always adorn themselves with materialistic things as that is all the value that they can ever obtain. In reality, they have no true value.

Rab'i bin Amir conducted himself in a manner similar to the one of Mughirah when he approached Rustum. Let us complete Qutub's quote:

"Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas sent Rab'i on the days preceding Al-Qadisiyyah to Rustum, the commander and leader of the Persian military. He entered a Persian court resplendent with silk carpets and cushions adorned with sapphire and expensive pearls. Rustum wore his crown and expensive garments and he sat on a bed made of gold. Rab'i entered in tattered clothes wearing a shield and riding a small horse. He rode the horse until it stepped on the edge of the royal carpet then he dismounted and tied his horse to one of the pillows in the court. As he continued approaching in full military gear and helmet the court told him to remove his weapons. He replied, 'I did not come, but you called for me... either let me be as I please or I will go back.' Rustum then said, 'Let him be.' Rab'i then began leaning on his spear on the pillows poking holes in most of them as he came closer..."

He did this to antagonize them. The Persian court valued all of the splendor that was presented in the court, yet Rab'i wanted to show that he did not. They thought he would feel small and would cower down when exposed to such riches, but he intended to show them that those matters were not held in high regard by Muslims.

Now, one might say that this action does not conform to the Islamic morals and ethics. They might say that one should not approach people and act in such a manner. However, this event occurred at a time when Islam was about to have dominance in the region. Persia sensed defeat and wanted to sign a treaty. The actions of Mughirah and Rab'i were consequently part of a plan and strategy to further weaken the Persian's position and status.

Furthermore, the request to meet came from the Persians, and perhaps feeling a bit inferior, they attempted to regain lost ground by intimidating the men with false displays of power and wealth. However, Rab'i and Mughirah's actions were clearly aimed at foiling Persia's intentions.

Of course, in other situations, one would not act in such a manner. However, Mughirah and Rab'i wanted to teach new values and show that the Persians were mere mortal human beings. When people see a rugged-looking Arab speaking freely without fear, they might begin to feel courage as well. This might have been planned with Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas. However, even if it was not, both men were known for their wisdom, as is especially apparent in the words of Rab'i, and this is how Qutub concludes the story:

"Rustum then asked Rab'i, 'Why are you here?' He replied, "Allah has sent us to remove whoever He wishes from the servitude of man to the exclusive servitude of the Lord of man, from the narrowness of this world to the vastness of this world and the Hereafter, and from the tyranny of religions to the justice of Islam'."

This was the last thing Rustum expected to hear. He thought Rab'i would say something along the lines of, "We came because we are poor, our land is dry, and you are rich. We are here to take such and such," just like all the others who came in search of wealth and materials. The Persians assumed that they would be able to bribe the Muslim by providing them with clothes and money.

However, that was not the case. The Muslims came for a greater issue. Notice how Rab'i said, **"Allah has sent us"** and not "We came." This wording was deliberately chosen to specify the source of their actions; it was as if they were saying, **"We are Allah's soldiers sent to liberate you, if you declare war you will be waging war against Allah and not us."**

We can also observe how he said: **"Allah has sent us to remove whoever He wishes from the servitude of man to the exclusive servitude of the Lord of man..."** Thus the ones who will be liberated will be chosen by Allah and it will not be up to the Muslims. Muslims only carry out the will of Allah.

Take a look at the next part of the phrase: **"from the narrowness of this world to the vastness of this world and the Hereafter..."** The Muslims saw all the riches and wealth of Rustum and his court as part of the narrowness of this world. All this splendor had no value in the eyes of a Muslim. If this world had any value, even if it was as little as a mosquito's wing, Allah would not have allowed a disbeliever to have a sip of water from it. Indeed, this world has no value, and Rab'i comprehended this very well. He knew that he was sent to liberate these supposedly rich people from the narrowness of this world. The Muslims later became wealthier than the Persians and Romans; nonetheless, they did not become enslaved to their wealth.

Rab'i concludes: "and from the tyranny of religions to the justice of Islam." This is another lesson in the Islamic ideology which Rab'i intended to teach the Persian court.

These are the factors that establish superiority in the heart of Muslims. The conditions of attaining the superiority of the Islamic faith are not extreme or unrealistic, nor are they idealistic requirements that cannot be achieved in reality. This sense can simply be attained by combining its factors and instilling them in the hearts of Muslims; instilling in them that they are superior in their authority and source, their understanding and concept, their concepts of values and standards, their conscience and emotions, as well as in their law and system of life.

If the Muslim is certain of all those factors, he will undoubtedly feel superior. Furthermore, this sense of superiority will be a natural result - a Muslim will not have to force himself to sense it.

Our example of Mughirah and Rab'i perfectly displays this meaning. It shows how Muslims feel when they approach individuals who are at the peak of jahilliya. These Muslim men were simple beings, did not have much wealth, and were also not necessarily well known in the Muslim society. If it had been Omar bin Al-Khattab or Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas, they would have instantly been recognized by people. Nonetheless, these two men were chosen to be sent, and they approached the Persians in the most simple clothing and outer appearance in comparison to the splendor and wealth of those Persians. This was done to display the profound difference between them and teach a valuable lesson; how to attain a sense of superiority despite your state, status or wealth. This is how one ought to feel superior, and Mughirah and Rab'i did not attain this sense until they truly believed that they were indeed superior due to their faith.

Attaining a sense of superiority in the current reality of the Islamic call

We will now move on to our current reality. We have previously talked about the reality of the time of Qadisiyyah, when the Muslims had power to the extent that they could freely converse with and threaten the greatest leaders and rulers, and were able to conquer lands and free themselves of the Persians. One might state that the times were different then as the Muslims had great power and authority. However, we will now talk about our reality in which Muslims are considered to be strangers and weak beings within the society. No doubt, a Muslim living in this reality is required to be equipped with a sense of superiority as well; a superiority that is solely due to his Islamic faith and not to any other factor.

Qutub declares: “As conditions change, the Muslim stands in a position of defeat, deprived of all physical power, yet he never stops feeling superior... he continues to look upon his conqueror from up high as he is a Believer...”

The primary source of a Muslim’s strength is his faith, even if he stands in a position of material defeat, deprived of all physical power, he never stops feeling superior. This is solely because he is a Believer and they are disbelievers; he knows the Truth and all they embrace is falsehood.

Thus Qutub says: “... he continues to look upon his conqueror from up high as he is a Believer. He is convinced that this is a temporary condition which will pass and that faith will always win. Even if it is his [the Muslim’s] death, he would not bow his head.”

This superiority stems from the fact that he is a Believer and he knows his destiny; he will either live honorably and nobly while striving to establish Islam on earth, or die as a martyr.

The finest fate, regardless of the results in this worldly life

Qutub states: “People will all die, but he [the Muslim] becomes a martyr. He will leave this earth to go to Paradise, while his conquerors go to Hell; and what a difference that is!”

This is an important factor for superiority and steadfastness, the feeling of disdain for falsehood, and the lack of hesitance in the face of obstacles. A Muslim is in a battle in which he will either be victorious or a martyr. It is an issue that does not require much thought. He strives as much as possible, and if he is victorious it will be by the grace of Allah, and if he is killed, he will be a martyr which will also be by the grace of Allah. A Muslim’s fate will always be the finest when he strives for the cause of Allah, thus he does not need to be worried or concerned.

Qutub concludes: “...and what a difference that is! He hears the call of his Generous Lord:

﴿ لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۚ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ۚ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ ۝﴾ [آل عمران: ١٩٦-١٩٨]

“Do not be deceived by the movement of the disbelievers throughout the land. [It is but] a small enjoyment, and then their refuge is Hell. What an evil place of rest! But those who feared their Lord will have gardens with rivers flowing beneath, living for eternity in the hospitality of Allah. And what Allah has in store is even better for the righteous.”

(Surah Al-i-Imran 3:196-198)”

It is evident that this noble verse describes the reality of the disbelievers and tyrants, and that their enjoyment is but a small enjoyment, and their final refuge will be Hell. On the other hand, those who feared their Lord will have gardens with rivers flowing beneath, living for eternity in the hospitality of Allah. This hospitality is motivation enough for the Muslim to remain steadfast when his condition changes and he stands in a position of defeat deprived of all power. All he needs to remember is that he is a Muslim, and that his fate is very different to that of his enemies. This is sufficient to make him feel superior and be steadfast in his position, as well as long to meet Allah as a martyr. These are not words of unrealistic dreams or fabricated lies, it is a reality which the Muslim lives. A Muslim is certain that Allah is the ultimate Truth, and that He will resurrect everyone on Judgment Day to question them about their deeds. Those who disobeyed Him will go to Hell, and those who obeyed Him will enter Paradise. Therefore, a Believer's fate will only be one of two blessings: either victory or martyrdom. This is also another factor of the superiority of the faith.

The blessing of Allah's guidance requires one to have pride in the Truth, be merciful to others and have a strong desire to guide them to Allah's way

Qutub states: **"And the society is dominated by beliefs, ideologies, values and standards that are all different to his [the Muslim's] belief, ideology, values and standards..."**

There is no doubt that a Muslim who lives in a Jahili society is faced with people who oppose him in everything: the belief, the ideology, the values, customs and standards. However, if a Muslim is certain that he is righteous, and that they are all in falsehood, then he, as Qutub says: **"...will never lose his sense of superiority, and his sense that all his opponents are in an inferior position. And he will look down upon them from up high with dignity and pride, with mercy and kindness, with a strong desire to guide them to the good that he has, and a desire to lift them to the pinnacle he stands upon."**

When living in a Jahili society, a Muslim must realize that he was sent by Allah to cleanse and purify the world. In order to fulfill this task, he must understand that he is ultimately the cleanest, most superior and most honorable of all. He must never feel that the Jahili individuals are superior to him, even if they are in a position of authority. A Muslim ought to know that a person's status in society is not a true indication of their true worth and value.

To restate what Qutub said: **"And he will look down upon them from up high with dignity and pride, with mercy and kindness, with a strong desire to guide them to the good that he has, and a desire to lift them to the pinnacle he stands upon."**

As we stated in the previous chapter, the Islamic advocate is motivated by his sense of love and care for mankind as well as his sense of his duty to liberate people and remove them from the darkness into light, from misery into happiness, and from deviation to righteousness. Thus he ought to always feel superior and be proud of the Truth that he believes in. He must also look at the masses with the utmost sympathy and mercy as he devotes all his energy to guide them and lift them to the pinnacle that Allah has graced him with.

These contrasting emotions: the pride one has in the Truth and his separation from jahilliya, compared to the sympathy and mercy which he has for them and his struggle to remove them from the darkness in which they are situated to guide them to this peak and dignity; these

contrasting emotions complement each other and they must be sensed by the Believer when preaching and calling to the Truth.

Milestones in the methodology of calling people to Islam

As we previously mentioned, the duty of calling people to the Truth is established on a grand and complete methodology. How should a Muslim interact with others when living in a Jahili reality? In the previous chapter, we elaborated on the necessity of establishing connections with Jahili individuals. These connections should not be severed nor should a Muslim abstain from showing mercy and kindness and being humble without degrading himself. This is in spite of the fact that Muslims have embraced the Truth and jahilliya is situated in falsehood, as well as the fact that Muslims are required to openly declare to Jahili individuals: "You are living a filthy life and we are here to cleanse you and change your condition."

A Muslim must never demean others, be cruel to them or treat them poorly, nor should he cut ties with them on account of the fact that he has embraced the Truth and they are situated in falsehood, and that he is superior in his ideology, methodology and senses. Indeed, this act contradicts the task he was sent to accomplish. If a Muslim seeks to preach and call people to the Truth, he must do so in the manner outlined by Allah:

﴿ فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى ﴾ [طه: ٤٤]

"And speak to him in a gentle tone so that he may take warning or fear (Allah)"

(Surah Ta-Ha 20:44)

In the previous chapter, Far Reaching Changes, we talked about the open and frank declarations with which the Muslim must face jahilliya. However, it is important to understand that they are not to be declared in every situation or stage. There is a time when it becomes appropriate, such as the later stages of the movement, after it preaches to people and explains all of the fundamental principles of Islam. The first few stages of the movement are done in secrecy, and the sole focus in those stages is to choose the right individuals and teach them Islam in a simple and precise manner, without initially overburdening them with a lot of various branches and details of Islam. When a Muslim chooses a candidate to call to the Truth, he must start with him from the basics and steadily proceed until full disclosure becomes appropriate. Having a balance between slowly teaching one and openly being frank with them is a necessary skill in the repertoire of the Muslim.

As for when the movement transitions to the public stage, as was the case with the movement of the Messenger (sas) in the Meccan period, it becomes an obligation to begin with a frank and open declaration from the beginning. The movement must proclaim the Truth fully. This is a necessary step so that the Truth becomes wholly established.

Understanding this balance is crucial, for it represents the methodology for preaching Islam and calling to the Truth, as well as the methodology for interacting with jahili individuals. The methodology for interacting with jahili individuals is comprehensive and has various stages. Nonetheless, a Muslim must refer back to the dynamic doctrine of Islam to determine what rulings are appropriate for each stage as he goes through life. If we look back to the time of the Messenger Muhammad (sas), we will find that the Islamic society at the time considered the latest verses revealed by Allah to be the final word and stage. When a new verse was revealed, they understood that their movement had reached a new stage.

In spite of the fact that the Quran has been completed, and the final stage and rule for each matter of Islam has been established, we are still required to start from the beginning and follow the steps as the Messenger (sas) had previously done.

The fact that we will start from the beginning and follow in the steps of the Messenger (sas) does not mean that can advance at the same pace of the Messenger (sas). Each stage has its own prerequisites and goals, and our pride in the Truth must not lead us to delivering the message of the Truth without the proper regulations and method. Rather, we should follow the appropriate rulings as determined by Islamic jurisprudence.

Islamic advocacy requires establishing connections, being gentle when delivering the Message of Islam and calmly presenting the Truth, all the while comprehensively and precisely clarifying all of the details that need to be clarified. Thus the preaching will be carried out in a consistent and precise manner.

The Believer sees the reality of jahilliya despite their misleading displays

Qutub then states: **“The force of falsehood stomps and raises its voice, puffs up its wings and surrounds itself with artificial displays that blind both sight and insight, so that one does not see its ugly core and rotten foundation. Yet the Believer looks down at the pompous falsehood and misled masses from up high; and he does not weaken or grieve, nor does he lose his persistence on the Truth he carries, or his steadfastness on the methodology he follows, nor does his desire to guide the misled and the astray weaken.”**

Jahilliya greatly relies on propaganda, media and politics to surround both falsehood and the transgressors with artificial powers and claims. The masses are easily affected by this, thus they blindly follow those artificial displays that cover the ugly face and truth of jahilliya, transgressors and falsehood. They are easily deceived by the few economic reforms, scientific and technological advances, the grants of money and the enhancement of cities. They thereby believe that the transgressors work for their benefit. Throughout all of this, jahilliya is able to slowly but surely plant their corrupt concepts into people’s minds, starting from when they first start school as children and leading up to when they graduate college. In addition to their education systems, they propagate their concepts through newspapers, magazines, television programs and social media. This all takes place while the vast majority believes that it is their benefit and interest that is being looked after.

When a Believer sees through these misleading appearances and witnesses the accompanying threats that are made towards anyone who contradicts the Jahili system; he may begin to feel weak and helpless. Nonetheless, a Muslim must not be deceived. He must remember that the attractive appearances, the deceptions, and the degrading and unjust system and way of life of jahilliya will lead one to an eternity in the pits of Hell, as well as a lowly and miserable life in this world and the Hereafter.

Qutub says: **“...the Believer looks down at the pompous falsehood and misled masses from up high; and he does not weaken or grieve...”** This is because he is aware of the Hereafter and conscious of Allah throughout it all. He knows of the things that await him in this world and the Hereafter. He also knows that he cannot fall back into the swamp from which Allah rescued him.

Qutub further states: **“...nor does he lose his persistence on the Truth he carries, or his steadfastness on the methodology he follows...”** He does not allow for the confinement and

anguish he feels due to the error and deviation of the masses to distract him from his ultimate task: calling people to the Truth. A Muslim does this for jahilliya in spite of its arrogance, decadence and filth. He seizes all opportunities to deliver the Message of Islam in a gentle and merciful manner as the Messenger (sas) did with Quraish. When the men of Quraish came to see him (sas), he would call them to the Truth and be merciful to them regardless of what they did to him. A great example of this was when Utbah bin Rabiah, a prominent Pagan leader of Quraish, came to talk to the Messenger (sas) in order to persuade him to stop calling people to Islam. Utbah presented a lengthy speech throughout which the Messenger (sas) listened calmly and politely without interrupting him. Once Utbah was done with his speech, the Messenger (sas) asked: "Have you finished Abu Waleed?" Once Utbah replied 'Yes', the Messenger (sas) politely said, 'Now listen to me', and began to recite the Quran.

Feeling superior due to the Truth does not mean exalting yourself over others

A Muslim must always be aware of his task: to liberate people from darkness and bring them to light- from the lowly swamps to the pinnacle of Islam. Despite being repulsed by jahilliya's despicable state, a Muslim must never forget that he is expected to guide and lead them to the Truth. Most of us should not forget that not too long ago, he was one of them, and then Allah guided him to the right path by His Mercy:

﴿كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا﴾ [النساء: ٩٤]

"You were like that before, then Allah granted His favor upon you" (Surah An-Nisa 4:94)

A Believer is not arrogant, nor does he exalt himself over others; rather, he feels superior due to his faith and the Truth. Feeling superior due to the Truth is different to exalting yourself over others. A Muslim must comprehend this and understand the difference between the former and the latter. If one was to approach him and ask him about Islam or anything else, he must show humbleness and politely converse with him.

Indeed, there is no conflict between the Believer's repulsion of the state of jahilliya and his duty in regards to delivering the Truth, even if people respond in an unbecoming manner, torture him or demean him. He should use every opportunity to deliver the Message of Islam with the hopes that it might be accepted and embraced by people.

Elevating oneself over desires and longing for the Hereafter

Qutub says: "Society may drown in its degrading lusts, continue chasing its immoral whims, and keep rolling in filth and dirt, thinking that it is enjoying and freeing itself of all rules and restrictions. Innocent actions and pure nutrition become a dear commodity as all is corrupted by dirt and mud. Yet the Muslim looks from up high at those wallowing in the dirt and rolling in the mud. He may be alone, but he does not weaken or grieve, nor does his heart desire that he take off his clean and pure garments to dive into the gutter. He remains superior through the pleasure of his Faith and the sweetness of his certainty."

When the Believer sees how Jahili individuals live their lives freely, how they pursue their desires without worry about any consequences, in comparison to him who senses that he is alone at times with many issues to worry about; there might be a moment where he is tempted to join them in their ways. In that moment, the Muslim must remember the Truth that he believes in. He must also remember that regardless of how much jahilliya seemingly lives freely and without worry,

the time will come when they will be held to account and judged for every deed. Thereafter, he will relax and enjoy the bliss of Paradise with the other Believers while the disbelievers suffer in the fire of Hell for eternity.

A Muslim knows that he cannot join jahilliya in their filthy ways. Additionally, he does not feel deprived or secluded for not being able to do so. His hope lies in the Hereafter, and he merely lives in this world as a stranger, as the Messenger (sas) said: "Live in this world as a stranger or passerby." Thus the Believer anticipates his reward on Judgment Day and awaits the pleasures promised to him in the Hereafter. This worldly life loses all value in his eyes. He disregards any pain and loss. He knows that the only thing which stands between him and eternity in Paradise is death; and death is closer to a person than his shoe-lace, as the Messenger (sas) said. The Messenger (sas) also stated: "The world is a prison for the Believer and Paradise for a non-believer." This is because a disbeliever has nothing to look forward to in the Hereafter except suffering and eternal punishment, whereas the promised reward of the Believer is so magnificent that any life in this world is relatively a prison.

Furthermore, the contrast between the Believer's life and that of the disbeliever in this world is infinitely smaller than their contrast in the Hereafter. This is because in this world, they both live, eat and sleep. However, in the Hereafter, one of them will spend eternity in Paradise with all its pleasures and bliss, while the other suffers eternally in Hell after being told:

﴿ اَحْسَبُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُونِ ﴾ [المؤمنون: ١٠٨]

"He [Allah] will say, "Remain despised therein and do not speak to Me."
(Surah Al-Muminun 23:108)

Thus there is a great contrast, which is why a Muslim must never long for the deceptively pleasurable lifestyle of jahilliya. He must not wish to have their life, for that alone is a descent to the level of an animal. Allah has dignified and honored him far above that.

With regards to all that we have stated, a Muslim is permitted to pursue anything that is halal, [permissible in Islam]. He is permitted to pursue wealth, as well as any other luxury in life provided that it is done in a clean manner and that it does not affect or bring harm to the Islamic advocacy, the Islamic society and the Truth. A Believer is required to remain superior in all things, and this includes the materialistic aspects of life if possible. He should not distance himself from this world and its pleasures, for that is not what Allah intended for him. Allah intended for the Muslim to take pleasure in all that is good, pure and permissible. This is not a matter that conflicts with one's faith as it is perceived by some.

Feeling superior inspite of the mockery of those who ridicule

Qutub states: "The Muslim stands holding on to his Faith like one who is holding onto a burning piece of coal, while living in a society that is void of the religion, of virtues, of high values, of noble pursuits and of all that is clean and beautiful. And the others stand ridiculing his position, mocking his ideology, and laughing at his values. But he does not weaken as he looks down from up high at those ridiculers, mockers and laughers. He says what was said by one individual from the noble group that preceded him in the bright procession of faith, while on the long road. Noah peace be upon him said:

﴿ اِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَاِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ ﴾ [هود: ٣٨]

“If you ridicule us, then we will ridicule you just as you ridicule” (Surah Hud 11:38)

And he sees the final fate of the bright procession and also of the wretched caravan as was related in the Quran:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا أُرْسِلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ حَافِظِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَلْ ثَوَابَ الْكُفَّارِ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾ [المطففين: ٢٩-٣٦]

“Those who committed crimes of sin used to laugh at the Believers. And whenever they passed by them they used to wink at each other. And when they returned to their folk they would return jesting. And when they saw them they would say ‘These are truly lost.’ Yet they were not sent as their guardians. But on this day the Believers will laugh at the disbelievers. On adorned couches they observe: Have the disbelievers been rewarded for what they used to do?” (Surah Al-Mutaffifin 83:29-36)”

This is a matter which Allah has informed us of, and Allah is the most Truthful. This will be the fate of those who ridicule as well as all of jahilliya. “Those who committed crimes of sin used to laugh at the Believers. And whenever they passed by them they used to wink at each other.” Thus they ridiculed the Believers in this world. “And when they returned to their folk they would return jesting” They would continue to mock and laugh at the Believers, and claim that they had lost the way: “And when they saw them they would say ‘These are truly lost.’ Yet they were not sent as their guardians.” Nonetheless, Allah tells us about their fate in the Hereafter: “But on this day the Believers will laugh at the disbelievers” Indeed, the victorious one is the one who has the last laugh. The Muslims will rest in Paradise. As for the disbelievers, they will receive their punishment. Allah ends this scene with a rhetorical question: “Have the disbelievers been rewarded for what they used to do?” This question is left without an answer, for one who contemplates will undoubtedly see that the disbelievers have indeed been rewarded justly.

Qutub notes: **“The Holy Quran has previously informed us of what the disbelievers say to the Believers:**

﴿ وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَأَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴾ [مريم: ٧٣]

“When our clear verses are recited to them, the disbelievers say to the Believers: Which of the two sides holds the better position and worthier council?” (Surah Maryam 19:73)”

This shows the corrupt value system of jahilliya as well as their ignorance, for they believe that those who are wealthier, stronger and have more followers hold a better position and worthier council.

Qutub continues: **“Which of the two sides? The chiefs who did not believe in Muhammad, or the poor who surrounded him? Which of the two? Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith, Amr ibn Hisham, Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughirah, and Abu Sufyan ibn Harb [who are all disbelievers and chiefs of Quraish in the Makkan period]... or Bilal, Ammar, Suhaib and Khabaab [Believers and Muslims who had been enslaved and tortured by the Quraish]?”**

If Muhammad’s Message was good, would his followers be these folk who have no power or position among Quraysh, who assemble in the humble home of Ibn Al-Arqam? Would his

opponents be the lords of the great and glorious Al-Nadwa assembly hall, the possessors of power, authority and grandeur?!

This is the logic of this world, the logic of those who are obstructed from this high horizon throughout history. It is due to the wisdom of Allah that this Faith stands free of adornments and coatings, and free of any alluring factors: no closeness to a ruler, no pride in authority, no promise of pleasures and no satisfaction of desires [in this world]. It only entails striving, hard work, struggling and martyrdom.

Then let those who accept this, take it, knowing full well they only want it for the sake of Allah alone, not for the people, nor for any of the values and temptations they hold dear. And then, let those who refuse, walk away, those who choose their own desires and interests, who want the adornments and coatings [of this world], who desire wealth and possessions, and who give value to the regard of the masses when Allah does not."

This is the standard and measurement of the Islamic faith, and the other standard is the one of this lowly earth - the one of those who have been obstructed from the high horizon of Islam, regardless of their era or location. The true standard and measurement of the value of all things is the one held by the Muslim who knows the Truth, who knows Allah, and who knowingly and lovingly chose Allah with keenness. It is the wisdom of Allah to make Islamic advocates free of any factors that may allure and attract people. This is to ensure that people are truly and sincerely accepting the Truth for what it is and not merely following the allurements surrounding the advocate.

There was also wisdom behind Quraish's disbelief in Muhammad (sas). Had they all believed him, it would have been declared: "he is one of their sons and they only believed him because he is of their tribe." Nevertheless, Allah willed for Quraish to not believe in the Messenger (sas), as well as for them to banish him from the city, battle him and attempt to kill him. This was all destined by Allah in order to show mankind that this Truth is void of tribalism as well as any jahili affiliations and adornments. Allah also destined for the Aws and Khazraj – two tribes who opposed Quraish – to believe in Muhammad (sas) even though he was one of Quraish. This affirms that those who believed and followed the Messenger (sas) did not merely follow him due to his personality or any other factor; rather, they followed and believed the Truth that he brought forth. The followers of Muhammad (sas) also abandoned their tribal affiliations and the adornments of this worldly life, and they swore an oath to leave everything behind in exchange for the promise of Paradise. Thus Allah's wisdom in making this faith free of all adornments, coatings and alluring factors was to ensure that those who embraced Islam solely did so on account of their desire for the Truth and for Allah the Almighty.

Qutub comments: **"The Believer does not derive his values, concepts and standards from people, thus he is not concerned with the regard of people..."**

A Believer's values, concepts and standards are derived from Allah and connected to Him, Exalted is He. A Believer is connected to Allah and receives his value and worth from Him. Therefore, he is not concerned with people's regard of him. He is honored and held in high regard by Allah, and that is sufficient for him. This also enables the Muslim to disregard people's mockery, ridicule and animosity towards him. All of the Messengers – peace be upon them – had faced the same issues. They were fought with, mocked, and accused of being insane and dishonest; nonetheless, this did not reduce any of their value and worth. In fact, the disbelievers knew in the depth of their hearts that the Messengers were nobler than them.

Thus Qutub continues: “...rather, he derives them [his values, concepts and standards] from the Lord of man, and Allah is sufficient and adequate for him. He does not derive them from the desires of people thus he does not fluctuate with their whims. Instead, he derives them from the firm balance of the Truth which does not fluctuate or compromise. He does not receive them from this impermanent world; instead, they stem from the source of all existence and are implanted in his soul.”

Thus a Believer is superior as he is connected to Allah. He is always superior, and jahilliya is always inferior.

“How could he possibly sense any weakness in himself or grief in his heart when he is connected with the Lord of people, the balance of Truth and the source of all existence?”

A Muslim does not sense weakness or grief. On the contrary, he finds joy in the tribulations he faces as they are a testimony that he is with Allah’s army and in His Religion.

There once was a Muslim who was imprisoned and tortured, and he would be consumed with the sense that he was Allah’s soldier. This sense enabled him to belittle every form of torture he received. He sensed that he was only imprisoned because he was a soldier of Allah, and that those who were torturing him were only doing so because they were the enemies of Allah. This sense established in him superiority as well as contentment with all that was being inflicted on him. The knowledge that he was Allah’s soldier and that they were Allah’s enemies sufficed for this Muslim, thus he neither feared them, nor did he feel confined by them, nor did the pain that they were inflicting on him affect him. He eagerly awaited to succumb to death in order to meet Allah and enter Paradise. Thus one who carries these feelings in his heart can never sense weakness or grief of any kind.

The Believer is allied with the Truth, and what can be beyond the Truth but error?

Finally, Qutub concludes: **“He is allied with the Truth, and what can be beyond the Truth but error? Let error have its power, let it have its drums and banners, let it have its hordes and masses. This will not change anything of the Truth. He is allied with the Truth, and there is nothing beyond the Truth but error, and a Believer would never choose error over Truth when he is a Believer, nor would he ever exchange the Truth for error no matter what the circumstances!”**

There is no doubt that this beautiful description only applies to the Believer who has filled his heart with certainty of this Truth. The Believer lives with this Truth in times of prosperity and well-being, thus when he faces tribulations he does not need to prepare or adjust himself. He will already be well-armed and prepared. He will also not sense weakness, defeat or grief.

﴿ رَبَّنَا لَا تُرِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴾ [آل عمران: ٨-٩]

“Our Lord, let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us and grant us from Yourself mercy. Indeed, you are the Bestower. Our Lord, surely You will gather the people for a Day about which there is no doubt. Indeed, Allah does not fail in His promise”

(Surah Al-i-Imran 3:8-9)