

be nothing, but He finds Allaah with him, Who will pay his due (in Hell). And Allāh is Swift in taking account. Or (the state of the disbeliever) is like the darkness in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with a great wave, topped by dark clouds - darkness one above another - if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! And he for whom Allāh has not appointed light, there is no light.

[*Sūrah an-Nūr* (24) : 39-40]

So the first verse (no. 39) sets forth a similitude for the false beliefs and the actions that arise from these beliefs, one considers them to be something of benefit, but when they come to him (on the day of Judgement) he will not find any benefit in them at all. Rather Allāh will fully give him his recompense for these actions (in Hell). The second verse (no. 40) is the similitude propounded for extensive ignorance, lack of faith and (correct) knowledge. The person who possesses these is in darknesses one above another, unable to see anything, for indeed the sight occurs only with the light of faith and (correct) knowledge.

Allāh, the Most High, said,

إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَافٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا
 فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

Indeed, those who are pious, when an evil thought comes to them from Satan, they remember (Allāh), and they then see (aright).

[*Sūrah al-A'raf* (7) : 201]

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ، وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ.

And indeed she did desire him and he (Yūsuf) would have inclined to her desire, had he not seen the evidence of his Lord.

[*Sūrah Yūsuf* (12) : 24]

Meaning the proof of faith which his heart had attained, so due to this Allāh caused him to turn away from that which he was inclined to, and recorded for him a complete good deed, and no sin was recorded against him due to his having performed a good action and not performed an evil one.

Allāh, the Exalted said,

الرَّكَتَبُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿١﴾

...In order that you might lead mankind out of darkness into light...

[*Sūrah Ibrāhīm* (14) : 1]

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ مِّنَ
النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ

Allāh is the Protector of those who believe. He brings them out from the darkness into the light. But as for those who disbelieve their protectors are false deities, they bring them out from the light into the darkness.

[*Sūrah al-Baqarab* (2) : 257]

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اتَّقُوْا اللّٰهَ
 وءَامِنُوْا بِرِسُوْلِهِۦ يُوْتِكُمْ كِفٰلَيْنِ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَيَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ
 نُوْرًا تَمْشُوْنَ بِهٖ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

O you who believe (in Moses and Jesus)! Fear Allāh and believe in His Messenger, He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk straight...

[Sūrah al-Hadid (57) : 28]

This is why Allāh has propounded two types of parables for faith: a parable of water by which life exists and the foam which comes with it; and a parable of fire by which light is produced.

Allāh said,

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ
 السَّمَاءِ مَآءً فَسَالَتْ اَوْدِيَةٌۭ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَّابِيًا
 وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ اَبْتِغَاءَ حِلْيَةٍ اَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِّثْلُهٗ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ
 يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ۗ فَاَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذٰهُبُ جَفَاً

He sends down water (rain) from the sky, and the valleys flow according to their measure, but the floods bears away the foam that mounts up on the surface, and also from that (ore) which they heat in the fire in order to make ornaments or utensils, rises a foam like unto it, thus does Allāh (by parables) show forth truth from falsehood...

[Sūrah ar-Ra'd (13) : 17]

Similarly Allāh has propounded two parables for hypocrisy,

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ
 ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ صُمُّ
 بُكْمٌ عُمْى فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ
 ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصْدِعُهمْ فِيءَ آذَانِهِم مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ
 حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطِفُ
 أَبْصَرَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشْوَاهِ فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا
 وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

Their likeness is as the likeness of one who kindled a fire; then, when it lighted all around him, Allāh took away their light and left them in darkness so they could not see. They are deaf, dumb and blind - so they will not return (to the Right Path). Or like a rainstorm from the sky, wherein is darkness, thunder and lightening. They thrust their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunderclap for fear of death. But Allāh ever encompasses the disbelievers. The lightening almost snatches away their sight, whenever it flashes for them they stand still. And if Allāh willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight. Indeed Allāh has power over all things.

[Sūrah al-Baqarah (2) : 17-20]

So He propounded a parable for them with one who kindled a fire, each time it ignited Allāh caused it to extinguish, and the parable of water in which the water is sent down containing darkness, thunder and lightening - this is not the place for a detailed explanation of these parables for the purpose here is only to mention the life of the heart and its illumination.

[1.7 The Life of the Heart]

In the narrated *du'ā* there occurs,

Make the Qur'ān the nurturer (*rabi'*) of our hearts
and the light of our chest. ⁵

Rabi': means the rain that descends from the sky and nourishes the plants. The Arabs call the season in which the rain first descends al-Rabi' due to the fall of rain which causes growth (of produce). The non-Arabs call the season that follow winter al-Rabi' because in this season the plants from which fruit is produced blossom and the leaves on the trees appear.

[1.8 The State of the Dead Heart]

The heart that is alive and enlightened hears, sees and understands due to the light that it contains, while the dead heart does not hear, see or understand.

⁵ Part of a lengthy supplication reported by Aḥmad [3712], Abū Ya'la [q 1/156], at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabir* [3/74/1] and others. The *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*. Refer to *as-Ṣaḥīḥah* [no. 199]. The wording of this *ḥadīth* of Aḥmad, however, is in a singular gender not plural. [Translator's Note]

Allāh, the Exalted said,

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ
بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً صُمُّ بِكُمْ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

The example of those who disbelieve, is as that of him who shouts to the (flock of sheep) that hears nothing but calls and cries. (They are) deaf, dumb and blind.

[Sūrah al-Baqarah (2) : 171]

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْدِي الْعُمَْىٰ وَلَوْ كَانُوا
لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

And among them are some who listen to you, but can you make the deaf hear, even though they comprehend not? And among them are some who look at you, but can you guide the blind, even though they see not?

[Sūrah Yūnus (10) : 42-43]

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ
قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُذُوبًا
لَّا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا
إِلَّا اسْتِطْرَارٌ لِّأُولَيْنَا ﴿٤٥﴾

And of them are some who listen to you; but We have set veils on their hearts, so they understand it not, and deafness in their ears; if they

see every one of the signs they will not believe therein, to the point that when they come to argue with you, the disbelievers say: 'These are nothing but tales of the men of old.'

[Sūrah al-An'ām (6) : 25]

So He informed us that their hearts cannot understand, and their ears cannot hear, and they do not believe in what they have seen of the Fire as He informed us about them when He said,

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ

وَمَا نَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فِي آذَانِنَا وَقَدْ مِمَّن بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ حِجَابٌ

And they say: 'Our hearts are under coverings from that which you invite us to, and in our ears is deafness, and between us and you is a screen.'

[Sūrah Fuṣṣilat (41) : 5]

So they mentioned the barriers upon their hearts, ears and eyes. Their bodies are alive - hearing and seeing, but this is a life of the body devoid of life in the heart - like the life of an animal - for the animals possess hearing and seeing, and eat and drink and marry.

This is why Allāh said,

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ

بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً صُمُّ بِكُمْ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

The example of those who disbelieve, is as that of him who shouts to the (flock of sheep) that hears nothing but calls and cries.

[Sūrah al-Baqarah (2) : 171]

Likening them to the cattle, at whom the shepherd shouts, and they hear nothing except the cry (not understanding what is said), as He said in other verses,

أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٤﴾

Or do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are only like cattle - nay, they are even farther astray from the Path.

[Sūrah al-Furqān (25) : 44]

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا الْجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ
لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُسْمَعُونَ
بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٧٩﴾

And indeed We have created many of the jinn and Mankind for Hell. They have hearts where-with they understand not, they have eyes where-with they hear not. They are like cattle - nay even more astray...

[Sūrah al-A'raf (7) : 179]

A group of the commentators, when referring to these verses and those that resembled them such as the verse,

وَإِذَا مَسَّ
الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا الْجَنَّبِيَّةَ ۖ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا
عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّكَ ۖ كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَىٰ ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ

And when harm touches man, he invokes Us, lying down on his side, or sitting or standing. But when We have removed his harm from him,

**he passes on his way as if he has never invoked
Us for a harm that touched him!**

[*Sūrah Yūnus* (10) : 12]

Regarding these and other such verses that mention the faults of man and their condemnation, (the commentators) said,

These verses refer to the disbelievers, and that the meaning of 'man' here is 'the disbelievers.'

So the one who hears this explanation is left thinking that one who openly manifests Islām is not included in this condemnation and threat, rather his thoughts link (these verses) to those who openly manifested *shirk* from amongst the Arabs, or to those he knows to have openly shown disbelief such as the Jews, the Christians and the polytheists of Turkey and India - and hence he would not benefit from these verses that Allāh revealed so that His servants may be guided.

So it is said in reply that firstly: those that openly manifest Islām include amongst them the believer and hypocrite, and the hypocrites are many in all periods of time and they are in the lowest level of the Hellfire.

Secondly: man possesses a strain of hypocrisy and disbelief even if he possesses faith along with this, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said in the *ḥadīth* reported by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim,

There are four qualities which if found in a person make him a pure hypocrite, and the one who has a portion of them has a portion of hypocrisy until he leaves them: when he speaks he lies, when he is entrusted, he betrays, when he speaks, he speak a lie, when he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous,

when he quarrels, he behaves in a evil and insulting manner ⁶

So he informed us that the one who has a portion of these then he has a portion of hypocrisy, and it is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī that he said to Abū Dhār,

Indeed you have displayed a trait of *Jāhiliyyah* in you.⁷

And Abū Dhār was from the most truthful of people with respect to his faith. He (ﷺ) said in the authentic *aḥādīth*,

Four (traits) in my *Ummah* are from the matters of *jāhiliyyah* (pre-Islamic ignorance): boasting about noble descent, abusing the lineage, wailing [over the dead] and seeking rain from the stars. ⁸

You will indeed follow the ways of those that came before you, inch by inch such that if they were to enter a lizard hole, you too would do so. They asked,

⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Eng. Trans. 1/32 no. 33,] and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Eng. Trans. 1/40 no. 111].

⁷ Referring to the *ḥadīth* reported by al-Ma‘rūr that, ‘At ar-Rabadha I met Abū Dhār (*raḍīy-Allāhu ‘anhu*), who was wearing a cloak and likewise his slave. I asked about the reason for this. He replied, ‘I abused a person by calling his mother with bad name.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) said to me, ‘O Abū Dhār! Did you abuse him by calling his mother with bad names? You have displayed a trait of *Jāhiliyyah*. Your slaves are your brothers and Allāh has placed them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask slaves to do things beyond their capacity and if you do so, then help them.’ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Eng. Trans. 1/29 no. 29] [Translator’s Note]

⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Eng. Trans. 2/444 no. 2033].