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THE CAUSE OF INTELLECTUAL ERROR AND LOSS, IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QURAN

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Abstract
"Indeed, mankind is in a state of loss" (Surah Al-Asr, 103:2). This verse of the Holy Qur'an guides humanity towards the path of success and prosperity in both this world and the Hereafter. Islam is a complete religion and a natural way of life that maintains an excellent balance between the requirements of worldly life and those of the Hereafter. It places no unnecessary restrictions or obstacles in the way of fulfilling human needs that are permissible under Islamic law. Rather, Islam emphasizes that the Hereafter should be built upon a righteous and constructive worldly life. However, if a person chooses to live solely for the sake of worldly pursuits, without any concern for the Hereafter, this constitutes a genuine loss, as mentioned in Surah Al-Asr. The surah also guides humanity towards avoiding this loss.
The research paper under study consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents the linguistic and terminological definitions of loss and discusses the various aspects of human life in which loss may occur. The second chapter examines the reasons why human beings fall into loss. The primary cause discussed in this chapter is intellectual and ideological misguidance, which manifests itself in numerous ways in everyday human life. These manifestations will be explored in detail.
The third chapter discusses one of the most serious consequences of loss: a person's falling into disbelief (kufr) and denial (juhud). It explains that the greatest loss a human being can suffer is deprivation of faith and the fundamental beliefs of Islam. The fourth chapter examines how a person may become deprived, in both word and deed, of the true understanding and practice of obedience to Allah and adherence to His commands and guidance.
The fifth and final chapter identifies the ways through which a person can protect themselves from this loss and explains the means of attaining salvation from it. Throughout this research, the subject is examined in the light of the Holy Qur'an.

The history of humanity reveals that those who failed to consider the consequences of their actions and remained unconcerned about the future, spending their time merely in fleeting pleasures, ultimately faced failure, disappointment, and even destruction. People who suffer loss are often unaware of the true value and significance of time. Therefore, anyone who wishes to avoid genuine loss must first understand the concept of loss and recognize the value of time. They must not waste the precious moments of their lives in negligence, mischief, heedlessness, or idle amusement. The periods of life that offer valuable opportunities to attain honour, dignity, knowledge, virtue, and excellence are truly precious. If these opportunities are wasted in negligence and forgetfulness, there can be no greater loss for a human being. Thus, the truly fortunate and successful individuals are those who strive to make their temporary lives everlasting through good deeds and transform their unproductive lives into meaningful ones. They recognize the value of precious moments and favourable opportunities and remain committed to attaining goodness, prosperity, and excellence.

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The attainment of eternal success and prosperity is possible only when a person fully understands the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving them. Therefore, this research includes a comprehensive introduction to the concept of loss, through which its significance can be understood. Furthermore, it discusses practical ways of avoiding loss, enabling individuals to protect themselves from both worldly and spiritual loss. Four simple paths to salvation are also mentioned in Surah Al-Asr, which will be discussed in detail. These can be briefly summarized as follows:

Faith (Iman)

Righteous deeds (Amal Salih)

Advising one another to uphold the truth and remain steadfast

Sincere concern for the welfare of others

A profound point underlying these principles is that reforming one's own actions is not sufficient for attaining salvation and success; it is equally necessary to be concerned about the moral and spiritual reform of other Muslims.

Surah Al-Asr is one of the chapters of the Holy Qur'an. Although it is very brief in terms of the number of words, it is remarkably comprehensive and complete in its message from the Lord.

As Abdullah ibn Hisn (may Allah be pleased with him) relates, two of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would not part from each other whenever they met until one of them recited Surah Al-Asr to the other.[1]

There are numerous causes of loss in religious and worldly life, and it is not possible to cover all of them in this brief article. Nevertheless, it is essential to mention the most important causes so that we may avoid them and protect our religion and faith from harm. Certainly, faith and religion are the means through which we can remain safe from punishment on the Day of Resurrection, and through faith we can become inhabitants of Paradise (Bhutto, & Ramzan, 2021).

Let us, therefore, follow the example of Sayyiduna Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman and learn about the causes that lead to our loss. Sayyiduna Hudhayfah was well known for asking the Noble Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) questions about evil so that he could protect himself from it.

It is narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari that Sayyiduna Hudhayfah said that people used to ask the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) about good, whereas he used to ask about evil and trials so that he could remain safe from them. [2]

The destruction of a person's worldly life and Hereafter begins when they turn away from divine guidance and become engrossed in misguidance. As a result, a person becomes liable to the displeasure of Almighty Allah. Therefore, it is essential to understand misguidance and avoid it completely. Misguidance leads a person onto the path of ruin and destruction.

[1] Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Zuhd, Hadith 417; al-Albānī, Al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah, Hadith 2648).

[2] Bukhari, Muhammad bin Ismail Abu Abdullah al-Ju'fi — Muhaqqiq: Muhammad Zuhair bin Nasir al-Nasir — Sahih al-Bukhari — Taba': Awwal, Dar Tawq al-Najah, 1422 AH — Kitab al-Manaqib — Bab: 'Alamat al-Nubuwwah fi al-Islam — Hadith: 3606

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In the light of the wisdom and understanding bestowed upon us by Allah Almighty, we should continue striving to attain His guidance. Undoubtedly, the person who abandons the path of Satan is the most successful in this world and the Hereafter.
Let us now discuss these matters in detail.

Preferring the World over the Hereafter

The widespread epidemic and one of the most dangerous maladies of our time is love for worldly life. Today, everywhere we see people yearning for worldly possessions, striving to acquire them, seeking worldly prestige and grandeur, and gazing greedily at this temporary world. Those who desire worldly life regard the acquisition of worldly possessions as the very definition of success and happiness.
A person who sells their religion in exchange for worldly gain deserves ruin and loss. What can be said about the misfortune of someone who destroys their Hereafter for the sake of this world? Such people are truly unfortunate. Their hearts have become filled with love for worldly life, depriving them of the sweetness of faith, the pleasure of seeking Allah's approval, blessings, and trust in Him. Almighty Allah says:
"These are the people who have purchased the life of this world in exchange for the Hereafter. Therefore, their punishment will not be lightened, nor will they be helped." [3]
Elsewhere, He says:
"That is because they preferred the life of this world over the Hereafter, and because Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. These are the people whose hearts, hearing, and sight Allah has sealed. They are the heedless ones. Without a doubt, they will be the losers in the Hereafter."[4]
These verses contain a warning of divine displeasure and punishment for those who choose disbelief after having faith. They have failed to prefer the everlasting blessings of the Hereafter over the insignificant attractions of this world. Instead, they have chosen this transient world over the eternal Hereafter.
They have preferred worldly life because they see believers experiencing financial hardship while disbelievers appear to enjoy prosperity. The consequence for such people is that Almighty Allah allows Satan to gain control over them, distancing them from the path of religion.
The hearts of those who possess these reprehensible characteristics have been sealed, as a result of which they have become distant from faith and unfamiliar with divine guidance. Their ears are deprived of listening to the call of truth, and their eyes are unfamiliar with the light of faith.
The expression "They are the heedless ones" employs an emphatic grammatical construction, indicating that these unfortunate people have fallen into the deepest depths of heedlessness. Their recompense in the Hereafter is described as follows: "Without a doubt, they will be the losers in the Hereafter." Their loss will be complete, and they will have no means of making up for it.
Almighty Allah declares:

[3] Al-Qur'an al-Majid, al-Baqarah: 86
[4] . Al-Qur'an al-Majid, al-Nahl: 107–109.

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"Say, 'Shall we inform you of those who will be the greatest losers in respect of their deeds? They are those whose efforts in worldly life have been wasted, while they think that they are doing good work.'"[5]

In these verses, Allah, the Exalted, employs an interrogative style because this manner of expression encourages the listener to reflect deeply upon the matter.

The statement means: O people of faith, shall we tell you about those who suffer loss because of their deeds? Why do their deeds lead to loss? The reason is that they have adopted methods of performing deeds that deviate from Islamic law. Consequently, their efforts in worldly life have been wasted, and they will derive no benefit from those deeds on the Day of Resurrection.

A person should develop detachment from worldly life and regard it as a means of reaching the Hereafter. Almighty Allah says:

"O you who believe! What is the matter with you that, when you are told to march forth in the cause of Allah, you cling heavily to the earth? Have you become satisfied with the life of this world instead of the Hereafter? Yet the enjoyment of worldly life, compared with the Hereafter, is very little." [6]

Sayyiduna Abu Sa'id al-Khudri narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Indeed, the world is sweet and green, and Allah has appointed you as successors in it to see how you act. So beware of worldly temptation and beware of the temptation of women, for the first trial among the Children of Israel was concerning women." [7]

A person whose heart is filled with contentment possesses true wealth, even if they are financially poor. Conversely, a person whose heart remains dependent upon worldly ambitions and other people is truly poor, even if they are wealthy in material terms.

Almighty Allah has promised protection from difficulties and relief from grief to the God-conscious. How fortunate, then, is the person who exchanges their worldly interests for the sake of the Hereafter.

Becoming Excessively Preoccupied with Wealth and Children

Worldly temptations are of various kinds and categories, and they have no fixed limits. Among these temptations, the greatest is the temptation of wealth because wealth is a principal object of desire for many people.

[5] Al-Qur'an al-Majid, al-Kahf: 103–104

[6] Al-Qur'an al-Majid, al-Tawbah: 38.

[7] Muslim, Muslim bin al-Hajjaj Abu al-Hasan al-Qushayri — Muhaqqiq: Muhammad Fu'ad Abd al-Baqi — Sahih Muslim — Taba': Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut — Kitab al-Riqaq — Bab: Akthar Ahl al-Jannah — Hadith: 2742

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The acquisition of wealth can lead to rebellion and arrogance, the consequences of which are loss and ruin. Conversely, a lack of wealth may expose a person to poverty, which can sometimes lead to disbelief. Nevertheless, wealth is not inherently blameworthy. In several places in the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah has described wealth as a means of support and assistance. For example, He says:

“He will provide you with abundant wealth and children, grant you gardens, and provide you with rivers.” [8]

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“How excellent is good wealth for a righteous man!” [9]

The above verse and hadith indicate that acquiring wealth is not prohibited, provided that it is not used for disobedience to Allah. However, if the pursuit of wealth becomes an obstacle to fulfilling religious obligations, then such a pursuit is blameworthy.

Like wealth, children are also a great blessing from Almighty Allah. The Holy Qur'an states:

“Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world.” [10]

A person should express gratitude for divine blessings and seek Allah's protection from pride and arrogance arising from having many children. If having numerous children becomes the ultimate purpose of a person's life, then misguidance and destruction may become their fate on the Day of Resurrection. May Allah protect us from this.

The teachings of the Holy Qur'an concerning wealth and worldly possessions are as follows:

“O you who believe! Do not let your wealth or your children distract you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does so, it is they who will be the losers.”[11]

In this verse, the people of faith are warned against adopting the characteristics and conduct of hypocrites. Hypocrites are deprived of the remembrance of Allah, the establishment of prayer, and other acts of obedience because they become preoccupied with wealth.

Exegetes have differed regarding whether this verse concerns hypocrites or believers. The stronger interpretation is that it addresses the believers, because the preceding verses had been discussing the characteristics of hypocrites. In this context, the believers are addressed and instructed to avoid the characteristics of hypocrisy completely.

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah states:

“Anything that prevents a person from carrying out obedience to Allah is prohibited, even if that thing is permissible in itself.”

Wealth, worldly possessions, and children can also distance a person from obedience to Allah. They become obstacles to fulfilling one's responsibilities when the heart becomes heedless. However, if a person remains conscious that wealth and possessions are intended to facilitate

[8] Al-Qur’an al-Majid, Nuh: 12.

[9] Abu Abdullah Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal — Muhaqqiq: Shu‘ayb al-Arna’ut — Taba‘: Awwal, Mu’assasat al-Risalah, 2001 CE — Vol. 29, p. 298, Hadith: 17763

[10] Qur’an Majeed, al-Kahf: 46.

[11] Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqi al-Din Abu al-‘Abbas. Al-Fatawa al-Kubra li-Ibn Taymiyyah. Tab‘: Awwal, Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1987 CE. Vol. 4, p. 470.

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obedience to Allah rather than to turn away from His remembrance, they can remain protected from loss.

The wisdom behind specifically mentioning wealth and children in the aforementioned verse is that these two things are among the most beloved worldly possessions. If they distract someone from remembering Allah, that person suffers loss because they have given worldly life precedence over the Hereafter.

A person with an awakened heart discovers the purpose and meaning of their existence. Their consciousness becomes illuminated by the understanding that their life's purpose is lofty. They recognise themselves as a creation into whom Almighty Allah has breathed a special spirit.

This spirit was endowed with an aspiration to manifest, within the limits of human capacity, certain qualities bestowed by Allah. Wealth and children were granted to human beings so that they might fulfil their responsibility as Allah's vicegerents on earth, not so that they might become completely absorbed in them.

A human being has received their humanity and its qualities from the Supreme Source. It is therefore their responsibility not to neglect the duty associated with this gift; otherwise, they risk losing the essence of their humanity. Whoever neglects their relationship with their Lord suffers a tremendous loss and becomes heedless of the purpose of their existence.

Imam al-Razi explains the expression “It is they who will be the losers” as follows:

“This means that they suffer a loss in their trade because they exchange something of a higher value for something inferior and perishable. Others have stated that they suffer loss because they turn away from the Messenger of Allah's teachings concerning the Oneness of Allah.” [12]

Almighty Allah says:

“Noah said, ‘My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed someone whose wealth and children have increased him in nothing but loss.’” [13]

In this blessed verse, Sayyiduna Noah (peace be upon him) presents his grievance before his Creator and Master. His words reveal the hardships that this great Messenger endured in the cause of truth and the difficult paths he traversed.

Despite all the efforts, perseverance, righteous aspirations, promises of worldly wealth, and offers of status and prestige made by Sayyiduna Noah (peace be upon him), his people continued to display disobedience, arrogance, and stubbornness.

By following misguided leaders, his people embraced disbelief and misguidance and rejected the Messenger who advised them and called them towards righteousness. Their wealth, children, and tribal affiliations would ultimately become a cause of their loss.

Choosing Misguidance Instead of Guidance

[12] al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din Abu ‘Abdullah Muhammad bin ‘Umar. Mafatih al-Ghayb (al-Tafsir al-Kabir). Tab‘: Thalith, Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1420 AH. Vol. 30, p. 550.

[13] Qur’an Majeed, Nuh: 21.

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Injustice and misguidance are two dangerous maladies that lead human beings towards destruction. When a person gives Satan even the slightest opportunity, Satan misleads them and distances them from acts of goodness and righteousness.

Such a person abandons the path of guidance, follows misguidance, and becomes involved in sinful actions. Almighty Allah says:

"Never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only gives them respite until a Day when their eyes will stare in horror." [14]

Sayyiduna Abu Dharr al-Ghifari narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) related the following statement of Almighty Allah:

"O My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and have made it forbidden among you, so do not wrong one another." [15]

The consequences of injustice are dreadful. It opens the door to numerous evils. Whenever injustice begins to prevail in a nation, community, city, or settlement, that society becomes an example for others to learn from. Injustice and corruption destroy homes and devastate cities. Blessings disappear, and failure becomes people's fate.

For this reason, Almighty Allah and the Prophet of Mercy (peace and blessings be upon him) have forbidden injustice.

Sayyiduna Jabir ibn Abdullah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Beware of injustice, for injustice will be darknesses on the Day of Resurrection. And beware of greed and avarice, for greed and avarice destroyed those who came before you. They incited them to shed one another's blood and to regard as lawful what was forbidden to them." [16]

A person who chooses misguidance instead of guidance is a loser, deserving of destruction and travelling along the path of error. Almighty Allah says:

"These are the people who purchased misguidance in exchange for guidance. Their trade brought them no profit, nor were they guided." [17]

The fate of an unjust and misguided person is extremely terrible. Only someone who remains protected from misguidance can travel along the highway of success.

The Holy Qur'an states:

"We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for the believers, but it increases the wrongdoers in nothing but loss."[18]

Abu Zahrah writes in his commentary on this verse:

"In the preceding verses, Allah Almighty explained that the illumination of the soul lies in following the truth. In this verse, Allah identifies the Holy Qur'an as the source of truth. The Holy

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[14] Qur'an Majeed, Ibrahim: 42

[15] Muslim, Muslim bin al-Hajjaj Abu al-Hasan al-Qushayri. Sahih Muslim. Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab, Bab Tahrim al-Zulm, Hadith: 6572.

[16]. Ibid., Hadith: 6576.

[17] 17. Qur'an Majeed, al-Baqarah: 16.

[18] . Qur'an Majeed, al-Isra': 82.

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Qur'an contains nothing but truth, and those who seek the truth should turn to it alone. This is what is indicated by the statement that We send down from the Qur'an that which is a healing.

"The Qur'an is a mercy and a healing exclusively for the people of faith because they are the ones who benefit from it. Healing means freeing the soul from false assumptions and delusions. It also means purifying the intellect from reprehensible moral qualities.

"Mercy means that the human soul becomes accustomed to noble moral qualities and that people deal with others in accordance with the pure Islamic law. In essence, believers benefit from the finest spiritual nourishment and treat the diseases of their hearts with an effective remedy.

"As for the disbelievers, because they turn away from the truth and do not listen attentively to the recitation of the Qur'an, they receive no healing and derive no benefit from this spiritual nourishment." [19]

In this verse, the term "wrongdoers" refers to disbelievers because they are deprived of the healing offered by the Qur'an. Almighty Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

"You will see them brought before the Fire, humbled by disgrace, looking with a furtive glance. Those who believed will say, 'Indeed, the losers are those who have lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection.' Unquestionably, the wrongdoers will remain in everlasting punishment." [20]

This verse describes the condition of disbelievers when they are brought before the Fire as a form of humiliation and punishment. They will be presented before the Fire in a state of disgrace and degradation because the reality of their sins will then become manifest. They will see the Fire with their own eyes and experience profound shame.

Those who become deeply immersed in sin are the ones who truly suffer loss because they will face everlasting punishment. Such wrongdoers will also become a cause of loss for their families. If their families accompany them into Hell, they will be so overwhelmed by the severity of the punishment that they will be unable to concern themselves with their loved ones. If their families enter Paradise, barriers will separate them.

The loss of one's family may also be understood in the following way: if the family members of wrongdoers attain the blessing of faith and become deserving of the heavenly companions of Paradise, the wrongdoers will remain deprived of these blessings.

As mentioned in a hadith of the Noble Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him):

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Everyone among you has two abodes: one in Paradise and one in Hell. When a person dies and enters Hell, the people of Paradise inherit that person's abode." This is the meaning of the statement of Almighty Allah: "It is they who are the inheritors." [21]

Almighty Allah declares:

[19] 19. Abu Zahrah, Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Mustafa. Zahrat al-Tafasir. Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi. Vol. 8, p. 4442.

[20] Qur'an Majeed, al-Shura: 45.

[21] 21. Ibn Majah, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad bin Yazid al-Qazwini. Tahqiq: Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi. Sunan Ibn Majah. Tab': Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah. Vol. 2, p. 1453, Hadith: 4341.

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"Whoever Allah guides is truly guided, and whoever He allows to go astray—it is they who are the losers."[22]

Imam al-Suyuti has transmitted a narration from Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Mas'ud that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would utter the following words in his sermons:

"All praise belongs to Allah. We seek His help and His forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evils within ourselves. Whoever Allah guides cannot be led astray by anyone, and whoever Allah allows to go astray cannot be guided by anyone. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger." [23]

When Almighty Allah grants someone guidance, He opens their heart to Islam, and that person begins to love Islam. Allah, the Exalted, does not wrong anyone. He has made the paths of good and evil clear to human beings and has left the choice to their own will.

The expression "whoever He allows to go astray" means that when Allah leaves a person to humiliation, He withdraws from them the ability to act in obedience to Him. Allah's allowing someone to go astray does not mean that He removes their capacity to intend good. Rather, a person themselves chooses the path of evil and corruption. Allah Almighty strongly dislikes disbelief and disobedience among His servants.

Those who deny the signs of Allah and fail to distinguish between truth and falsehood become the victims of loss and ruin. The expression "they are the losers" is emphatic and refers to their deprivation of the blessings of the Hereafter and their inability to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Misguidance means being distant from the Straight Path and being deprived of the ability to follow it.

Almighty Allah says:

"So that Allah may distinguish the impure from the pure, place the impure together, pile it all up, and then cast it into Hell. It is they who will be the losers." [24]

This blessed verse points to the misguidance of disbelievers in their financial religious activities and exposes the corrupt nature of their conduct.

The verse warns those disbelievers who provide financial resources to spread disbelief and suppress the truth. The preceding verses described the condition of the disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection, while this verse explains the reason for their fate.

The expression "so that Allah may distinguish the impure from the pure" means that on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will reveal the support given to the believers, their financial efforts for Islam, and the financial efforts of the disbelievers to promote disbelief. The disbelievers will then be consigned to Hell along with their wealth and possessions.

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[22] Qur'an Majeed, al-A'raf: 178.

[23] Al-Nasa'i, Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad bin Shu'ayb bin 'Ali al-Khurasani. Tahqiq: 'Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah. Tab': Thaniyah, Maktab al-Matbu'at al-Islamiyyah, Aleppo, 1986 CE. Vol. 6, p. 89, Hadith: 3277.

[24] Qur'an Majeed, al-Anfal: 37

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The expression “they are the losers” refers to those unfortunate people who use their financial resources to turn others away from the path of Allah. Their loss lies in the fact that they spent their wealth and possessions in the world to obstruct the truth; consequently, they will face nothing but loss on the Day of Judgement.

Breaking Promises, Severing Family Ties, and Spreading Corruption on Earth

The characteristics discussed above are associated with hypocrisy. Each of these matters will be briefly examined. To protect ourselves from loss and deprivation in this world and the Hereafter, we must completely avoid these reprehensible qualities.
What would become of a society in which people failed to honour their promises and mutual trust no longer existed? Because of excessive love for worldly life, family ties are gradually being severed. Owing to worldly engagements and preoccupations, maintaining good relations with relatives and sharing in their moments of happiness and grief are increasingly becoming things of the past.
As for spreading corruption on earth, it has become alarmingly widespread. May Allah protect us!

(A) Fulfilment of Promises
Almighty Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) have commanded people to fulfil their promises.
“...And fulfil your commitments, for you will surely be questioned about your commitments.” [25]
Elsewhere, Almighty Allah says:
“Fulfil the covenant of Allah when you have made a covenant...” [26]
The Noble Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) counted breaking promises among the characteristics of a hypocrite.
Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:
“The signs of a hypocrite are three: when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is entrusted with something, he betrays that trust.” [27]

(B) Severing Family Ties
The Holy Qur'an clearly warns against severing family ties and strongly discourages this conduct. Almighty Allah says:

[25] Qur’an Majeed, al-Isra’: 34.
[26] Qur’an Majeed, al-Nahl: 91
[27] Muslim, Muslim bin al-Hajjaj Abu al-Hasan al-Qushayri. Sahih Muslim. Kitab al-Iman, Bab Bayan Khisal al-Munafiq, Hadith: 107

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"Would you then, if you were given authority, spread corruption on earth and sever your ties of kinship? Such are the people whom Allah has cursed, making them deaf and blinding their eyes." [28]

Sayyiduna Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf stated that he heard the Noble Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) say:

"Allah says: I am Allah, and I am the Most Merciful. I created the womb and derived its name from My name. Whoever maintains the ties of kinship, I maintain a connection with them; and whoever severs those ties, I sever My connection with them."[29]

Similarly, the Noble Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) encouraged the maintenance of family ties and said:

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should maintain the ties of kinship. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good words or remain silent." [30]

The teachings of Allah and His Messenger consistently encourage us to maintain family ties. The ties of kinship remain connected to the Throne, and maintaining them brings blessings in one's provision and an increase in one's lifespan.

(C) Spreading Corruption on Earth

Almighty Allah has forbidden corruption on earth because it deprives human society of the blessing of peace. Allah declares:

"Do not spread corruption on the earth after it has been set right, and call upon Him with fear and hope." [31]

Similarly, in Surah Hud, Almighty Allah states:

"...Do not deprive people of their due, and do not spread corruption on the earth." [32]

A verse in Surah Al-Baqarah mentions all three of these forms of corruption and explains their consequences. Almighty Allah says:

"Those who break the covenant of Allah after confirming it, sever what Allah has commanded to be joined, and spread corruption on earth—it is they who are the losers." [33]

What covenant is meant by breaking the pledge? What relationships have people been commanded to maintain? What is the nature and extent of corruption on earth?

The meaning of the covenant

The covenant can refer to several things.

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[28] Qur'an Majeed, Muhammad: 22–23

[29] Al-Tirmidhi, Muhammad bin 'Isa bin Sawrah bin Musa bin al-Dahhak. Tahqiq: Ibrahim 'Atwah 'Awad. Sunan al-Tirmidhi. Tab': Thaniyah, Sharikat Maktabah wa Matba'at Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, Egypt, 1975 CE. Vol. 4, p. 315, Hadith: 1907.

[30] Bukhari, Muhammad bin Isma'il Abu 'Abdullah al-Ju'fi. Sahih Bukhari. Kitab al-Adab, Bab Ikram al-Dayf, Hadith: 6138.

[31] 31. Qur'an Majeed, al-A'raf: 56.

[32] 32. Qur'an Majeed, Hud: 85.

[33] Qur'an Majeed, al-Baqarah: 27

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The primordial covenant: This is embedded in the innate disposition of every living being. Through this natural disposition, every living being can recognise its Creator and Master. When a human being turns away from this primordial covenant, they fall into misguidance. They begin to attribute divine qualities to things other than Allah, thereby falling into the depths of polytheism.

The covenant of vicegerency: The covenant mentioned in this verse may also refer to the responsibility assigned by Almighty Allah to human beings to establish His vicegerency on earth. Human beings have neglected their responsibility to fulfil this role and have thereby violated this covenant.

In his commentary on the statement of Almighty Allah, "Those who break the covenant of Allah after confirming it," al-Tabari writes:

"The people intended by those who break the covenant in this verse include every disbeliever, hypocrite, and their associated polytheists. Although the address primarily concerns these people, it also serves as a warning to everyone to whom the Qur'anic threats, admonitions, and reprimands apply." [34]

In his commentary on the statement, "and sever what Allah has commanded to be joined," Sayyid Qutb states:

"Almighty Allah has commanded the maintenance of many relationships. These include ties of kinship, the rights of relatives, the rights of the entire human community, and, above all, the bond of brotherhood based on faith, upon which every other relationship and connection depends.

"If the relationships that Allah has commanded people to maintain are severed, all bonds will be broken, connections will be cut off, corruption will arise, and disorder will spread."

Spreading corruption on earth

The phrase refers to those who spread corruption on earth. Corruption takes many forms, all of which arise from disobedience, the violation of covenants, and the severing of family ties.

The root cause of corruption is turning away from the way of life that Almighty Allah has prescribed for humanity. Deviating from Islam results in widespread corruption. Corruption cannot be eliminated from the earth without adopting the way of life prescribed by Allah Almighty—the religion of Islam—in its entirety.

When a person deviates from Islam and the relationship between Allah and His servant is broken, corruption fills people's hearts and their circumstances become corrupt. As a result, corruption enters every sphere of life and livelihood. It engulfs every relationship. In short, corruption and evil are consequences of disobedience. Therefore, those who persist in disobedience may find that matters which serve as a source of guidance for believers instead become a cause of misguidance for them.

They are the losers

The word "losers" means that, because of disbelief and polytheism, these people deprive themselves of divine mercy and bring about their own destruction.

[34] al-Tabari, Muhammad bin Jarir bin Yazid. Tahqiq: Dr. 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Turki. Tafsir al-Tabari. Tab': Awwal, Dar Hajr li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi' wa al-I'lan, 2001 CE. Vol. 1, p. 438

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Some commentators explain this expression by stating that these people have deprived themselves of eternal happiness in the Hereafter and exposed themselves to everlasting punishment.
Another explanation is that they have demonstrated a lack of sound judgement in distinguishing between good and evil, with the result that they have deprived themselves of eternal felicity.

Summary

In the light of the Holy Quran, factors such as intellectual deviation, inordinate love for the world, excessive preoccupation with wealth and offspring, oppression, breach of promises, severing ties of kinship, and causing disorder on earth can lead to a person's religious, moral, and social ruin. To guard against these, it is essential for an individual to make the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah their guiding principles, strengthen their faith and righteous deeds, ensure the fulfillment of the rights of Allah and the rights of fellow human beings, and continuously reform their character. Through this approach, an individual can improve their own life and play a constructive role in building a righteous, peaceful, and responsible society.

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