**Returning to Allah**

Assalam o Alaikum wa Rehmatullahi wa Barakatuhu

Insha allah I will only be talking to you about one Ayah – just one ayah that I feel I will share with you. Those of you that are going to try and remember this in sha Allah this is Surah number 39 ayah number 53. So 39:53 is the reference to this ayah, this discussion we are about to have in sha allah. In this ayah, there are two conversations. And both of these conversations are really, really important to understand. By the way, in both conversations Allah is talking to two different audiences. One conversation is between Allah and someone who is trying to preach allah’s message. The other conversation is between Allah and someone who has lived a life of sin and they do so much sin that they have completely lost hope. And they feel as though they are so messed up that at this poihnt they are never going to be able to become a good person again, they feel like they have reached a point of no return.

Once again, there are two conversations. One conversation is between Allah and the one who is trying to send the message to people – a Da’ee – someone who’s trying to preach, someone who’s trying to give good advice or council. And the other is Allah talking to someone who is sinful. When we are trying to give the message of Islam to people, who are we emulating after, whos model are we trying to duplicate? It’s the model of the messenger of Allah (S.a.w). When we call people to Allah we try to copy him because he’s the first and the best to call people to Allah.

The ayah begins with the word ‘Qul’: say. And its singular. Meaning Allah is saying to one person “say”. That one person is the messenger of Allah (S.a.w). Allah is telling his messenger what to say when he talks to people. So, remember I told you there are two conversations? There are two lessons? The first lesson is Allah is teaching His messenger what to say. And when we learn that carefully what Allah is teaching his messenger to say, if you and I ever do the work of Da’waa and if you and I ever talk to someone engrossed in sin then we should take this ayah carefully because now we are also learning what should we say to people like that.

The second conversation Allah tells the messenger to tell these people who are immersed in sin – tell them that I am still willing to talk to them directly. What should we say to them?

 “My slaves” – those of you that have made violations against your own self, those of you that have gone beyond limits, only harming your own selves – I am using a simplified translation to get the message of the ayah across. The first words are: “My slaves”. Who’s talking? Who says “My slaves”? Does the messenger say “My slaves” or does Allah say “My slaves”? Allah says “My slaves”. So the messenger is supposed to go to people and tell them “look what Allah says to who? Says to you. You know when somebody is really upset with you they don’t talk to you? Right, they refuse to talk to you? So you could say you know, that Allah is not angry at you or that Allah might forgive you but you’re talking about Allah. But in this ayah Allah is not only talking to you He’s giving you: Look, He’s talking to you. So you’re reminding the sinful person: Listen, Allah is directly addressing you. Now, when the one who does a lot of sins you know, in Arabic one of the words for that is “*musrif****”.*** Musrif is someone - Allah set a limit – and he went beyond that limit. You know literally, a fence - and you tell the horse to never pass that fence, ypu train the horse. And when it crosses that fence, the horse is called a *musrif,* right*?* Allah sets a limit: don’t do this, don’t look at that, don’t do this, don’t do that, remain within these limits. When you cross those limits, then the - what is this person called? A *musrif.* The ayah doesn’t say, tell the messenger to speak to the people and say “Ya ayyuhal musrifoon : the people who go past the limits, listen up, don’t lose hope in Allah’s mercy”. It’s not like that. Allah says: “Ya ibaadi: My slaves”, my slaves. You know, in normal discourse, who do you call a slave of Allah? Like that person is such a good slave of Allah. The word ‘slave’ implies someone someone who obeys the master, who loves the master, someone who listens to everything the master says. Doesn’t it? What I’m trying to get across to you is that this ayah is not talking about people who obey Allah, its talking about people who what? Disobey Allah. Allah talks to them – even talks to them – and says: “My slaves”. Ya ibaadi. This is a term of love and also what they are being told is, no matter how much you’ve messed up, you still haven’t lost your ability to become a slave. There’s still hope alive with you. So much so (that) not only am I talking to you I am calling you by a good name. Ya ibaadi. By the way, the word “a’bd” is used in the Quran for the messenger (s.a.w.). Subhan Allah. That word “slave” is used for Mohammed (s.a.w) and in this ayah Allah is using that word to call the person who sins, the person who is immersed in sins. What does He say?

My slaves who have crossed the limits, only harming their own selves, who have transgressed against their own selves.

You know, when you break the rules you figure you harmed the one who set those rules. Like you parents told you don’t do this or the other and you do it, you figure you hurt whose feelings? Your parents. You’ve harmed your parents. So when you cross the limits and you break the rules and regulations and you disobey, you are hurting someone else. But according to Allah in this case whenever you sin, whenever you cross Allah’s limits, who are you hurting? You’re only hurting yourself. So Allah tells you “My slaves” - who is so bent upon not hurting Me, but hurting himself. You can’t harm Allah, you can’t take away from Him anything. So when you and I … who are we harming? Our own selves. You’ve only harmed yourself. By the way, I want to tell you what this harming yourself – some practical examples of what it means that you are harming yourself. Since there are a lot of young people, since...there’re really young people here too…but let me just share this with you. When you see something shameless, when you see something shameless, you’ve actually harmed yourself. Every time you see something shameless, your heart becomes harder. You lose a part of your humanity. Animals have no shame. Allah gave human beings a sense of shame. And the more you see something shameless the closer you start becoming to what? Animals. The closer you start becoming to an animal. Until the point comes that there is no difference between you and an animal. What makes an animal an animal? An animal has no control over its urges. It’s hungry, it bites. It sees a mate, it goes after it. Squirrel running after a squirrel around a tree. And it has no control over its urges. No control over its tongue, no control over what it eats, no control over where it goes. Whenever it feels something it does it, right? Which is the contemporary equivalent of saying: “I do whatever I feel like doing”. You ever heard that expression: “I do what I feel like, I do what I want”. You know what that, by definition, what behavior that is? The behavior of an animal. When you become accustomed to shamelessness, you are closer to being an animal. When you don’t care what you eat, those are haram or halal, you don’t care, whatever those are, you don’t care it’s okay. Then you are no different from an animal. So who are you harming? You are harming yourself. Allah gave you the status of human beings and you want to reduce yourself to an animal. Subhan’Allah. You are only harming yourself. And by the way, those of you that are a little bit older, especially when it comes to shame…there are two problems I believe personally, there are two problems Muslim youth have. If they solve these two problems they have no other problems, as far as I am concerned, they got no other problems. First problem that we have is they are not respectful enough to their parents. The second problem they have is they are overexposed to shamelessness. Two problems. If you can solve these two problems you got no other, everything else will be solved, everything else will be fine. You don’t make Salah on time, it will be fixed, don’t worry about it. Everything else will fall into place. But these are two things that are eating away at the life of the Muslim youth and reducing them not just from believer but from even human beings to animals. Even Muslim kids are being reduced to the likeness of animals. Then the other thing was what? Yeah, not enough respect for your parents, not enough respect for your parents. So you know when Allah is talking about the slaves who went beyond their limits, you know what the number one limit you are crossing is? … what you owe your parents. How much respect, how much dignity, how much regard, how much obedience, how much love you owe your parents. That’s the first thing. By the way, when somebody does you a favor what’s the least you should do? Thank them. You’re walking to school, a friend of your pulls over, says ‘I’ll give you a ride”. He gives you a ride. And it’s snowing and you know, it’s freezing, he gives you a ride. When he gives you a ride, when you get out, what do you say at the very least? And what kind of indecent, despicable person would you be that they did this for you and you don’t even thank them. What kind of a disgusting human being. You don’t even have that much dignity to say ‘thanks, man’? Now just think about…you know, a lot of you have this conversation among yourselves, at school or among yourselves: ‘My parents, man, they just don’t understand, bro. I’m trying to explain to them but they just don’t get it.’ Or you know, in…those of you that are at the public school…hear this from the other kids all the time: ‘My parents got a funny accent’. Or they call their mom by their...her…first name: ‘Hey, Johann! How’s it going?’ or ‘Hey, Clark! You’re late to pick me up from school’. They talk about…to their parents with their first name. and we pick up somebody’s model from a…there are a lot of TV shows. I mean, you guys don’t watch cartoons but I do them, okay, so I’ll tell you. You watch cartoons and a lot of cartoons are dedicated to depicting parents as idiots. Ever seen Jimmy Neutron? Ever seen it? The parents are c…you know this thing? The parents look like a bunch of morons, they are…the kid is a genius, they are idiots. You ever seen, what’s that, “Fairly odd parents”. You ever seen that? Same thing again. The kids are a bunch of…the parents are morons and the kids are really smart. Now who’s watching that show, by the way? Parents or kids? And what’s being gutted in their minds, in their subconscious? That they are really smart and their parents are stupid, they are dumb, they don’t know anything. They don’t know anything. What’s that African American family on Disney TV? Pryo cat? The same thing. The same thing again. Over and over. And this is cartoons. You know back in the day in the cartoons there was a cat and a mouse and they’re trying to kill each other and everything was cool. But now..that was good stuff…but now you know, there are these messages inside a show and these cartoons even, right? And you don’t even realize the next time you talk about your parents a certain way it’s because you saw some garbage. It is stuck in your head and it makes you less of a human. Less of a human. Subhan Allah. So the first thing I say to you is there are you know, after the rights of Allah in the passage in Surah tun Nisa, after the rights of Allah, are whose rights? The parents.

I won’t go into the grammar but this is amazing over here and especially when it comes to your parents you better be the best. Forget everyone else when it comes to your parents. Take extra cautions when you deal with your parents. Because that will…not dealing with them properly...I’m being blunt with you guys because I’m not gonna flower this up…that is your one-way ticket to hell. You’re gonna mess up with your parents, doesn’t matter you go to hajj every year, slaughter?...give charity and make qiyam...none of that matters. You mess up with your parents it is a straight ticket to hell fire. Watch it.

So in this ayah it says if you have messed up before, who have you harmed? Yourself. Then what does He say? He says..la (Arabic)…”Don’t lose hope in Allah’s mercy.” ‘Alaqa’ in Arabic is to lose...to become depressed and sad to a point where you expect nothing good anymore. Allah is describing a person who has done so many messed up things, shaitan comes to them and says ‘man, you’re so messed up, you call yourself a Muslim? You’re so messed up. You shouldn’t even pray anymore, you hypocrite. How you’re going to stand there and recite Quran and pray when you know you’re such a messed up person? You don’t...you shouldn’t even, you know..you shouldn’t even any of these things you know, hang out with Muslims or this or that. Cut yourself off because you are a filthy person. You’re a terrible human being. And shaitan comes to you and uses your what mistake? To trick you into doing more mistakes and taking you even further away from Allah (SWT). On this, I’ve talked about this elsewhere but I want to just bring this point to your attention coz this is very important for you guys. When you make a mistake…what when you walk in late to class? This mistake, you walk in late to class. You make eye contact with the teacher or you avoid eye contact with the teacher? You avoid eye contact. You make it late to work, you make eye contact with your boss or you sneak in to your cubicle or your office? You sneak in. When you get a really bad report card and you walk home, you enter the house are you “Assalam o alaikum, I’m home!” or is it that you barely notice…the door’s open, you kick the shoes off before you walk the stairs, go inside the bed and pass out. Right? In other words, when you disappoint someone, you try to avoid them. Because it is embarrassing, you know, it’s humiliating. When you sin, who are you disappointing? You’ve disappointed Allah. Shaitan comes and says what should you do? Avoid. The natural instinct of a human being, when you disappoint someone, shaitan comes and says ‘avoid the prayer. Avoid the company where you’re going to be reminded of Allah because how can you face him now? What kind of a person are you?” And the further you get, the more you listen, you listen to one thing then you listen to two things then you listen to three things and the door, the floodgates to sin are open. And when they open up, you become so immersed in it that you say ‘God, I’m so messed up there’s no hope of Allah forgiving me. You don’t even know the things I have done, how messed up!” This brother came to me one time, “Bro, I know you’re talking about like forgiving and everything. But you don’t know man, I’m bad. I’m bad. You don’t even know. I was like “Don’t tell me how bad. Tell me this. As bad as you are, can you compete you evil deeds…the power of your evil deeds…with the power of Allah’s mercy?” What’s stronger? What do you think? Allah’s mercy. You know the worst thing you can do is lose hope in Allah’s mercy.

And in this ayah He says: “My slaves, those who have violet against their own selves. Don’t lose hope in Allah’s mercy. Then He says (Arabic). “There is no doubt, for sure, Allah will cover, forgive, all of the mistakes, all of the sins, altogether. He will take all of your prior evil deeds and get rid of all of them. All of them, in one shot. The first thing you need – in this ayah – is not lose hope. Right, the first thing you need to do is not lose hope. And by the way before I talk about not lose(ing) hope, that was the final stage. What was the first stage? You start doing what with Allah? Avoiding Him. You start avoiding, you don’t talk to Him. By the way, all of you, you should talk **to** Allah (SWT). You’ve memorized lots of duas, the prayer’s done, you raise your hands, you make some duas you have memorized. When you’re walking to school, when you’re walking downstairs, you’re by yourself, talk to Allah: “I really messed up. I’m sorry.” You know when you talk to someone you know they can hear you? You know when you talk to someone you know they can hear you. When you talk to Allah do you know He can hear you? Do you know He can hear you? Yes. And if you feel weird if you feel like ‘I’m talking to myself, that’s kind of weird.’ You know what that means? That means you’re not really a string believer. ‘Cos you have to believe that Allah hears you. So you have to learn to talk to Allah. You probably do this, you talk to Allah. You have to believe that He not only hears you, He also sees you. And you behave differently when someone sees you and hears you and you behave differently when they don’t see you, or don’t hear you. Isn’t that true? We have to develop a consciousness. And this one ayah Subhan Allah, those of you that try to advise others about deen, what’s the first step for these people? You know…Muslims who are immersed in sins and they’re doing all kinds of haram things…where, where do you start talking to them? If you tell them this is haram, they already know that it’s haram. When you tell them they shouldn’t do that, they already know they shouldn’t do that. It’s not like they don’t know. They’re doing it anyway. What is this ayah teaching us? Where do you start? What do you tell them first? Listen, you’re still Allah’s slave. Even if you disobey Allah, you’re still His slave. And that Master of yours He’s saying don’t lose hope, even If you’ve sinned. And don’t try to tell me ‘you don’t know man, I’m bad, I’m real bad’. Allah knows more, Allah actually knows how bad you are. Despite all that you are He still says ‘don’t lose hope in My mercy’.

 ‘No doubt Allah will forgive all of the sins, altogether.’

This is by the way the concept of Tauba in Islam. You’ve heard the word for it, right? Tauba.

There’s one thing I want to tell you about, I won’t give you a long lecture, I want to just pen this discussion with you, two things I wanted to highlight: the rights of your parents, we’ll talk about that a little more. And then shamelessness. Two problems that you have and when I’m saying make tauba and don’t lose hope in Allah’s mercy…go back and do?...you change your ways in regards to two things. You change your ways in regards to how you deal with your parents and you change your way in regards to how exposed you are or how desensitized you are to shameless things. Shameless words, shameless language, shameless company, shameless things on the screen, I don’t care what screen, whether it’s your cell phone screen, or it’s your laptop screen or some TV screen, , I don’t care, your cell phone screen you watch it. Shameless things in the hallway when you’re walking down. The high school, the hall way in high school or in class, you’re exposed to shamelessness and you know it. And you’re exposed to some of the shamelessness that your parents don’t even know it can exist. So you know about it but you should know of animals too. Save yourself from becoming an animal. People around you are animals. They are. You’ve seen them. They’re worst than animals. They can’t even control their mouths. They don’t know how to show respect or (…) to show respect. They don’t. That’s what animals do, they bark, it barks, they have no control, you know. We shouldn’t be reduced to that. The last thing iA.

This is something you read all the time in the Quran. Probably you’ve heard it…you may have heard it discussed in a little bit more detail. Allah (SWT) says “It is He who is forgiving and merciful.” But the way He said forgiving – the word *zahuruhu...* – there’s a wow in there. You hear that, zahurahu? What is that, Raheem. What lies in the middle? The ‘ya’. The ‘laam’ in Arabic, it does something to the meaning of a word. I won’t get technical with you but I will tell you it does something to the meaning of a word. It makes it excessive. So what He is saying is that He is extremely forgiving. He is extremely forgiving. The ‘ya’, it doesn’t make the word extreme, it makes it permanent. So ‘Al-Raheem’ means He is always merciful. So the meaning is He is extremely forgiving and at the same time, He’s what? Always merciful. So why not say always forgiving? The question is He said He is extremely forgiving but He didn’t say what? Always forgiving. You know why? Because He’s not always forgiving. He’s not always forgiving. If He’s said always forgiving then you have no wrong. You do whatever you want. And when you get into trouble what can you say? “Hey, Allah is always forgiving.” But He’s not always forgiving. He’s extremely forgiving but even when He punishes He’s still, what? Always merciful. Even then He’s merciful. Subhan Allah. So don’t take advantage of thinking Allah’s always gonna forgive. That door is not always open. That depends on you. Now this one ayah is one of opening the doors of your relation…between you and Allah again. Now the rest of this ayah…let’s see who remembers which ayah number this one is. 39:53. That’s correct.

The next ayah tells you ok now that you have revived your hopes and you are hopeful that Allah will forgive you, what should you do next? Ill tell you only little bit of … then I am done, in sha Allah. Turn back towards your master. You remember what I said about so many sins and what do they do? Avoid. Allah says quit avoiding and now turn back. It’s such appropriate language. And this time, give up before it. Completely give yourself up. Surrender. Surrender your ego. Surrender your temptations. Surrender your bad habits. Surrender your tongue, surrender your eyes. Right. Surrender your wasting of time. Surrender, you know, your misbehavior, all of that, give it up before Him. We’ll rush through it quickly, in sha Allah. And you better do it before the punishment comes and then you won’t be helped. In other words, Allah is saying this my way of what for you? Figure it out. What is Allah doing right now, in this verse? He’s helping you. And He’s saying that once the punishment comes and you didn’t take advantage of this help, at that point you will not be helped. When that happens, it’s too late. You won’t get helped. You’re getting help right now. So if somebody’s saying ‘Allah hasn’t helped me’…Yes He has. Here it is. He said don’t lose hope. He said the door of forgiveness is open. He said that turn back here and this time, surrender. This time surrender your will before Him. You can do that much and that is Allah’s help for you. And if you don’t do that you just wait for the punishment and when it comes then there is no matter how much you cry and scream and say I’m sorry, I believe, I won’t do it again…doesn’t matter now.

At that point you will not be helped. By the way, the word ‘nasra’ in Arabic is not just small help, it’s huge amounts of help. Aid. You know, when somebody gives somebody a penny (…) , that’s not ‘nusra’, that’s not nasr. When a country gives another country millions of dollars in like, food supplies and medicine and things like that, that’s called nusra. What the word here suggests is you’re going to be in such a heap of trouble that a little bit of help won’t even do and you’re going to ask for what? Huge amounts of help, and you won’t get it. May Allah not make us from these unfortunate people.

Now the last thing is excuses. What excuses does a person make of not turning back to Allah. On the Day of Judgment, (...), the person says ‘Oh! If only Allah guided me, I would have been good. Had only Allah guided me, I could’ve been from the people who have taqwa, people who fear, people who are (….), who are conscious of the rights and wrongs, I could’ve been from those people, it’s just that Allah didn’t want me to be guided. Allah decided that I should be a messed up person, it’s just my fate’. This is what a person will say on the Day of Judgment by the way. Persons about to be thrown into hell, he says ‘Man, I wish Allah had just guided me, I would’ve been good, I just…He didn’t’. So, in other words, he’s saying ‘it’s not my fault’. What’s he saying? ‘It’s Allah’s fault, it’s not my fault.’ How does Allah respond to that?

He says ‘My *ayaat,* My *ayaat’.* You know what *ayaat* means?His miraculous signs, these revelations. They came to you. In other words when you say Allah didn’t guide me, Allah says ‘No, I did, I sent ayaat’. In other words, what is the guidance of Allah? The *ayaat.* So you can’t say Allah didn’t guide me. Yes, He did. Here’s Quran. Here it is. Did you take it? There’s one thing you didn’t feed me, the plate was full and you didn’t eat it. That’s not my problem, you didn’t take. So Allah sent the Book and He’s saying, ‘No, you’re lying. I did send you the *ayaat.’*

‘Then you lie against them.’

In other words, when you say Allah didn’t guide me, you’re lying. You’re lying but I did send you the *ayaat.* First of all you kept sinning your whole life. Now you come in front of me and say ‘You didn’t send me guidance’, you’re gonna lie at my face, too?

And this is the most important word for you guys. Remember I told you there are two major problems you have to worry about? What were they? Parent and what? Shamelessness. That’s on the outside. You know what you follow on the inside? Ego. You know, me too. We are full of ourselves. We are obsessed with ourselves. We are egotistical maniacs. We are so self obsessed and self absorbed uh…that if somebody so much as looks at you for a long time you say ‘(…) you want to look at me? What do you want? What’s up? You want a (….)’.

You know what that is? That’s arrogance. That’s kind of Firaun. Kind of. We are all so very self absorbed. You know you can’t deny this, a lot of you listen to hip hop music I know. You don’t have to accept it, it’s okay, you can accept it in your heart. You know a lot of things…I personally believe all music is messed up, but hip hop music particularly is by and large is taking these people and making them not just animals but worst than animals. Why? Self - obsession with the self. ‘My chain, my hat, my car, my rings, my golden tooth, my…my, my, my. You can’t touch me, you can’t do this, you can’t do this like me, you can’t act like me and talk like me and walk like me.’ The pronoun ‘me’ is all over the lyrics. What does that show you? Ego. ‘I am number 1, nobody can touch this, I’m above everything else. I, I, I. Me, me, me.’ Ego, ego, ego. And that’s your biggest problem. The ego manifests…the worst way in which ego comes up in youth nowadays that I’ve seen, this is a big English word, I won’t show you because this is the last part of the ayah…you show arrogance. You’re from those who deny. This word…the English word is ‘apathy’. You know what apathy means? Apathy means you don’t care. Somebody talks to you about hell-fire and you’re like ‘I’m too hard to…you know, I’m too rough around the edge, you can’t touch me with that. Scared of that? C’mon! Look at that guy cry coz he’s afraid of hell.’ That attitude where you’re like, too hardcore a thug to, you know, let hell fire scare you or for your consciousness to wake up that maybe I have been messed up to my parents, I’m not gonna let you show that, I’m not gonna let you see that, I’m too rough around the edges, I’m too big and strong and whatever. And this is by the way, ego problem for sisters as well. When you (…) like that, it is called apathy. And this is all a manifestation of arrogance. And the word that illustrates the arrogance of our youth today, it’s one word that they use a lot, what is that word…oh yeah, ‘whatever’. Whatever. That word is the contemporary manifestation of an obsessed and inflated ego. When you get good advise what do you say? Whatever. Someone tells you did something wrong, what do you say? Whatever. Your parents say ‘Can you come down for a minute?’ ‘Whatever, mom.’ You know whatever nowadays and how you use, how you use it, is an easy check for yourselves to see how hard egotistically you have become.

On the outside there is the problem of shamelessness and the problem of not respecting our parents. On the inside, what’s the big problem? Ego and by the way, on the Day of Judgment, if everything is good but your heatrty has an ounce of ego, paradise or no? Nope, nope. And we become a culture – and I’m not pointing at American society or Western society – all of us are in this culture, we’re in it. We have become a culture that is obsessed with ego, we’re obsessed with ego – ourselves, our own selves. Give over yourself. A slave doesn’t have ego. A slave has humility. Remember when this passage began what did Allah call us? ‘My slaves, my slaves.’ A slave doesn’t you what he’s got because he knows ‘it’s not mine’. Whose is it? The slave’s wearing these very nice clothes; he doesn’t say ‘These are my clothes. My, my, my.’ Whose is it, does he say? A gift from the master. This is his. I have to be grateful. He gave. It’s a different attitude, it’s a different attitude. And if you have an egotistical attitude it actually suggests that you haven’t accepted yourself as a slave. You haven’t accepted yourself as a slave. That is *the* demand of the Quran. Accept Allah as master, accept yourselves as slaves. That’s the only thing, it kills the arrogance, on the inside. On the outside, it becomes easier for you to avoid shamelessness coz the Master said ‘Don’t be shameless’. It becomes easier for you to listen to your parents, no matter how illogical and how irrational and how unfair. You know for you guys just, I don’t want to get angry at you guys coz I don’t know you, but I do want to say, the things you get angry at your parents, it’s pathetic. You want to have a sleepover at your friend’s house and they say no, ‘You never let me do anything’. There are people like, you know, across the Atlantic, children that haven’t had food to eat for three days, right, and you’re crying all night about sleepover. What’s the matter with you?