##### Surah Balad -2 Transcript

*Alhamdulillah.. Assalaatu wasalaamu alaa rasoolillah summa amma baád..assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu.*

We are continuing with the 10th ayah of suratal Balad, ‘**wa hadainaahu najdain**’..First and foremost inshallah, let’s look at a hadith that is quoted in the tafsir of this surah by al Biqaai rahmahullah, “*Ya aiyyuhun naas hallimmu ilaa rabbikum fa innama qalla wa kafaa qairum mimmaah kafaru wa alhaa..ya aiyyuhun naas innama huma najdaan najdu qairin wa najdu sharr,fa maa jaala najda sharri áhabba ilaikum min najdi qair”*. Beautiful hadith from the prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam – Rush towards your Lord, people- because certainly, that which is little and enough, is better than what is in plenty and what deludes you and deceives you and distracts you.’ People listen up, no doubt there are only two paths, the path of good or the high path leading to good and the path leading to evil..then what has made the evil path more beloved to you, or the path filled with harm, more beloved to you, than the path leading to good?’

Now in that context, inshallahuta’ala, let’s look at the language of the aayah ‘**wa hudainaahu najdain**’. The word ‘hadaa’ in Arabic is to guide someone – and by Allah saying that Allah has guided us to two paths, (again the majority tafseer, not the unanimous) the majority tafseer of the ayah is, this is the path of good and evil. This has been illustrated in other places in the Quran, for example when Allah AzzawaJal says **‘Qad tabbaiyanal rushdu minal ghaii’** – the straight, or the right way, has been clearly identified from the wrong one – or for example we are going to be reading later on in the same juz of the Quran ‘**fa allahamaha fujooraha wa taqwaaha** so this is two implications – the implication here is that Allah guided along two paths- or ‘We guided him to two paths’, means ‘We clearly showed him the right and the wrong’ .. By the way, Meccan Quran, early Quran talked a lot about universal goods - things that, for example we are going to read in this surah and the previous one also we read about taking care of the orphan – which society has a problem with that, or sees that as an evil.. everybody knows that that’s a good thing, right - or giving to the needy, giving to the poor, charity, rights of neighbour etc., etc. - These are the sorts of things that are talked about in early Meccan Quran - a universal sense of morality. So before we talk about the finer details of the deen , and the dawah of the Messenger salallaahu alaihi wa sallam, very few – little to nothing -of shari’ah as we know it, is mentioned in Meccan Quran - very few things. On one or two occasions there’s mention of foods that are permissible, on one occasion specifically, there’s mention of Riba, right - but outside of that - pretty much you have these general, moral principles that anybody can relate to – that anybody can relate with – even the mushrikoon of the Arabs, who did not have any exposure to revelation before – they are not like the People of the Book, that know about a Book, and know about law, and divine law and commandments – they have no idea - they have no background in these things – but even they could relate to certain things as being good and evil, and those are the things that are highlighted in Meccan Quran, this call to universal ethics and goodness, okay? Now with that in mind, this is actually something Allah pre-programmed inside the human being – this is in our fitrah – so ‘killing is wrong’ is something that’s part of human nature, right? – and this actually, is a subject in social psychology, and in other areas of psychology - the subject matter of morality. Philosophers tried to deal with the subject of right and wrong, right – what is right and what is wrong by means of rationality. But psychologists, interestingly, try to study the subject matter of right and wrong- How do humans develop this not from a philosophical point of view, but from maybe their environment or their genetics, and things like that, and there are some really interesting findings that you know, that we’ve known all along, that these are pre-programmed inside of us right? – there is actually now a good amount of evidence for example, being averse to lying, for instance, is one evil that every society says lying is bad. Pretty much. There’s no society that says, Hey you’re a liar! We love you! That doesn’t happen, right? So lying is looked at as an almost across the board universal wrong. And studies have shown basically, that when somebody engages in a lie ( these are studies done in social psychology ) when somebody engages in a lie for the first time - not like a professional liar like a politician, or a professional liar like an actor, but I’m talking about a liar like who’s not usually lying. When they lie for the first time you know what happens? Their blood pressure increases, the hair on their skin rises, the pitch of the voice goes up, out of their control. But these are physiological things – but lying is not a physiological act – you’re not putting your hand on a fire or touching ice or something like that. It’s a psychological thing, it’s all in your head. So why is something abstract leading to these physical consequences, and basically I asked my professor this when I was studying social psychology. You know what he told me? He told me the human being wasn’t programmed to lie, is best we can say! Right, that’s what my agnost, non muslim professor tells me about lying – human beings are not programmed to lie. And what do we know about the fitrah, that it inclines towards the truth, right? So Allah shows the two paths - **Wa hadainahu najdain**. The thing about the language here- there are a couple of things – just like inThe Fatiha there are no prepositions.We find in The Fatiha **‘Ihdinas siratal mustaqeem’** We dont fin’d Ihdina ila au ihdina lis siratal mustaqeem - theres no ila there’s no laam ,there’s no preposition.Other places in the Quran, with the verb of ‘guidance’ hada there is a preposition. Wa yahdihim ila siratal Azeezil Hameed. yahdi ilaa rushdi, ilaa is used, alhamdulillahillazi li hadaana- li hadaa, prepositions are used. But here there is no preposition - Wa hadainahu -There is no illan najdain or lin najdain. But there is just straight najdain. Now the removal of prepositions does something linguistically - it actually makes the phrase more comprehensive and carry more meaning. So one meaning of course is, we guided him *to*, the word to i’m using in translation, two pathways, but actually also at the same time it also means We guided him *along* two pathways. And that’s very important-The path of good , when somebody takes that path you know what Allah does, Allah facilitates that path for them and guides them along that path and when somebody decides to take the path of evil what does Allah do for him? **Wa** **ya mudduhum fi tugyanihim yamahoon**, He tells us Himself - We extend for them in their rebellion so they can go further blind – they can keep going further in their blindness. So Allah will not just guide you to it, but also guide you along it. You’ve chosen your career, Allah will now facilitate it for you and get you further enhanced in your career whether its good or evil. ‘So firaun, you want to be bad, let’s see how bad you can get. Open that door for him!’ right? So this is really the concept that’s been illustrated here, **wa hadainahu najdain**. A little about the word najd. It means a mountain that has no vegetation or trees – its bare rock, okay, and in it there’s a clear path that’s leading up. Now najdain is two paths, right? So the vision, the image that’s presented in the ayah is of a person at the foot of a hill, and in front of him there are these two ranges, these two paths that are leading right and left- but there are two paths. And Allah has clearly shown this path leads to this, and this path leads to that. Now the thing to understand is, these two paths are right in front of you, they’re clear, they’re heading both climbing upwards... does it involve labour in any way? Whether you go up the right way or the left way it still involves labour. And that’s already been taught to us in this surah before when Allah said **laqad qalaqnal insaana fi kabad**. The human being is created with toil. So that lesson is being reinforced with a new image. Here’s the next thing that’s really important to know about this ayah – the word najd is the general word for mountain. And Im going to add some things to help you understand what’s coming – one of these ranges is easy going up, but as you go further up, there is difficulty. And the other range is very difficult in the beginning, but once you get a certain path it becomes easy. So one is easy in the beginning and one is hard in the beginning .One is hard at the end and one is easy at the end. So now you’ve got these two choices. Right, you want easy in the beginning, or you want hard in the beginning right and the human being, what does he love to get immediately? Ease in the beginning right? We love things that come quickly. We want to – as for problems, we say we’ll deal with it later. Let me just get what I want right now. So Allah says **falaqta hama al aqaba**. And aqaba is a really interesting word. It is also a word used for a path, it is also a word used for a path heading up a mountain range. So its almost synonymous with the word najd. Except, the word aqaba also means a path that is very difficult to climb...is very difficult to climb. So first Allah showed us two paths,but then He told us one of these paths is not just najd, its also aqaba. Its very difficult and high and you know it takes a lot of struggle to get through this path. So He says **falaqta wa aqaba**. He didn’t just get involved right away in aqaba= al aqaba. Now the word iqtihaam lets look at the word iqtihama. Iqtihaam in Arabic is to jump into something without giving it any thought and put yourself in a task that will involve a lot - a lot - a lot of work, but once you jump in you just jumped in right? Have you ever been involved in a task which you know, you say yeah I can do this, you know putting some furniture together or something . I’m thinking of furniture because i just moved, right? Oh i could do this! Then you get involved, then it gets difficult, then you realise maybe this wasn’t such a good idea - in the middle of it, right? So you dive right in without too much thought and then you realise this is actually a lot of work and it’s exhausting, right? This is iqtiham. Allah says the human being didn’t jump right away you know, so enthusiastically into this heavy cliff – aw I can handle it! He didn’t do that. But now the way he says this in the ayah in the beginning the first word in the ayah is la - fala. Then, after He showed him these two paths, then, he did not and the word for not, the negation is la, but for the past tense in the Arabic language, which the word iqtihaama is, it’s the past tense – we don’t use la we use ma. **Maqtahamala aqaba.** That’s what we were expecting -The expected grammatical term here was not la it was ma.. la yaqtahimu – okay. Lam yaqtahim – fine. But la iqtahamaa? It doesn’t come together normally..., and so what this illustrates is a linguistic – I don’t want to call it a problem, it’s almost a riddle – there are depths and layers of meaning that are captured by just one change of a word. One implication of this, la is used for something, that necessitates - that has taáddud in it - meaning there are multiple things that are being negated. But we know, iqtahamaa is just one thing – He didn’t jump right in is just one act, but the word aqaba- are there multiple things involved in al aqaba? We will find later fakku raqabbatin, au itaamin qiyamin yateeman maqraba miskeenan the entire passage that is coming is all an explaination of al aqaba is an illustration of au aqaba. So, accordind to some mufassiroon, because there is ta’adud, multiple things mentioned here, that’s why la is there. So la will prepare the listener that this path had multiple stops. It had multiple stops... cause la illustrates something that has multiple components that’s being negated. So la will prepare you for these multiple items that are coming, it’s not just one thing. The other thing with la is it’s called a duaa. Meaning for example in it says it means fala why didn’t he just jump right in.. why didnt he just jump right in -did we not give him enough ability hadn’t we given him eyes, two eyes, a tongue, right, hadn’t We guided him clearly to both paths, what one leads to and what the other one leads to? He had everything he needed to get on this path, so how come he didn’t? So fala is actually in the meaning of limaaza - limaaza la yaqtahin al aqaba. How come he didn’t just climb up that path? What was missing? So its almost as though Allah azzawajal is complaining about the human being who did’nt jump right in. And by doing so what is he asking all of us to do? He is asking us to take the challenge and jump right in – to actually engage in the struggle and engage in climbing up the mount. So falaqta hamalaqaba. Now he has - by the way al riqaai also among other mufasaroon comment hiyaa tareequn naja’at -that this path is the path to salvation. It is the path to save oneself. This path will be talked about in brief here, but in full bloom there is some language at the end of this surah there is some clue about this salvation, some idea about what you will see when you reach the top of this path, but the full picture will be given in surah al asr. So the same wording is used. Here You will find **wa tawasau bis sabr wa tawaasau bi marhama**,t here you will find the complete picture. **Illal lazina amanu wa amilas sawlihaat, wa tawasau bil haq, wa tawasau bis sabr.** We’ll talk about that when we get to surah al Asr inshallah. Now ibnu Uyaina writes about the next ayah - wa ma adraka mal aqaba. In the quran we find two phrases – wa ma adraaka, and also wa ma yudreeka. Ma yudreeka is the present tense form and ma adraaka would be ‘and what would give you any clue – what could you look around and decipher, or conclude from, or deduce from that would give you an idea what al aqaba – that high cliff- What that really means, what that really is. Now the way Allah says that is in the past tense. What **would have** given you an idea. But sometimes He says what **will** give you an idea. Now whenever He uses the present tense which also includes the future tense, He never answers the question. When He uses what **will** tell you, He won’t tell you. What **could have** told you, then He’ll give you the answer. So whenever you find **adraaka** you find more information. When you find **yudreeka** , it is a kind of question, the answer to which, you’re not going to know. Allah will not open that door to you. For example, when is the Hour coming. Allah will say what will give you a clue when its coming. He won’t answer it. **Ma yudreeka la allahu yazzakka** you read before. What will give you any clue that perhaps he wants to purify himself - the human being wants to purify himself. Can anything give us an idea whats going on inside of the heart of another human being? Nothing. All we see are actions. We don’t see the intentions of those actions. We assume sincerity, but we don’t know sincerity.Right? You will never know. So yudreeka, we are not going to know .But adraaka, Allah will teach. Allah will tell you what you could do – what you could do to find out what this mount is. So its a mercy of Allah that the word adraaka is used. What would give you a clue and now we’re hoping for an answer. Because what we did if we know what this cliff is we wouldn’t even jump in and climb- because we don’t even know whatthe path is. So let’s see what are the things that Allah talks about that are part of this path. The first thing – **fakku raqabatin**. Ikrama says and his is the only unique opinion about the ayah – he says - the literal meaning by the way, is rescuing someone from slavery. Ikramah says, it means to free yourself from the slavery of sins by making taubah.(radhiallah hum.) That’s what his opinion is, of this ayah. That actually the first thing to climb is your own nafs, and to conquer yourself by means of taubah. Well let’s look at the majority tafseer of the ayah, inshallahu ta ála. In Arabic there are two words for rescuing – there is anqada- anqada with a daal at the end for example afa tunqidu man fin naar in the quran and then there is fakka – this word that we find in this ayah. This word is used when you’re trying to rescue a slave, or somebody out of prison. But anqada is used when you’re trying to rescue someone from a fire, or from some kind of danger, you pull them out of the way. So rescuing from bondage or slavery or prison, and then rescuing from danger. Two different kinds of words are used in the quran. Here of course we find the word for slavery. So the first act is freeing the slave. Now the word for slavery is raqaba which literally means the back of the neck. Now you know **unook** is the neck. And there are other words to illustrate the neck in the quran but specifically raqaba is used for the back of the neck illustrating that there is a chain around the neck of the person and the link to it is where? In the back. Now if the link was in the front and the master pulls it you go forward. But if the link is in the back and the master pulls it what happens? They get choked. They don’t get choked when they get pulled forward but when they get pulled back. So its actually illustrating the pain of being a slave. Slavery is mentioned in two ways in Islamic literature. One is literal slavery and the other is the slavery of a debt. That your necks are tied in the slavery of debt – that your necks are tied in debt. That’s also a its a choke-hold on you. So ‘**fakku raqabatin’** Subhanallah! Other words used in the quran for neck are wateen, waqqabajeet and unook .These words inshallah we will discuss when we get to them. The other thing to know here is , the first word is not used in verbal form. The word Fakku in Arabic, fa kaf kaf , the root origin, this word being used in the nominal masdar form implies you are committed to it. Meaning the first mount to climb was not one time you freed a slave, one time you did this good thing, you’re committed to this as a cause. So even in Meccan quran, we find the cause of freeing of slaves, You know how people talk about why does Islam endorse slavery? And the discussion is taken in every direction? The Meccan Quran from the very beginning is saying, you want to climb that right path, what’s the first act? Become committed to freeing a slave. Become committed to it.. **Fakku raqqabatin**. In surah Noor, inshallah one day when we get to that surah, we will talk about how Islam systematically, and the quran systematically, abolished the institution of slavery. Now, **au itaamun** – or, in addition, feeding. By the way, in the previous surah we read something very interesting. We read about a person**, kalla balla tuqriboon al yateem wa laa tahaabuna ala taamil miskeen. Wa ta’akulan tauraat**. They’re very selfish people, right and what is the first act of climbing the mountain ? you have to become what? Selfless! So the previous surah illustrated why isn’t it that you climbed up. And’ **iqtahama**  past tense- you haven’t done so. What’s the proof that you haven’t already done so? Has the proof been given? It’s given in the previous surah .And now you’re being told the exact opposite. Freeing the slaves and au itaamun. Not just itaam, not just giving – and by the way, they don’t even give. They eat themselves. Wa taakuloona turaasa akla lamma. You eat the wealth that comes to you from the inherited from monies you didn’t earn yourself. You love to eat it, but if you love to eat it you should have more of a love for giving to others to eat. Au itaam. Giving to eat. But giving to eat when? Not just giving to eat. Even that’s not enough. Fi yaumin li masghaba.In a day that is quantified with , the term maghaba. In Arabic , in the quran specifically, for hunger there are four terms used. Masqaba, jooa,maqrasa and qasasa. These are four words that are used in the quran for hunger. Specifically the one that is used here for is masghaba. Asghabal qoumu means when a nation is hungry because of famine. So masghaba means widespread hunger. Hunger that isn’t just limited to the one you are trying to feed, but everyone is hungry. Meaning in our expression we would say, ‘bad economic times’. So Allah says, this mountain to climb, why is it so tough in the beginning? You have to feed, and be committed to feeding because again, this is not a verbal form au yuteemuna fi yaumin, no, au atamu fi yaumin, no. Au itaamun fi - itaam is the masdar, the infinitive form that implies its a timeless commitment. You are committed to the act of feeding, especially in bad economic times. Fi youmi zi masghaba, in a day that is known, is possessed by, this overwhelming hunger that is coming to everybody. Meaning when you are reluctant to give, because you yourself are so hungry. But Allah is saying if you want to climb this mountain, you have to become a true humanitarian. In the sense that you are even giving preference over yourself in giving to the other. Subhanallah! Allah has not talked in the surah yet about iman! He’s not talked about iman, he’s not talked about Aqirah so much, he hasn’t talked about that stuff. What has he talked about? These ethics and these morals, about becoming selfless as a person. You are concerned about the slave, and by the way. some of the good people of Meccah even before Islam were they not concerned about some of these things? This is a historical fact. These are universal ethical humanitarian concerns that are being given precedence in this context. You know why? One of the benefits of that - the previous surah told us what did kufr lead to = what did the tughyan lead to? Fa aksaruhu fiha al fasaad. In the cities, they cause corruption. Fiha referring to the cities.They cause corruption in the cities. What is corruption in the cities? It is slavery. It is the oppression of the weak It is not giving to the poor . This is oppression! So now, in this surah it is a response that is already understood - they didn’t rebel against Allah. Because had they rebelled against Allah there would have been fasad - what’s the counter to that fasad? What is being mentioned in this surah . so **yateem**  and **za maqraba**. Previous surah said, kalla balla tukrimoonal yateem. **Yateem** came up again. It’s like a review of the previous lesson. So He said **yateeman za maqraba**, Feeding of an orphan that possesses closeness. And the word Maqraba is interesting because it is from waf makaan. Now zal qurba or zal qurb even, of closeness meaning the orphan that is a close relative to you. But za maqraba doesn’t just mean the relative that is close to you it also means the one who is in close proximity to you. There are orphans all around your neighbourhood. What about them too? So it captures two things- the orphan in your family that’s needy and the orphan in your community. What this calls for from the believer is first of all, you know what happens, you have close relations with your brother, because you grew up together and you know, you’re very close. But then your brother lives in a different city and you live in a different city. Right? You get a little bit further apart. and he has children and he sends you pictures of those children. You know you’re attached to them, you love them, but not like you love your brother. You actually had a meaningful connection. You see those kids once in a while etc Right? So now what happens is ma azallah when that brother passes away and those children are orphans. You think about them but not so much because you’re more concerned about your brother than about those children, so there’s a little bit of a distance between you and them right? And even actually in our families what happens is that your niece and nephew come up to you to your home and they’re fighting with your kids and you go oh my God, they’re coming again next week?

Like, this idea of cousins being a nuisance, right? So what happens is even in the family if there is some yateem , then people tend to overlook- there’s a possibility of them overlooking so Allah calls for that first. Not just **yateeman, za maqraba**, the ones in close proximity , meaning not only in your family but also in your neighbourhood. You have to know the yateem or yatama in your community. So this is actually a very important task of the muslim and this is something that allah is saying that even the moral kafir should be aware of even he can relate to this because the discussion, the appeal is to al insaan not to al lazeena amanu. Allah is talking to human beings in general here – subhanallah! they should be concerned. **Au miskeenan za maqraba**. The word miskeen comes from maskana, its used in many different places in the quran, it is described in many different ways, for example Imam Raghib al Isfahani says, someone who barely has enough life essentials to survive. Meaning they have no assets, they have no savings meaning perhaps they don’t even have a home, some linguists argue, but they are somehow surviving anyway, like If you saw them you would say how are you surviving? Thats a miskeen, okay? So Allah says miskeenan but then He adds **za matraba** this needy person, this barely surviving person, that is associated possessing dust,turaab – not even **za turaab, za matraba** the meem here is the meem masdariya. What it does is, it means he’s completely covered in dust. It captures a few things for us. Number one, he’s homeless – because if he had a home, he wouldn’t be covered in dust. Number two he’s going around in search of food. So when you go around what happens to you? You get covered in dust. Number three his bed is dust. When you sleep on dust and you get up you are now covered with dust. And he’s dirty and he’s bankrupt.. all of these implications are captured when we see **au miskeen za matraba**. The previous surah told us how bad those people are they don’t climb the mount.And how did He say it **wa la tahaabuna ala taamil miskeen**. Forget feeding them you don’t even encourage anybody else to feed them. So that was actually illustrated in the previous surah and it is being responded to again here. Then Allah says **summa kaana minnal lazeena amanu**- thereafter he became from those who had believed. Iman is mentioned all the way at the end here. What was mentioned before, the freeing of a slave, **’fakku raqabatin’**. the giving to the orphan and the needy covered in dust, humanitarian causes.. so Allah is saying, those of you who see something in society its a very profound lesson of , I don’t want to say philosophy , its the wisdom of the Quran. Profound lesson. Those that solve problems in society before them and they can relate to these problems and were looking for solution to these problems. There is only one real solution, everything else is patchwork. You know there are organisations – may Allah reward them – that are trying to feed the needy and the poor and the hungry etc. right? And they say this year we fed 10,000 orphans. And the next year they say we increased our activities. This year we got to feed 20,000. Or we got to put these many more children. So they show you these charts where their progress has gone up right? But if you compare that progress with the level of hunger..did hunger increase in the world? What will you see? Your progress is this way , but the progress of the problem is this way right? So you made a little progress in helping but the problem is exponentially faster in its growth. So the people who work in humanitarian causes very quickly realise that its a hopeless cause. They become very very you know, disheartened...they’re just workingworkingworking but they become hopeless – man there’s no hope – human beings are just- there’s no helping this – it’s just endless. It’s just endless, right? So what happens is, a lot of these charities they don’t want to tell you how big the problem is, they say ‘support one orphan’, ‘one dollar a day’.. They don’t want you to see the bigger picture because if you see it the bigger picture what’s going to happen to you ? ‘Man forget it! It’s too overwhelming!’But then you know, these are the problems of humanity - this is fasaad, basically, In humanity its always been there. The previous surah told us what was the root of that fasad - It was ‘Allazeena tahau fil bilaad’. They rebelled – rebelled against who ? against Allah. And thereby caused corruption. So how do you get rid of the corruption - You could try to help the corruption whats the root that will get rid of the corruption altogether? That is returning back to Iman in Allah. So the person has these concerns, what’s that final concern that will lead them away You see this is why Allah azza wa jal says, about the believers - He says wa yaqtaqlifunna fil ardh wa yaqtaqlifannahum fil ardh wa la yumakkianna hum mim baadi khaufihim, amna . That He will establish them in the earth And He will replace for them and this is Allah’s promise to those who believe - He will replace for them after the time of fear, a time of peace and safety. What does Iman bring? It brings Amn. What is Amn? Safety. And you know the surah began by swearing by the city. What’s the other attribute of this city? **Wa haazal baladil ameen**! Iman and amn are directly connected to each other. So you turn to Allah, and Allah will send Barakaat from the sky. And Allah will by means of His revealed justice and His revelation create a society in which these problems are properly dealt with. Now look, historically speaking – When the society of iman was established, was it not the case that the hungry and the poor and the **yateeman za maqraba** and the **miskeenan za matraba** were taken care of? Think about the rule of Omer (r.a.) Where did that solution come from? What political theory or constitution brought that out.. What was the root source of that entire situation? That was iman – that was iman. So at the end of this **summa** – thereafter, what did he become what was the conclusion**- kaana minalazeena amanu**- he became from those who had actually believed. He came to iman.. and then **wa tawasau bis sabr.** And then after they became from those who believed, *he* became from those who believed- then they- see, kaana was singular – kaana was singular. It’s not **kaanu** - **Kaanu** would have been *they became from those who believed*. But it says **kaana minallazeena amanu**. He became. He was now the one who believed. But then immediately there’s a switch to the plural ‘wa *tawasau* bis sabr’ Its not wa *taqwasa* bis sabr- tawasa would have been singular- tawasau- *they* enjoined each other- meaning when you become a person of iman necessarily you join in the ranks of other believers. You are not in the struggle to help humanity alone, now you are part of a larger struggle, a communal struggle of believers. This is what’s happened to you. By the way the previous surah hinted towards it Even in jannah, **fad quli fi ibaadi** – enter in the company of my slaves- even the work of this deen is in the company of slaves **‘tawasau’** they encouraged each other. The word wassiya is to leave a will or legacy, right? Tawasi is to advise and motivate and encourage and counsel one another. So now what’s happening is they become believers but the situation still looks hopeless. So what do they have to do? They have to counsel each other they have to advise each other. They have to keep each other motivated. Motivated to be what? Bis sabr. Bis sabr. The sabr is understood in two ways here- what does sabr mean? It means patience, commitment . consistency and constancy.Four things at least, okay ? that are in English are not captured in one word but in Arabic as sabr but in English you have to have to understand 4 distinct attributes of sabr –those are patience, right, that’s the most common translation, consistency, meaning you’re doing something, but you are doing it consistently- that’s sabr, then constancy, meaning no matter if its hard or difficult you are constant in your commitment, and commitment finally- so you’re constant and you’re committed to whatever that cause is. So they enjoined on each other and they did whatever they could to encourage and counsel each other to remain constant. The other thing is bis sabr could be haal al fael – in other words what it could be - it is with commitment that they keep counselling each other. So once again in simple language i’ll say two things – they counsel each other to patience and perseverance and commitment, and it is with commitment and consistency that they continuously counsel each other. These are the two implications of **wa tawasau bis sabr**. Why as sabr ? Because this task of climbing this hill is difficult isn’t it? That’s already captured in the word **al aqaba,** so you might start losing hope. So there has to be someone else who says, ‘Come on come on, you can do this. Little more to go, cmon you can handle it, we’ll help each other’. This is *tawasi bis sabr.* Now in the passage that’s the context of the aayaat, let’s look at one more thing – the things that we are told that are the uphill climb among the humanitarian causes – why is it that the kuffaar were not inclined to do so? because they were greedy they didn’t have the patience, they did not have the self-restraint to not take the wealth for themselves. **taakuluna turaa ,la tuhaabuna ala taamil miskeen**. These were their problems – so what’s the first thing they had to be told, patience. You have to be patient. And part of what patience is, you’ve got to restrain the desires of yourself for the sake of another. It takes sabr. So he becomes one of sabr really *afte*r he has iman. Then what **wa tawaasau bil marhama.** Beautiful word. The word **marhama** does not just mean *mercy* - that is the word **Rahma.** **Rahma** means *mercy*. They enjoined each other, encouraged each other and counselled each other for the sake of, you know, universal mercy. **Marhama** means mercy that goes in every direction , *meem masdari* makes it powerful. Mercy for everyone and everything. So what is the ultimate Mercy in this surah? It is Iman. Number one, that is the ultimate mercy and if you have that mercy, now you have concern for humanity and I want to tie these two things together *inshallah hu taala.* The decent human being that is listening to this call for human concern is concerned about the welfare of other people. Isn’t that the case? What’s the ultimate welfare of another human being? You fed him today and tomorrow and took care of him, but what if he still ended up in the hell fire? What if he became from **ashaabul mashamma** that is being mentioned at the end of this surah? That is not mercy enough! What is real mercy? You take care of their needs today and you take care of their needs for tomorrow. That day when some of them will be saying ya laitani qaddamtu li hayyati, you give them for that day too- give them the food they will need to survive then also. So that is **marhama**. Real mercy- its not just immediate mercy it is also profound universal mercy that you encourage each other to.

**Ulaaika ashaabul maimana**. Those are in fact the people on the far, well off to the right **ashaabal yameen**? To the right**. Ashaabul maimana**? Far to the right.Meaning they are safe from the center and tipping the other way. They really are, and Safe, on the right path, Subhanallah! May Allah make us from **ashaabal Maimana**. A beautiful contrast between this and the previous surah- In the previous surah we found ‘wa jia youmaizzinnbi jahannam’youma izzin yatazakkarul insaan wa anna lahu zikra yaqoolu ya laitani qaddamtu li hayaati fa yauma izzila yuazzibu azaabahu ahad wa laa yuthiku wa thaakahu ahad and then ya aiyatuhan nafsul mutmainna. Meaning the people of hell fire were mentioned first and people of paradise were mentioned second. In this surah what happens ? the reverse. The people of hell fire are mentioned second, but the people of paradise are mentioned first there’s a reversal. Similarly in the previous surah we found – in this surah rather we found the **yateem** first and the **miskeen** second. In the previous surah its the opposite – the **miskeen** first and the **yateem** second. So there’s this flipping of sequences between this surah and the next. Also the end of that surah was jannah. And the end of this surah is **naar** – the hell fire. As we will see. Okay? So **wallazeena kaffaru bi aayaatina hum ashaabul mashamaa** – those who disbelieved in our miraculous signs, disbelieved in our revelations – there was no discussion of revelation in the whole surah! Most of the surah was talking about al aqaba which was humanitarian work, and then just little mention of iman, but then the problem, the root problem of all of this is what? **Kufr bi aayaatillah**. Disbelief in the miraculous signs of Allah. What are the aayaat of Allah? The Quraan. Kufr in the Quran means kufr in the messenger of Allah(sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam) so actually now we are getting the definition of iman in the previous surah. You know when you think of iman, the first thing that comes to mind is iman in Allah. Iman in Allah. But this surah is highlighting another iman- Iman in the revelations of Allah. Iman in the revelations of Allah. Because the revelations of Allah is real guidance to solving the problems of humanity- najdain. That guidance. So those who disbelieve in the guidance, they are in kufr. They will fall,they will continue to have fasaad in the land. So **wallazeena kaffaru bi aayaatina**, those who disbelieved in our miraculous signs – I commonly don’t translate aayah as ‘verse’. I don’t translate it as verse because it has nothing to do with verse. The word verse in English literature is either used for poetry, or it’s used in the biblical context. Verses of the bible, or verses of poetry or verses of a song. The Quraan emphatically declares that it has nothing to do with poetry. It’s very strong in saying wa ma alamnahu shaera wa ma huwa bi qauli shair – It’s very strong in saying that. So I don’t want an English listener to have even the slightest, most subtle hint in their mind that it has something to do with verse. As in poetry. The second thing the quran claims against -is - you know the claim made against the quran was that it is plagiarised from the bible- so the last thing you want people to think about when you talk about the quran is - the bible. The bible always comes to mind when you think about verse... You know, verses of the bible. A biblical connotation comes to mind! So when we’re translating, not only do we have to be careful about the words, but the messages those words send to the audience ,and what connotations they have. The word ayah in the quran is two things, its a sign, and its a miracle. Two things. So I like the translation ‘miraculous sign’ wallahu aalam. It’s used ín the sense of the miraculous birth of Isaa alaihis salam or the staff turning into a python, etc. Aayah. That’s an aayah, okay? Revelation is called aayah. Something that points to the oneness of Allah is also called an aayah so the creations of Allah are also called aayaath, because they point to the oneness of Allah when you reflect on them. So those who disbelieved in our miraculous signs ‘**bi aayaathina, hum ashabul mashamma**’ those are the people associated with the curse – al mashama, the overwhelming curse. Ashuoom in Arabic is to be vile to be disgusting. You know, other people are disgusted with you and you are a source of curse, people stay away from you. Also the word mashama means the left side. Because the Arabs considered the left side the cursed side and that’s something that continued in the tradition of Islam for example in Tahara we use the left and for good things we use the right and this is from the sunnah of the messenger sallahu alaihi wa sallam. One last comment on wa kaffaru bi aayaathina before we go further. What are the aayaath of Allah? There are two kinds, essentially, There are two kinds. There is revelation and there is creation. Revelation is Quran, and creation is all of creation. Now we talked about the disbelief being in the revelation of Allah, Quran. But there’s also kufr in the other aayaath of Allah. What’s the other aayaath of Allah? The human being, and all the other creation. Speaking of these aayaath Allah says sanureehim aayaathina fil aafaaqi wa fi anfusihim hatta yatabayyana lahum anamul haq. We will show them our miraculous signs in the horizons and even inside of themselves until it is absolutely clear to them that this is the truth. So there are miraculous signs inside of us if we reflect. And there are miraculous signs outside of us if we reflect and then there are miraculous signs inside the revelation of Allah itself. Are there miraculous signs of how Allah looks inside the psyche of a human being in the beginning of the surah? And He tells the human being even what he is thinking without even saying it? You know, it is one thing for the messenger of Allah (s.a.w) to know what the person said. How is he going to know what the person thinks? Ayahsabu ain yaqdaru alaihi ahad? Ayahsabu allam yaraaoo ahad?..... Does he think no one will have control? Does he think no one saw him? Now the person is thinking, ‘nobody’s going to control me’ - ’nobody saw me ‘. Allah tells him what he’s even thinking! So there’s a miraculous sign even inside of his thought. Allah captured it inside of His revelation Subhanallah! Even that they deny. So they are the ultimately cursed, they are refusing to reflect, they’re refusing to think. They’re refusing concern. So really that’s the bottom line of this surah from the previous one. The people who will have the easiest transition to iman are people who are decent human beings, that are not engulfed in self-pleasure, have concern for humanity and that concern will lead them to the ultimate concern, and that’s iman. That’s the logic that is being presented here in this surah beautifully. Finally, **alaihim naarul musada** – and this is an amazing balance of the quran- when Allah spoke of the people of the right hand, He did not mention Jannah. Right? But when He spoke about the cursed people He mentioned hell fire He added something for the people of the hell fire- Why? The entire surah is essentially a surah of shiddah and tough words are used – like Asaabooni r.a. would say every surah has a jau- a climate. Every surah has a climate. And the climate of this surah is very tough . It begins with **la** – a tough word. Then ther’s **aqaba. Najdain. Iqtahama**. The climate of this surah has a lot of Shidddah in it. So even the people of paradise, a little is mentioned in it but more is mentioned of the people of the hell fire. If you look at the previous surah, what is given more emphasis? The ending emphasised more so the people of paradise. So the balance between these two surahs has been reached. So Allah says alaihim, it is exclusively and especially upon them, **naarun musada-** a fire that has been sealed up- al waslu qatmu shai ila shai- Ibnil khaarij says. Wasl is to seal something on top of it with another thing..’au sadu qidr’ for example you will say I placed the lid on the stew. You know when the stew starts boiling and the steam starts coming out and you put a lid on it so the steam doesn’t escape, that is eesad. Allah says **alaihim naarun mussada**- Only upon them there will be a fire completely covered. Meaning the heat doesn’t escape. The heat of the fire doesn’t escape it goes and further intensifies what is inside. Subhanallah. Similarly, an Arabic expression when you say awsad albaab, it means he locked the door when there were no other escapes either- like if a room had windows you could get out of, then you won’t say ausad albaab. You’ll just say armaq alabbab or galaq albaab, right? But you wont say ausad. Ausad is when there is no other escape, right, so Allah says **alaihim naarun musada**- upon them exclusively is the fire from which there is no escape, Subhanallah. Now I would like to Inshallah taala conclude with some commentary from , some glimpses of commentary from fatheh salehas son Irahi rahimallah who consistently connects the beginnings and conclusions of surahs and talks about the intricate relationship between them. He argues - in the beginning of the surah we found ***laqad qalaqnal insaana fi kabad*** - *No doubt we created the human being in toil*. But that toil is for this duniya and if he doesn’t do the right thing there’s a far worse toil coming at the end, so the surah ends ‘**alaihim naarun musada’**. It ties the toil of this world, if you don’t do the right kind of toil, you’ll end up with much worse toil in the end which is closed off and will only get worse and worse and worse. May Allah azzawajal protect us from the flame of the fire may Allah azzawa jal enter us directly into jannah and not even have to see a whiff or draft of the hell fire. *Barakallahu li wa lakum fi quran alhakeem wa nafaani wa iyyakum bil aayaathi wa zikril hakeem. Asslam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu.*