

ALLAH HAS PREPARED SALVATION

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Praise be to Allah—praise from him who has come to his senses, confessed his sin, repented of his disobedience, and turned to his Lord.

I witness that there is no god except Allah, the Living, the Mighty. Everything was created by Him and for Him. May He be glorified. He alone is omnipotent, rich, wise, forgiving, and merciful. His love is great; and Allah guides us in the straight path.

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As for what follows, is there any hope that Allah would forgive our sins and pardon us for our disobedience? Does man have any hope for deliverance from hell, for assurance of eternal life? Yes, yes, my brother. So come with me to see how that is possible.

Allah, almighty and glorious, is the King of the Day of Judgment. He is the just Judge who will judge all people on the Last Day. In the second lesson we learned that everyone has fallen into sin and rebellion.

"There is no one who is righteous, no one who is wise or who worships Allah. All have turned away from Allah; they have all gone wrong; no one does what is right, not even one."

There is no doubt that the sins and trespasses we commit will be judged sternly.

A rich landowner asked his steward to plant wheat in his fields. However, the manager planted beans. A little while later when the seeds sprouted and began to grow, the landowner came to check his fields. He was surprised to find beans growing, so he asked his steward: "Didn't I tell you to plant wheat?" "Yes sir," replied the manager, "but I planted beans, hoping that we would harvest wheat." When the rich man looked surprised, the wise steward said: "Master, in the same way, it is not possible to plant unkindness during one's life and then harvest happiness. People harvest what they plant." This is exactly what Allah's Honorable book says:

"Do not deceive yourselves; no one makes a fool of Allah. A person will reap exactly what he sows."

So on the Day of Judgment all people are to be punished—to perish in eternal torment in the fire of hell. Sin has caused all this. Sin has degraded humans and brought them down. They have become miserable slaves under the authority and power of Satan instead of being Allah's deputies (caliphs) on earth, the masters of His creation and



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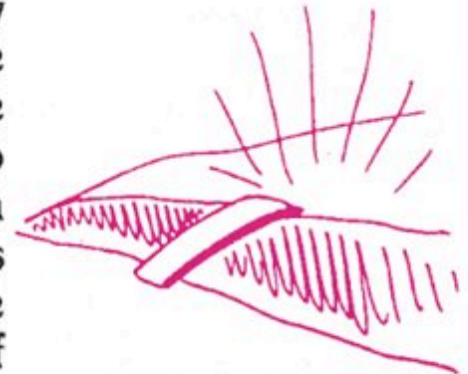
obedient to His orders.

"...everyone who sins is a slave of sin."

As we said in the last lesson, sin is like a thick, high wall that separates humans from Allah Almighty, and like a wide gulf that hinders people from approaching Allah. This wall, my friend, must be demolished so that the beautiful fellowship with Allah can be restored and we be rescued from the torment of the Last Day. A

bridge must be built over the wide gulf so that estranged people can approach Allah and enjoy His approval.

The peace, security, and wellbeing that humankind lost because of sin can be regained if the fellowship between people and Allah is restored. But how can that relationship be restored? On our part, we are blind: we cannot see the straight path. We are helpless: we cannot find the straight path because we have fallen into a pit, and we have no strength to get ourselves out of it. So Allah Almighty, in His power and glory and through His mercy and love, has stretched out His hand to lift us up out of the pit, guide us in the straight path, and so deliver us from the torment of the Day of Judgment.



A bridge must be built.

Remember, my friend, that Allah is righteous and good. He forgives sin and pardons disobedience. He is just, but merciful at the same time. He is strict and also loving. He loves people with a deep love. True, He hates our sins and hates the evil in our hearts and consciences. But He loves us. We are His creation; He is our Maker. And He wants good relations to be restored; not because He needs us, but because He loves us and wants to have a relationship with us.

Allah's justice demands that He punish us because we are sinners. And the punishment that awaits sinners is eternal hell. But Allah does not want us to perish, because He loves us and because He is merciful. At the same time, Allah does not forgive people without punishing them for their sins. If He pardoned them without punishment, divine justice would not be satisfied—Allah's rights would be trampled on and His honor violated, something that is impossible.

So Allah decided to send a Messenger to redeem miserable man who was lost and perishing. This Messenger came to the world and bore the punishment of sin on behalf of humankind. He demolished the wall that separated people from their Creator. He built a bridge and brought them close to Allah. He rescued them from the pit into which they had fallen, and He reconciled the Creator with the creature.



Allah has stretched out His hand to lift us up out of the pit.

Indeed, the principle of redemption is known, accepted, and used by Allah and by people. For example, when a driver commits an offence against the traffic laws, he pays a fine. This is actually like redemption or a substitute for the driver himself who committed the offence. And what do you think of a courageous soldier who sacrifices his life for the sake of his country and dies in war to combat the enemy's aggression so that his countrymen can live with honor and pride? This is great redemption.



*Allah sent a ram
to die and take the place
of Abraham's son.*

And with Allah, we know that the ram He sent to Abraham was intended to take the place of Abraham's son who was about to be sacrificed. The ram illustrates redemption for Abraham's son.

A policeman stopped a young man who had run a red light. He said to him: "In front of us is the courthouse. Either you pay a fine right now, or go directly to the courthouse where they may put you in jail." Since the young man did not have the money to pay the fine, he made his way to the courthouse. There, the judge asked him if he would admit that he had run a red light, and he said, "Yes." Then the judge asked him why he had not paid the fine, and the young man, ashamed, answered: "I don't have the money." So the judge confirmed what the policeman had said and told the boy: "Either you pay the fine, or you'll go to jail." The young man was disappointed and surprised at the sentence,

because he had a special relationship with the judge: the judge was his father. Yes, his own father had decided to put him in jail. How could that happen? Where was the father's mercy? The policeman took the young man to jail. Immediately the judge left the court to find his son. Out of compassion he gave him the money to pay the fine, saying: "My son, since I'm the judge, I have to uphold the law and enforce it. And since I'm your father, I'm making this sacrifice for you and getting you out of jail."

My friend, that is what Allah has done for us. He enforces the law and makes us respect it because He is just. He is also loving and merciful, so He saves and delivers us.

And here, let me tell you the story of our master Noah. People of that time were so corrupt that Allah justly sentenced them to perish. But Allah Almighty prepared redemption and deliverance for those who would repent and obey Him.

So Allah instructed our master Noah to build a ship (or an ark) that would be the means of salvation for whoever would take refuge in it from the terrible flood coming to cover the earth and destroy everyone. Thus, Allah showed that He is just and strict and hates sin. He sent the flood to punish the



Allah has prepared deliverance for all those who will accept it.



*An animal was killed
to provide garments for
Adam and Eve.*

wicked. At the same time He loves people and wills their good. He prepared deliverance for those who would choose it.

My friend, do you remember what we said in lesson one—that when Adam and Eve fell into disobedience, Allah made them garments of animal skin to use as a covering instead of the fig leaves? Where did the animal skin come from? Of course an animal had to be killed and skinned to provide that kind of garment. This is another picture of redemption. That animal died so that humans could be covered.

But the Messenger who would redeem people—could He be found among ordinary human beings like you and I? The answer is no, because since all people have fallen into sin, all are to be punished for their transgressions. And it is not possible for a sinner to redeem sinners, for a criminal to defend or mediate on behalf of criminals. The Messenger Allah sent to redeem humankind had to be sinless. He had to be pure, never having committed evil, rebellion, transgression, or wickedness. He never made a mistake. He was pure, clean, righteous, and perfect—thus He was able to be the Redeemer.

My dear friend, this Messenger was not born like all other human beings. He came as a sign from Allah, almighty and glorious. He was conceived by a miracle. His mother was a virgin who had no marital relations with a man. Thus, He had no earthly father like

other people. So, who is this noble, honorable Messenger? I would like you, my friend, to think about this until we meet again in the next lesson, Allah willing.

In the keeping of Allah, good-bye for now.

Your friend,
Sheikh Abdullah

Email:

Sheikh.Khalilullah@gmail.com

khalilullah@amalalhaleej.com

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