

## Ahle Zikr - II

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### In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

While traveling on expressways we see **thick white lines or bands** which **divide the road into different lanes**. These white lines are **the mark of separation** of lanes based on the speed limit. There are fast lanes, medium lanes and lanes for slow or heavy vehicles. In order to remain in the specific lane **these lines are to be followed diligently**. If a driver **follows these lines** he is ensured of a **safer and smoother journey** on the expressway but in case if **he fails to remain in his lane** and by mistake moves out, **the chances of accident with another vehicle increase** and the journey might not remain safer anymore. Thus **for a good driver it is mandatory not to ignore these lines and follow them with perfection.**

Now relate this example with life. Our life is a journey and we are all travelers, heading towards our final destination in our respective lanes at our respective speed. In such a situation **how do we find out that we are in the right lane?** We might wonder whether **Allah (SWT) has created His Signs which need to be followed diligently to remain in the right lane and avoid getting hit by Satan.**

→ In this article let us try to understand this phenomenon in the light of holy Quran and try to identify those **Signs of Allah which are to be followed** throughout our life span **to remain on the straight path.**

We start our research with the following ayah from Surah-e-Baqra:

- “Aur **Shaitan ke qadam ba qadam na chalo** woh to tumhara zaahir ba zaahir dushman hai.” – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 168)

“(And **do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan;** surely he is your open enemy).”

In the above ayah, Allah (SWT) has instructed us **not to follow the footsteps of the Satan** but **the Satan is invisible** to us, nor can we **see his footsteps** and thus unknowingly **we are at a risk of following him**, giving him the benefit of leading us to the wrong path. So how do we save ourselves from not getting astray by the Satan? Let us see one more ayah in this regard:

- “**Beshak ye sarasar nasihat hai to jo shakhs chahe apne parwardigar ki raah le.**” – (Surah-e-Insan, ayah 29)

“(This surely is a reminder: Therefore **whosoever desires may take the way to his Lord.**”

In the previous ayah Allah (SWT) instructs us not to follow the footsteps of Satan and in the above ayah **He reminds us that we should have the desire to take the path that reaches Him**. But again the problem persists as Allah (SWT) though Omnipresent is invisible. None is capable enough to grasp His Vision and hence how does one ensure that the path being taken is the straight path that reaches Him? How does one ensure, safety from Satan? Let us consider one more ayah from Surah-e-Insan:

- “*Aur jab tak Khuda ko manzur na ho tum log kuch bhi chah nahin sakte beshak Khuda bada waqifkaar dana hai.*” – (Surah-e-Insan, ayah 30)

“(But **you will not desire except as God wills.** Verily He is all-knowing and all-wise).”

Relating the above ayah to the previous one we can see that the previous ayah from *Surah-e-Insan* (ayah no 29) reminds us **to have the desire of taking the path in His direction** while the ayah above says that **one cannot even have a desire unless He Wills.** This means that **even in order to have the desire of taking the straight path one needs to earn Allah’s Will first.**

➔ We can thus infer on the basis of the above contemplations on various ayahs that Allah (SWT) does not want us **to follow the footsteps of the Satan** and He wants us **to have the will and the desire to take the straight path in His direction.** But further the ayah has clarified that **we can’t even hold such a desire unless He Wills.** Thus in order to reach the straight path we **need to seek Allah (SWT)’s pleasure** and only then can we reach the straight path and hence be safe from Satan.

Quran is the final commandment of Allah (SWT) and I believe that if we ponder upon various ayahs we would find a definite way to seek Allah’s Pleasure and His Will. Let us move forward in this direction and consider the following ayah from *Surah-e-Fateha* for this:

- “*Humain seedha raasta dikha, un logo ka raasta jin per Tu ne inaaam farmaya...*” – (Surah-e-Fateha Ayah 6-7)

“(Show us the straight way, **the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace...**”)

In the above ayah Allah (SWT) has asked the Muslim *Ummah* to pray to Him to show them **the straight path taken by the chosen ones who were bestowed upon by His Grace.** Here, let us go back to the previous ayah of *Surah-e-Insan* (ayah no. 29), where Allah (SWT) has reminded us **to have the desire to take the path in His direction** while in the above ayah **He has shown us the specific direction to reach Him.** **The path taken by His chosen ones is the path He wishes us to take.** This path would lead us to Him and **hence by taking this path we would ensure that we win His Pleasure and His Will.**

The prominent Islamic researchers like *Sa’labi* and others have mentioned a tradition from Abu Hureira according to which the **‘Straight Path’** mentioned in the above ayah is the path taken by **the holy Prophet (pbuh) and his holy Progeny (pbut).** (Ref: *Sa’labi in his Tafseer, Waki ibn-e-Jarrah in his commentary*).

Before we carry forward the discussion on this ayah let us consider another ayah from *Surah-e-Ambiya*:

- “*To agar tum log khud nahin jaante ho to ahl-e-zikr se pooch kar dekho.*” – (Surah-e-Ambiya, ayah 7)

“(Ask the remembrances (*ahl-e-zikr*), if you do not know)”

In the light of above ayah we can say that there are chosen guides whom we need to follow. These guides are the representatives of Allah (SWT) and His arguments over us and **hence we should seek their guidance to reach the Straight Path.** The ayah has termed them as *Ahle Zikr*.

*Sa'labi* reports from the authority of Jabir Ibn-e-Abdullah Ansari in his *tafseer* that **on revelation of this ayah Mawla Ali (as) said, “We are the rememberancers (ahl-e-zikr)”.**

Thus as per Quran **the Imams from the holy Progeny of the holy Prophet (SAW) are Ahle Zikr and our guides.** Let us now see what our beloved Prophet (pbuh) has said about his holy *Ahlulbait*:

- “Do not go ahead of them lest ye perish; nor lag behind them, lest ye perish also. And do not teach them for **they know more than you.**” (Ref: *Tabrani as part of Hadees-e-Saqlain, Ibn-e-Hajar Sawaiq-e-Mohraika, vol 24, Chapter 37*)

And Syeda Fatema (S.A) has said: "Verily, Allah made obeying us (*Ahlulbait*) - the regulation of the nation and our (*Ahlulbait's*) leadership - the safeguard from disunity. (Ref: *Al-Ihtijaj vol.1 p.97, Bihar Al-Anwar vol.29 p.223*)

➔ It is clear from above *Quranic* contemplations that **the holy Prophet (SAW) and his pious Progeny (as)** are the *Ahle Zikr*, the true guides and **rightful representatives of Allah (SWT) on this earth.** Seeking guidance from them is to seek guidance from Allah (SWT) Himself and following their footsteps is the doctrine to reach Allah (SWT) **and hence a passport of salvation.**

The *Ahle Zikr* are the holy Prophet (SAW) and his Progeny (as) as per the result we just derived. But why did Allah (SWT) choose them to be *Ahle Zikr*? Is there a reason for that? Let us strive in this direction and seek answers to our queries.

Striving in the direction of Allah (SWT) is the most important aspect of our faith and religion and that is the reason Allah (SWT) instructed the holy Prophet (SAW) to give his final message to the Muslim *Ummah* in the following manner:

- “*Ae Rasool (SAW) un logon se tum kehdo ke main iss tabligh-e-risaalat per tum se kuch mazdoori to maangta nahin hoon magar tamanna ye hai ke **jo chaahе apne Parvardigar tak pahonch ne ki raah pakad le.***” – (*Surah-e-Furqaan, ayah 57*)

“(Say: “No reward do I ask of you for it but this: that each one who will, **may take a (straight) Path to his Lord.**”)”

**‘Each one who will, may take a straight Path to his Lord’** – this is the reward Allah (SWT) instructed the holy Prophet (SAW) to seek from the Muslim *Ummah* for his labour of Prophethood. Let us see one more ayah from *Surah-e-Baqra* and then contemplate on both the above ayahs:

- “*Aur **Khuda jise chahe rahe raast ki hidayat karta hai.**” – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 213)*  
“(And **Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path.**)”

The ayah says that **Allah (SWT) guides whom He pleases to the right path.** While the final message of the holy Prophet to his *Ummah* as mentioned in the previous ayah from *Surah-e-Furqaan* is **to strive in the direction of the Straight Path that reaches Allah (SWT).** But we have concluded that **the straight path to Allah (SWT) is the path taken by the holy Progeny (as) of our beloved Prophet (SAW).** Thus Allah (SWT) again asked the holy Prophet (SAW) to further clarify his final message in the following manner:

- “*Ae Rasool (SAW) tum kehdo ke main apni tableegh-e-risalat ka **apne qarabatdaron ki mohabbat** ke siwa tumse koi sila nahin maangta” – (Surah-e-Shura, ayat – 23)*  
“(‘Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but **love for my near relatives’**)”

Upon the revelation of the above ayah it was asked to the holy Prophet (SAW) as to who were they whose love has been made mandatory for us? To which the Prophet (SAW) replied that they are **Ali (as), Fatema (sa), their children Hassan (as) and Hussain (as).** (Ref: *Tafseer-e-Kishaf*, Allama Zamkhashri, Vol 3, P 67)

A similar tradition has been recorded by *Sa’labi, Zamakhshari, Suyuti* and *Baidhavi* in which it is mentioned that the above ayah was revealed to make **the love of the household of Mawla Ali (A.S) mandatory on the Muslim world.** Even prominent Islamic authorities like Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmed Ibn Hambal and others have recorded traditions to this effect by quoting Ibn-e-Abbas. **Thus to take the straight path that reaches Allah (SWT) is to love the Ahlulbait and try to follow their guidance.**

Going back to *ayah no. 213* from *Surah-e-Baqra*, which has already been discussed above which says, **Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path,** here the **right path is the love of Ahlulbait.** It means that **Allah (SWT) instills love of Ahlulbait in the bosoms of people whom He wishes to guide.** And this conclusion of ours has been testified by Quran in the following manner in the following ayah:

- “*Khuda **apne Noor ki taraf jise chahta hai hidayat karta hai**” – (Surah-e-Noor, ayah 35)*  
“(Allah guides to His Noor whom He pleases).”

The above ayah says that **Allah guides to His Noor whom He pleases**. But Allah (SWT) being invisible, to which *Noor* shall we be guided?

Let us see few references on the revelation of the above ayah which would further confirm our inference:

- *Ali ibn Muhammad* and *Muhammad ibn al-Hassan* have narrated from *Sahl ibn Ziyad* from *Muhammad ibn al-Hassan ibn Shammun* from ‘*Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Asamma* from ‘*Abd Allah ibn al-Qasim* from *Salih ibn Sahl al-Hamadani* who has narrated a tradition from the authority of Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (as) and according to it the Imam has said that in the above ayah:

‘**Allah guides to His Noor whom He pleases**’ means that **Allah Guides through the Imams (as) whoever He likes.**’ (Ref: *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, H. 513)

- *Hasan al-Basri*, *Abdul Hasan Maghazil* and *Shafe’I* have mentioned that “**Allah guides to His Noor whom He pleases**” means the **love for descendants of Mawla Ali (as) and Lady Fatema (sa)**.

→ This clarifies why Allah (SWT) chose them as *Ahle Zikr*. The holy Prophet (SAW) and Imams from his holy Progeny (as) are *Ahle Zikr* as **they are the light of Allah (SWT) created to guide us. Allah (SWT) has kept Himself invisible from our eyes and created this light in human form so that we may understand the Divine Message and remain steadfast on the straight path.** If we lose their sight we are at risk of facing the Satan and we might get astray but if we strive in their direction we are ensured of guidance and salvation. **Throughout his life our beloved Prophet (SAW) had conveyed the message of importance of love for Ahlulbait (as) in our lives on different occasions and this has been documented in the form of ahadith** which find their mention in authentic books of different sects of Muslim *Ummah*.

And since they are our guides, the virtues displayed during their lifespan need to be imbibed by us to the best of our capacities. It is impossible for us to emulate them but if we take inspiration from their lives we could be immensely benefited. They have epitomized various virtues which we would see in the light of following ayah:

- “*Aur Hum to kisi shakhs ko uss ki quwwat se badhke takleef dete hi nahin.*” – (Surah – e-Momineen, ayah 62)

“(On no soul do **We place a burden greater than it can bear**).”

The above ayah says that Allah (SW) does not burden someone beyond his capacity. **This means that the larger the atrocity faced by one the greater is his capacity to bear it.** Seeing the lives of Prophets who descended on this earth and faced different atrocities it can be said that **none had to face the calamity as great as the atrocities of Karbala faced by Imam Hussain (as) and his household.** The battlefield of Karbala afflicted countless ruthless atrocities on the innocent children and household of our beloved Imam Hussain (as). This if we see **in the light of above ayah** showcases **his magnitude of Patience and Faith.**

During my recent visit to Iraq I saw the place where Imam Musa Kazim (as) was imprisoned for most of his life. The cell was so small and the ceiling so low that the holy Imam could barely raise his head above the 'ruku' position. If Allah (SWT) created the Imams as *Ahle Zikr* then why such atrocities on them, we tend to wonder.

But when we see their lives in the light of above ayah it explains that **Allah (SWT) has revealed their strength to mankind in the light of these atrocities.** They have epitomized every virtue which Allah (SWT) has instructed in Quran for us to imbibe. They are '*Quran-e-Naatiq*' and their lives are guidance for us.

- As per the holy Quran the holy Prophet (SAW) is 'Mercy' to the Worlds (*Surah-e-Ambiya, ayah 107*). **Thus he has epitomized 'Mercy'**
- When the Muslim army could not conquer the '*Fort of Khyber*' and were losing the battle the holy Prophet (SAW) called for the help of Mawla Ali (as) in his prayer to Allah (SWT) by reciting '*Naade Ali*'. Mawla Ali came to the rescue, conquered the Fort and lifted the huge door miraculously on his arm. The *Surah-e-Hadid, ayah no. 25* mentions the event of descension of Zulfiqar - In the battlefield of Ohad, Jibraeel (A.S) brought down the sword '***Zulfiqar***' and presented it to Mawla Ali (A.S) by saying: '***La fataah illa Ali La Saif illa Zulfiqar.***' (Zulfiqar is the only effective sword and Ali the unique champion) (*Ref: Habib-al-Siyar; Rawdzat-al-Ahbab*). **Thus Mawla Ali (as) became epitome of 'Strength' and 'Divine Help'**
- *Ayah no. 33 of Surah-e-Ahzab (ayat-e-Tatheer)* has testified **Saiyeda Fatema (sa) as the epitome of 'Piety'**.
- In order to stop the killings of innocent Muslims, our beloved Imam Hassan (as) entered into a treaty with the crafty caliph of that time and curbed his cunning moves and stopped the unnecessary bloodshed, **thus epitomizing 'Wisdom'**.
- In the battlefield of Karbala Imam Hussain (as) sacrificed his innocent household for the sake of Islam. **Thus becoming the epitome of 'Patience' and 'Faith'**
- In the battlefield of Karbala after the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (as) Saiyeda Zainab (sa) took care of his household. Her dignified conduct during atrocities to date is an inspiration for women of the *Ummah* and stands as the **epitome of 'Dignity'**.
- The presence of Abbas Alamdar (as) which sent shivers down the spine of enemies in Karbala, was a respite for Imam Hussain (as) and his household. His loyalty and love for Imam Hussain (as) was such that he allowed his arms getting amputated by coward enemies but did not lift the weapons against the wish of Imam Hussain (as). He conquered the river Euphrates but did not drink water as children of Imam Hussain (as) were thirsty. He sacrificed his life for Imam and his children. He is an inspiration for brotherly love. **He thus epitomized "Bravery" and 'Loyalty'**.

The above cited examples are just few of many to explain my point of view. They are '**Signs of Allah' and His Identity.** We have to see them and their lives to understand Allah (SWT) and His message. The sermon of the holy Prophet (SAW) from the authority of Imam Zainulabedin (as) supports our above claim:

- Imam Ali Bin Al-Hussein (pbuh) said: "My father narrated to me that his father narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuhp) said:

*When Adam (as) saw our spirits he said: "O Lord! What are these spirits?" Allah, the Most High, said: "O Adam, these are the spirits of my greatest creations and servants. -*

- *This is Mohammad and I am Al-Mahmoud Al-Hamid (The Most Thanked) for My actions, I derived this name for him from My Name.*
- *This is Ali and I am Al-Ali Al-Athim (The Most High and the Greatest), I derived this name for him from My Name.*
- *This is Fatima and I am (Fater) the Originator of the skies and earth; I am the One who shall deprive my enemies from My mercy on the day of My judgment and protect my saints from what may harm them; hence, I derived this name for her from My Name and*
- *These are Al-Hasan and Al-Hussein and I am Al-Mohsen Al-Mojmel (The Most Charitable and the Most Generous); I derived their names from My Name.*

**These are My most virtuous creations and My most dignified servants. By them, I give. By them, I punish. By them, I reward. Therefore, plead by them, O Adam, and if you face a hardship, let them be your interceders. For, I swore to Myself indeed to never disappoint anyone who hopes mercy by them and never refuse anyone who asks a request by them.** (Ref: Bihar-ul-Anwar, P 327, V 26, P 150, V 11, Tafseer-e-Imam Hasan Askari (as) P 219, Tafseer-e-Saafi, V 1, P 115, Yanabe-ul-Mawadda, V 1, P 288)

➔ The holy Prophet (SAW) and his Progeny (as) are the "**light of Allah (SWT)**" created as **our guides** and our constant **source of inspiration**. They are **the "Straight Path"** to be followed as mentioned in Quran. They are "**Signs of Allah**" which need to be loved. Their 'Zikr' is Allah's Zikr' and hence **they are "Ahle Zikr"**. Allah (SWT) instills their **love in the bosoms of people whom He wishes**. So let us thank Allah (SWT) that He has chosen us by instilling love of *Ahlulbait* in our hearts and pray to Him to keep us guided and reward us for this in both the worlds. We would finally conclude this article by mentioning Mawla Ali (as)'s instructions to us on this:

**"Look at the people of the Prophet's family. Adhere to their direction. Follow their footsteps because they would never let you out of guidance, and never throw you into destruction. If they sit down, you sit down, and if they rise up you rise up. Do not go ahead of them, as you would thereby go astray and do not lag behind of them as you would thereby be ruined."** – (Ref: Sermon 96, Nahjulbalagha)