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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allāh. We seek His assistance and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of ourselves and the evil of our actions. Whomsoever Allāh guides none can misguide him, and whomsoever Allāh misguides none can guide him.

I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh alone, without partner. I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger. May the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him.

This sermon is known as the *khuṭbah al-ḥājjah*. It is delivered before a person wishes to discuss a need of his, whether that need is marriage, a worldly need or a religious need. This is why it is called *khuṭbah al-ḥājjah* (the sermon of need). We shall now explain some parts of this sermon.

Whomsoever Allāh guides none can misguide him. This statement clearly shows that whomsoever Allāh has decreed guidance for none has the ability to misguide him or remove him from the guidance which he has been blessed with.

...and whomsoever He misguides none can guide him. Similarly, whomsoever Allāh has decreed misguidance for none has the ability to guide him.

I bear witness. The reason this testimony is in the singular tense as opposed to the plural 'we' found at the beginning of the sermon, is due to the singular tense being more appropriate when discussing the unity and oneness of Allāh, the Most High.

I have been asked by a number of brothers to author an introduction to the exegesis of the Qur'ān, comprising of comprehensive principles which will assist one in understanding its meanings as well as differentiating between the truth and all kinds of falsehood indicating in all of the above the criterion to be used in this.

Here, the author¹ mentions the reason which led him to author this book; that reason being he was requested to do so. An author either pens a book due to him realising that there is a need for such a topic to be discussed, or there may be another reason, such as him being asked to do so. Therefore, in the first instance, he is addressing a need, and in the second he is responding to a request. Indeed, if a scholar realises that people are in need of knowledge in a particular field, then he must address this need and author works in this field. This is so that people are fully aware of the rulings and are able to worship Allāh upon clear guidance and understanding.

The author says 'comprehensive principles'. *Qawā'id* is the plural of *qā'idah* [principle] and it means the foundation of something. This is where the saying '*qawā'id al-bayt*' ['the foundations of a house'] is derived from. Therefore, these are the principles and foundations which assist one in understanding the Qur'ān and the principles of the exegesis of the Qur'ān. This is because understanding the Qur'ān is one of the three reasons for which it was revealed.

The Qur'ān was revealed for three reasons: to worship Allāh by reciting it, to understand its meanings and to act according to it. This is why the companions (رضي الله عنهم) would not pass ten verses until they had completely understood and acted upon them. They would say: 'So we learnt the Qur'ān, knowledge and action all together.'

¹ i.e. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah.

Whoever calls to it has been guided to the straight path. This means that Allāh has guided such an individual, for one who calls to the Qur'ān has been guided to the straight path. As for one who calls to his own desires then he will be misguided. This is why the author also states: And whosoever seeks guidance elsewhere will be misguided.

And whosoever arrogantly leaves it will be destroyed. This peril and destruction does not necessarily have to take place in this world, but it can also be in the Hereafter.

Allāh says:

فَأَمَّا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ مَقْرُونِينَ
 فَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى ۗ وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنِّي
 ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَمَخْشَرَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
 أَعْمَى ۗ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا ۗ
 قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَنْتَ أَعْمَى الْيَوْمَ نَسِيتَ آيَاتِي الَّتِي كُنْتُ أَنْزِلُ
 عَلَيْكَ فَتَبِعْتَهُمْ حَتَّى كُنْتَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ۗ

And if there should come to you guidance from Me – then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter]. And whoever turns away from My remembrance – indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e. difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e. raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind. He will say, “My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?” [Allāh] will say, “Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e. disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.”

Sūrah Ṭā-Hā, 20:123-126

...will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter]. This verse means that he will not go astray regarding his knowledge, nor will he suffer in his actions. Another explanation is he will not go astray in this world, nor will he suffer in the Hereafter, and each interpretation alludes to the other. However, misguidance is normally referred to as being the opposite of knowledge and guidance, and suffering is the opposite of happiness.

And whoever turns away from My remembrance – indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e. difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e. raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind. It is said that a ‘depressed life’ refers to the punishment of the grave; the grave will continue to constrict until one’s body is twisted. Others state that this ‘depressed life’ will be in this world, and even though he may apparently show signs of happiness, his heart will be in a state of depression and constriction. Allāh says:

CHAPTER 3

Differences of Opinion amongst the Predecessors in the Exegesis of the Qur'ān: A Difference of Variation

The predecessors differed little in the exegesis of the Qur'ān, however they differed considerably more in issues related to rulings (*ahkām*). Whenever they do differ in the exegesis of the Qur'ān it is more a difference of variation than contradiction. This is of two categories:

Here the author asserts that differences amongst the predecessors in the exegesis of the Qur'ān may occur, but it is significantly less than their differences in rulings. The reason for this is that exegesis revolves around explaining words, their meanings and what is intended by them, and this is something in which there is not much difference. In contrast to this, rulings are based upon deduction and analogy, so differences are considerably more so than in *tafsīr*, due to a contrast in the levels of knowledge and understanding.

We have previously mentioned the difference between the explanation of the words of the Qur'ān and their meanings, and the fact that they are not necessarily one and the same. Explanation of the words is done by using other words to clarify the meaning of that particular word, whereas explanation of

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states here the reasons which may cause a difference of opinion; however these causes are not meant to be comprehensive, as this can be found in another of the author's works: *Raf al-Malām 'an al-A'imat al-A'lām* (Removing the Blame from the Great Scholars).

Here he states, 'due to relevant evidences being hidden', i.e. the scholar doesn't believe it is an evidence for that particular issue, so even though he came across the evidence, it didn't seem relevant to the issue at hand. Likewise, the evidence may be 'overlooked', meaning that even though he knew of the evidence he forgot it. If it is due to not being heard then that scholar was unaware of the evidence, or the difference may be due to misunderstanding the texts. The final cause mentioned here is due to the scholar knowing of the evidence, but due to another reason he avoids implementing it, such as the text being general and the scholar finding something which specifies it, or the text being limited in its application.

Whoever wishes to expound upon this topic should return to the author's work in this subject: *Raf al-Malām 'an al-A'imat al-A'lām* and also our book which is a summary of the authors with clearer examples: *Differences of opinion amongst the scholars – Their causes and our position towards them*.³⁵

³⁵ Available in English, published by al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution.

CHAPTER 4

The Two Categories of Differences in the Exegesis of the Qur'an Relating to the Source: Narrations and Deductions

Differences in the exegesis can be of two types: The source of the first is narrations and the other type is derived from different means, for knowledge is either a truthful narration, or a correct deduction, and the narrations either originate from one who is infallible or one who is not.

Here, we will discuss these narrations irrespective of whether they stem from an infallible authority or not; this is the first category. At times, we are able to distinguish between authentic and weak narrations and at times we are unable to do so. This latter part whose authenticity we cannot ascertain, for the most is unbeneficial and to delve into it is unnecessary.

As for that knowledge which is essential to the Muslims, then Allāh has placed for them sufficient signs showing them the truth. An example of that which is unbeneficial and has no clear evidence is the difference regarding the colour of the dog belonging to the companions of the cave. Similar to this is the difference regarding which part of the cow was used to strike the slain man.

Also included in this are the measurements of the ark of Nūh, and the type of wood used.

