

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

Surah Al-Qiyammah verse 15-16

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِٗٓ بَصِيرَةٌ ۚ ﴿١٥﴾
وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ ۚ ﴿١٦﴾

”Nay, man is a witness against himself.

Even though he puts forward his excuses”

A commentary on the above verses of the Holy Quran by Hazrat Sahibzada Mirza Rafi Ahmad (AS)

It is a fact that man is witness against himself and observes well what his performance is i.e. he knows how he is utilizing the powers bestowed to him and in what way he is exhibiting the excellence which he claims. In the previous verse it was said that man will be told what he did and did not do. Where he hurried and where he delayed; wasted the time or benefitted from it. Stepped forward towards sins and abstained from repentance. Whether he preferred the *Deen* or not; loved material world or made efforts to adorn the Hereafter. Spent the wealth in pursuit of lust or spent it also for virtues. Trained the children to seek worldly gains or devoted them to lodge in them the Knowledge of Greatness and Grandeur of Allah the Exalted.

Thereafter in this verse used the word **بل** (**Bal** - Nay) and developed a new subject from the previous one or there is a diversion from one objective to the other. In view of Imam Raghīb it is for clarification i.e. in a statement there is something needing explanation or correction then the word of **بل** (**Bal** - Nay) is used. Thus at first it was told that man will be informed about his conduct and at the same time said that if man peeps into his heart and ponders over his self and its surroundings and does not close his eyes from reality then even without reminder he knows that Allah the Exalted has bestowed him the *self reproaching soul*. The *Self Reproaching Soul* can only be for that being who possesses wisdom and manners (awareness); as described earlier. Thus if man possesses the observance of the rules of etiquette then he knows where he stands; meaning thereby one cannot deceive the conscience. It does not

matter how many excuses or arguments he gives; the satisfaction of conscience will be secured only with virtuous and gracious actions; discharge of responsibilities and rights and not putting forward an excuse. So far as satisfaction of conscience is not secured, man cannot be protected from chastisement; maybe all promises of comfort and engagement are made available to him. This condition of the human soul is an argument of his accountability. In the word **بَصِيرَةٌ** ("Baseera" – witness) alphabet **ي** ("Ya") is for exaggeration (utmost effect).

In the previous few verses there was presentation by way of argument of ancient manifestation of these incidents and occurrences in the first advent of the Noble Prophet (SAW) or for which manifestation was destined for second dispatch; then there was description of the subject of Human Psychology which was already being described that for man his being distinct and possessing wisdom and distinction; his being's excellence and apparent form were described as arguments of resurrection and then resumed the same topic that man is a witness upon himself; rather say he is a perfect witness. God the Exalted has developed his whole body; spiritual, intellectual and physical as such bestowing him distinction on other creatures. Man has been given those potentialities which were essential for his being manifestor of Attributes of God. Thus man being witness upon himself has the potentiality of distinguishing the virtue from the vice and this capability is an argument against him. **Firstly** that having the potentiality of distinction and the *Self Reproaching Soul*, he cannot offer this excuse that he had no knowledge that what are those values which should be preferred and what are the values which need to be omitted. **Secondly** it means that his being witness upon himself is an argument that he will be accounted for. Hadhrat Shah Abdul Qadir says if man ponders over his conditions then he can recognize his Lord. It is a nice point which explains the saying of the Noble Prophet (SAW) **"Whoever recognizes himself he has recognized his Lord."** The total body of man apparently and latently all of it is developed by the Creator as such that over his affairs of mind and intellect and all happenings of heart and wisdom and all notions and assumptions and imaginations, his physique i.e. that container which is the apparent form of his soul that he be the manifestor of attributes of God.

The second meaning of **بَصِيرَةٌ** ("Baseera" – witness) is argument and witness that man is an argument against himself; that he accepts by his own statement that he possesses distinction and is holder of choice and possesses intellect and wisdom then he is withheld by his own claim. If he has the authority to choose then he has to accept the responsibility of such choice and to account for it; it is a conspicuous intellectual argument that if man is responsible then to whom. If it is said to the society then it is false because the existence of man is ahead of society. And if he thinks he is responsible to society then he commits the folly of giving preference to later over the First. Man came into existence first; and at first he became homosapien then the society came into existence. His responsibility and accountability before it (society) is intellectually absurd because of its existence being later to man. Thus if man is responsible and accountable then who has put this responsibility and in which Exalted Being's court will he have to present himself.

The words "**Nay man is witness against himself**" means that Man himself is a witness against himself that is Allah the Exalted has developed his organs and he did his تسوية بنان (Taswiya Banan) i.e. construction of his fingertips; that human actions have effects on his organs and his fingers; this is a reply to those who said in a verse

"that unjustly we are caught on the recording of Angles – Was there any man a witness at the time of writing"... In the first verse character book (report card) was presented with which the angels writing the character book also became witnesses automatically. Then thereafter in this verse said it is not all; man is himself the witness because of his formation and creation mentally or apparently. Man's own psychology is a witness against him as it is known to some extent by the research that many a mental diseases, complications and disorders are due to this reason that man does not pick up the courage to accept the responsibilities put on him. Then he searches a way of escape or due to suffering in mental tension in his soul a condition of a battle with inability to discriminate what is good and what is bad develops; the result of which is madness or other mental disorder. This is evidence from human psychology. Besides it the joints i.e. apparent body of the man is developed as such that it stands witness on human actions for example the thumb impression through which a thief is caught. Although in this field the human sciences have not progressed much but still there is enough knowledge gained. I have read about one expert of Forensic Science that he claimed that they have learnt the means to investigate crimes committed many thousands years ago. In the words "**Nay man is a witness against himself**" there is indication of many scientific realities which are concerned with human psychology and formation of human body. Some of these facts have been proved by human experiments. For example, that human organs will be made witnesses by Allah the Exalted as said

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

"Their tongues, their hands and feet will be witness on their actions"

It is not too distant that on the day of resurrection the whole history sheet of the man may be presented to him.

بَصِيرَةٌ (Baseera - vigilant) is the indication of الْإِنْسَانُ (the man) as if man has been described as possessing power of vigilance and insight as he was given the name of Reproaching Soul. And over himself means that in the man there are two persons as is said that such and such is double minded i.e. between his two selves there is going on a consultation and it is called "**double personality**". It means if he is not vigilant having insight than he is not the man and does not deserve that honour and excellence which is specific for the man and if he has the power of insight then cannot deny reward and punishment just like an adult, wise person cannot be above legal responsibility.

﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ

“Even though he puts forward his excuses”

Allah the Exalted said that even if man offers many justifications and excuses he cannot be absolved of accusation because his being a “Reproaching Soul” and possessor of insight rejects his excuses. In مَعَاذِيرُهُ (“**MuaZeera -Excuses**”) the person referred is the man. It means there is no accusation against him or he is not liable for accountability or that he is not at fault. The beauty of the speech is this that it is the Self Reproaching Soul which is offering an excuse that it in spite of being a Self Accuser says there is no Censure on me.

مَعَاذِيرُهُ (“**Muazeera -Excuses**”) is the plural of معزرة (**Mazrah** - Excuse) as the scholars of Glossary have explained. The question arises that the plural of معزرة (**Mazrah** - Excuse) should have been معازر (**Muazir**) on the pattern of مفاعِل (**Mufael**). Why ي (Ya) is added. It has been explained differently. ZamaKashri says plural noun is opposite to analogy as مناكِر (**Munakir**) is the plural of منكر (**Munkar**). Other scholars have rejected it and given different explanations. I am convinced with none. In my view ي (Ya) is added here for enlargement of meanings. It is the beauty of the Arabic language that sometimes in one word some alphabet is added in order to enlarge meanings concerning quality or quantity or abundance. The plural actually was معازر (**Muazir**). By adding ي (Ya) here the meanings of utmost have been generated and this objective is created that man is a constant seeker of excuses and a pretender. In spite of awareness of his responsibilities and having the Self Reproaching Soul by indulging in Lust is negligent of his responsibilities and then starts offering a long list of excuses. In here there is reference to this shortcoming of the human soul that instead of feeling shame and admittance of fault he stubbornly reacts by creating arguments and contentions as said in Surah Al-Kahaf, verse 55:

وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

“But of all things man is most contentious”

That man is most contentious. To make deduction from point to point and to argue without any justification is his habit i.e. he is considered argumentative, quibbler, hair splitter and a denier of reality by unreasonable arguments. This is the connotation of being stubborn also that in spite of consciousness of reality to argue in support of one’s stance; this is a subtle defect of human soul. Zamkhashri has described the connotation of مَعَاذِيرُهُ (“**MuaZeera -Excuses**”) in such words; that maybe he offers many excuses to clarify and may be advocates many arguments since his soul is Self Reproaching and he is Vigilant over his self; he knows his arguments are futile. The proof of that is this that if this argument had any weight then his conscience would have received satisfaction and apprehension removed. But it does not happen as such. Thus said man commits sin after sin. Firstly he evades his duties and then instead of feeling ashamed on the contrary by offering excuses becomes the confirmer of the saying “**Excuse for committing sin is worse than the sin**”

Excuse basically is of two kinds; one is that I had no knowledge that this is my responsibility or that I will have to account for. Its rejection is already indicated in the words of Self Reproaching Soul. He knows well that Allah the Exalted has made him a responsible being possessor of choice and he will have to account for. But in spite of knowing it and being vigilant, he coins excuses. The second form of excuse is this that there be expression of compulsion that he had knowledge that this should be done and this should not be done but offers this excuse that there was some compulsion or inability or was unable to carry out

order. Its rejection has been done in **نُسُوِي بَنَانَهُ** (Nosawiya Banana) **“We have restored his very fingertips”**. That the Creator had bestowed the powers and organs to achieve the purpose of creation and bestowed him such a perfect body which was helpful in discharging these responsibilities. There can also be a third form that excuse means the false excuse that he denies having done it then the end of their mischief will be as said – **“Naught save they shall say by Allah our Lord we were not idolaters”** (Surah Al-Nur verse 24) i.e. at that time they will totally deny and state on oath that by God we did not propose partners.

In **وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ** (Even though he puts forward his excuses)

there are four Arabic words and out of it three have been explained. Only the word of **لَوْ** (Lo - even) remains to be expounded. **لَوْ** (Lo - even) is word for condition. When there is word of condition then there must be the answer for it. Some scholars say that **لَوْ** (Lo - even) conditional word is used as such that meaning of condition does not remain in it. Hence no need to answer. In this shape **لَوْ** (Lo - even) should be considered consecutive as the Grammarians have said

لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

i.e. Allah the Exalted will cause His religion to dominate over all religions regardless of how much idolaters dislike it. This is more appropriate form. It means that man is vigilant over his self. Despite how many excuses he may offer, but this reality cannot remain hidden that he is possessor of wisdom and is bestowed the distinction between good and bad. The second form is like that in **لَوْ** (Lo - even) there are meanings of condition but the answer is not mentioned and will be taken out of statement as **Maqatil** (an author) has said man offers excuses he may do so but it will be of no use as said in the Quran **“That day the excuses of the wicked will not benefit them and they will not be allowed the permission to offer an excuse”** This is so because it is useless. The reason described is this that his being; his

having consciousness and prudence and his organs and extremities all are unanimous to witness against him then why make excuses and what for.

The answer for **“Nay man is witness against himself. Even though he puts forward his excuses”** can be given like this that it may be that he argues and argues

much and denies being a witness **بَصِيرَةً** (**Baseera**) even then he cannot deny it that he is created as prudent. Al-Sadi and Al-Zahok have described the meaning of **مَعَاذِيرَةٌ** (**Muazeera**) as cover. He says some Arabs used this word for curtains. Meaning by how much you cover your faults but cannot escape from punishment because your own soul is witness to it. Some have given it the meanings of shifting the blame i.e. to say it is not my fault rather somebody else’s as said:

لَوْلَا أَنْتُمْ لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِينَ

On the day of judgement sinners will say to their leaders you are at fault you misled us. If your conspiracies and misleading sayings were not there then we would have been believers.

In brief by adding Even **لَوْ** (**Lo** - even) to the sentence three meanings have been created.

First: This develops the connotation of a speech that man is by nature a seeker of excuses and apologist and is negligent in discharge responsibilities and then contends excuses. Thus in these words attention has been drawn towards this defect of human psychology without correction of which a man remains deprived of moral and spiritual progress. This shortcoming is in every man. Through struggle and supplications he progresses and attains the rank of pious men as Hadhrat Masih-e-Maud (AS) said: - To say loudly we committed wrong is the habit of pious persons. The pious and good by progressing reach such a station that the praise of Allah the Exalted is not by tongue alone rather the whole body engages in His praise and considers defects in himself and Good and Betterment is referred to that Holy Being who in His person is praiseworthy and Pious. Maulana Room has evidently described his verses very beautifully. While reciting the incident of Adam and the prohibited tree he says on one side is Adam who holds a rank of honor and he forgets but he does not adopt the way of offering excuses rather by admitting fault seeks forgiveness from Allah the Exalted through prayers that He may grant the felicity that the fault be compensated and there be no wrongs in future. But in contrast to Adam there is Iblees, who instead of adopting this pious example and to follow Adam; on the contrary stubbornly insists and says My Lord you misled me. As Hadhrat Masih-e-Maud (AS) said do not show poison of your mouth you are not the progeny of snake. Snake is Iblees i.e. Are you the progeny of Iblees as you show poison of your mouth; utter an unholy saying and after committing wrong instead of admitting and regretting, emit poison. You are the progeny of Adam adopt his example which is to admit **“I am at fault.”**

Second: By saying **وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ** **“Even though he puts forward his excuses”** is conveyed that by adopting vice and then over it adopting the way of offering excuses this reality cannot be covered that man has been bestowed insight and wisdom. Prudence and consciousness is a natural thing and seeking excuses develops indulgence in unnatural sin. Hence it is said that how ever many covers you put, you can not hide the fact that man is a self reproaching soul. It is not possible to remove the accusation and anxiety of conscience through excuse. Thus **لَوْ** (Lo - even) is giving the meaning of **“in spite of”** i.e. may be in spite of it you build heaps of excuses this reality will stand at its place that the Being of man is self reproaching and man is made guardian over it.

Third: The third meaning in **وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ** by inserting **لَوْ** (Lo - even) are developed as such that excuse is a useless act. The excuses cannot change the realities. For example a student does not learn his lesson and then offers a thousand excuses and offers reasons of every kind. However, the reality that the lesson was not learnt cannot change. Past is not in anybody’s control. A day lost in negligence can not return. There is a saying that the lost time can not be gained. Hence draw attention towards this that you are prudent and possessing choices; pay attention towards discharging your responsibilities. Do not waste life in apologies. Hence said apology is useless and futile it can not change the realities. Human history is witness that in man’s life at the individual and national level the biggest tragedy is this that men and also the nations are negligent in their responsibilities and further instead of catching up (making mends) they try covering their mistakes through excuses and the future is further damaged.

Hence in **“Even though he puts forward his excuses”** Allah the Exalted has pointed to the defect of human psychology that apology is a useless thing. Neither it can remove the anxiety of conscience nor can it change realities. These days the cure which is proposed through self analysis and psychiatry for mental and psychic complications make this mistake that by analysis i.e. discovering the cause of anxiety is considered a way of apology and reconciliation. When a man comes to know what is the reason of his anxiety then reconciliation is achieved and by removal of the anxiety mental peace is received. Allah the Exalted has exhibited this mistake that it is not possible. Analysis and self analysis cannot be the cure because the conscience has not died. It is living. This analysis is also a sort of apology i.e. Instead of it that man himself apologizes he hires a healer for self analysis and wants to be cured through him which is a form of deception of the current times. If there’s no recovery by self apology, then hire another person on payment of fees and appointed for this job. This practice has existed in one form or the other sometimes in the shape of witch doctor; some times in front of a priest in the form of admission man is searching for medicine for anxiety of his conscience. Allah the Exalted has told in this verse that this is not the correct cure. It is not as such that this kind of cure is not beneficial to any extent. This kind of treatment provides a temporary condition of peace but is palliative and not the cure. For some time the intense anxiety of conscience in one’s mind may be reduced and the paralyzing condition of organs is removed; but the sickness continues rather due to non provision of correct cure it returns with

more severity as is the case concerning suppression of physical pains by medicines that after some time these too become ineffective.

Here a question arises then what is the remedy. Man is weak; fault is committed by him. The possibility of sin is present. Is remedy not possible once a sin is committed? Will the anxiety of conscience always disturbs the mental peace? Its cure according to Quranic Teachings is this that when a man admits that he is **Forgetful embodiment** and is weak and lacking strength then he should seek the remedy of his helplessness and weakness by searching such a Being who is without any shortcoming and Free from mistake and is Mighty and before whose power nothing is impossible. Whose authority encompasses the past and the future. Then by establishing a relationship with such Being transfers one's burden to Him and seek power through His power that He is that Being who can give protection to man and by purifying him from weakness, mistakes and faults bestows him that position by attaining which the glad

tidings **وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ** **(And they neither fear nor grieve)** is secured by him i.e. neither previous sins and wrongs disrupts his peace nor become a bar in his progress nor does his future becomes dark.

Allah the Exalted has given the man *Self Reproaching Soul* and bestowed him conscience. This gift was not for this that his condition of censure and anxiety of conscience may paralyse his powers and make him ineffective and insane. Rather it was for this that it helps in his progress and purpose. Allah the Exalted provided teaching in the Noble Quran that if a person commits a wrong then he should strive to remove it. It should not happen that the sin adopts a constant shape, a chain of sin after the sin starts. A man by thinking that he cannot protect himself from sins and by getting disappointed about his future gets himself constantly sunk in mud of sins. Consciousness of sin while on one side makes one paralyzed on the other side it also works as a spur that a man by getting ashamed over past mistakes pays attention to open a new leaf of his life. Hence He taught that man must not get disappointed. To get disappointed from that Holy Being and Omnipotent God is the biggest sin and the cause of being put in long lasting hell.

Allah the Exalted said: **“Say O my servants who by committing sin and by non-discharging of responsibilities have wronged your souls; beside such sins do not add this big sin that you get disappointed from the Mercy of Allah.”** Do not get disappointed from His Mercy. Allah the Exalted has power to forgive all sins; He is the most forgiving and Merciful. And He forgives because He has the power to forgive and has the full power to remove the effects of sins and cure them. He is Merciful and takes pity on His servants condition provided that man is not disappointed from His Mercy and seeks His forgiveness and provided he makes his condition as such to absorb His Mercy. (Surah Al-Zumar verse 54 expounded)

Thus according to Quranic teachings the anxiety of conscience is not to paralyze his powers and suppress his mind but act as a spur and man being warned by his self keeps on moving further and forward to achieve his purpose.

Thus basically this is the cure which the Noble Quran proposes as man has weak foundation and is less powerful. He needs support. He needs such a Being who is powerful and can reduce his burden due to His Mercy. Then described its detail that man should repent. According to teachings of the Noble Quran the remedy for the conscience of mortal which by purifying comes in the sheet of forgiveness of Allah the Exalted; it has many constituents. **First** is feeling of ashamedness which is the initial step regarding which there is reference in this verse when said

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He must confess his faults and he must remove the scars of his sins with the waters of ashamedness instead of false and baseless and useless excuses. **Secondly** as far as possible he must compensate for the damage caused due to non-performance of responsibilities to each and everybody and in various forms as far as possible. **Thirdly** that he should resolve firmly that in future will try to save himself from the wandering of the self. Repentance is a kind of death a person causes to prevail with effort over his negligent and sinful life and thereafter with a new resolve starts a new life. **Fourth** is prayer, knowing that he committed mistakes earlier and there is possibility in future that it occurs and knowing this that he alone with his efforts cannot confront these difficulties which he comes across and in facing that typhoon which is caused by **Nafs-e-Ammarah** [which means *the self that incites to evil*]. He is helpless and cannot protect himself until some Powerful Hand does not reach him in order to help. With this feeling of humiliation and weakness and with this faith that the Powerful Hand which can take him out of this typhoon and cause him to reach the desired harbour is the Hand of his Creator and Merciful Lord. He must seek this help; which is called **Istighfar**. He said if you seek **Istighfar** from your Lord then return to him. Seek help of Allah the Exalted to forgive you and bestow you strength from His power and to grace with His Mercy and catch your hand with His attribute of Subsisting and Sustenance. And cause you to walk in this difficult path by holding of the hand. This is the remedy which is proposed in the Holy Book of Allah the Exalted for protection from mental anxiety and psychological disorders. That every wise person knows that the path on which he has to tread is full of dangers and life is limited. It can finish up in removing the thorns on the way. Hence there is need of a strong support and powerful companion who by His Omnipotence may remove all difficulties on the way; that by His help, man can reach the destination in which direction the words **“Nay! I call to witness the Day of Resurrection. And I do call to witness the self reproaching conscience”**.

In the verse 54 of Surah Al-Zumar: The remedy was told to the world to save ourselves from the curse of sins which are the enemies of man. The word **قُلْ** (**Qul -Say**) is very important and its explanation is also essential. From this verse it is evident that man has been told the remedy to save himself from the slavery of **Nafs-e-Ammara** but this remedy is not told without any media. Rather told that it is through the media of His Holy Prophet (SAW). He said O, My Messenger say to my servants and teach them O my slaves (slaves of the Prophet (SAW)) do not despair from the Mercy of Allah the Exalted. Through this indirect way and by citing the relationship of His servants to His Prophet by telling them that they are the servants of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) this point is taught that man at such a difficult time when excesses and severity of sins is pushing him in the pit of despair and he needs to hear some helpful message. But such a condition of despair is prevailed upon him that just verbal good news is not sufficient to create hope and satisfaction in him rather he needs an example. He wants to know whether in fact deliverance of man is possible. Is there in fact a man who has crossed this valley full of thorns with peace and safety and there is no contamination on his garments? A man having reached the maximum despair was in need of a heavy satisfaction. So the most Forgiver and Merciful God granted him those provisions. He presented the example of His Innocent Prophet and thus by citing such a big example of success to the drowning hopes; presented to them the solid image in the person of Mohammad (SAW) the Messenger of Allah (SAW). He said tell them that no doubt deliverance is possible for you but in result of repentance and no doubt repentance is possible but by establishing the relationship of **عبادى** (**Abadi -My servants -**) i.e. by following me by establishing such relationship of love and sincerity through which my media establishes your relationship with God. In this way the other meaning of **Self Reproaching Soul** are (that **Self Reproaching Soul** is such that its God has declared it above **Reproach**). Hence in the next verse He changed the addressee and after addressing all humans he particularly addressed the Noble Prophet (SAW) so that He makes his being and the words revealed to him and its miracle the argument for the day of Resurrection and a source of hope for humans as described in the last (previous) Surah Al-Muddasir in detail. Hence said:

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ۗ

Don't be hasty for securing Quran and its protection and its establishment and its reading and teaching because it disrupts the job and We have given the example of Adam who committed haste and man was expelled from Jannah. Now we have sent you that the Jannah lost by man is secured by him again. So We hope you will not commit that haste which was the cause of earlier stumbling. You will not commit it in any form.

Note: This commentary was written by the author around 1980 A.D

Translation has been done with maximum care to convey the expositions as much possible except some Arabic grammatical terms.