When Right Becomes Strange, Wrong Becomes Normal

A Guide from Surah Al-Kahf for an Upside-Down Age



Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

WHEN RIGHT BECOMES STRANGE AND WRONG BECOMES NORMAL

A Guide from Surah Al-Kahf for an Upside-Down Age

نَّحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَٰهُمْ هُدًى

"It is We who relate to you, [O Muhammad], their story in truth. Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance."

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:13

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who sent down the Book upright, with no crookedness in it. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who began his call as a “stranger” and gave glad tidings to al-ghuraba’ (the strangers).

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah make all our hearts firm, just as He made firm the hearts of the youths of the Cave — *wa rabatna ‘ala qulubihim*.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover depicts a valley at night beneath a dark blue sky scattered with stars. A crescent moon hangs in the sky, and a geometric Islamic star pattern is faintly visible behind the darkness — a sign that the scales of truth remain perfectly ordered even when the age grows dark. In the centre rises a rocky mountain with a **cave** glowing with golden light from within — reminding us of the cave in which the youths of Al-Kahf took refuge to protect their faith: "So take refuge in the cave; your Lord will spread out for you of His mercy" (Surah Al-Kahf 18:16).

Before the mountain stretches a field filled with thousands of grey flowers, all **bowed downwards** — a symbol of **wrong becoming normal**, and of the heart that has become "like an overturned vessel" (Sahih Muslim, No. 144). In the middle of the field, **a single white flower stands upright and shining** — the only one unlike the rest. It symbolises **right becoming strange**, and the glad tidings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "So glad tidings to the strangers" (Sahih Muslim, No. 145). A small golden path flows from the mouth of the cave straight to the white flower — a sign that the light of Surah Al-Kahf is a provision and a shield for those who remain firm upon the truth (Sahih Muslim, No. 809).

At the bottom, the calm surface of a lake reflects the whole scene **upside down** — the mountain, the cave, the field of flowers, the white flower and the crescent moon, all inverted. This symbolises **the upside-down age**, when the liar is believed and the truthful is disbelieved (Sunan Ibn Majah, No. 4036), and the trial of the Dajjal, whose "fire is Paradise and whose Paradise is fire" (Sahih Muslim, No. 2934). The reflection looks beautiful, but it is only an inverted image — not the reality.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; blue box = scientific finding; grey box = athar / sayings of scholars. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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WHEN RIGHT BECOMES STRANGE AND WRONG BECOMES NORMAL

A GUIDE FROM SURAH AL-KAHF FOR AN UPSIDE-DOWN AGE

Have we ever felt awkward for doing what is right? Refusing a bribe is seen as "not knowing how to do business". Covering one's 'awrah is seen as "old-fashioned". Keeping up prayer at the workplace is seen as "too pious". Refusing riba is seen as "not understanding economics". Meanwhile, backbiting has become entertainment, lying a strategy, exposing others' faults on social media viral content, and abandoning prayer something no one bothers to correct any more.

This is the phenomenon that gives this eBook its title: **when right becomes strange, and wrong becomes normal**. It is nothing new. The Qur'an records how the people of Prophet Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ — who committed an abomination no people before them had committed — felt no shame at it. Instead, they wanted to **expel** those who kept themselves pure:

SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:82

وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن قَالُوٓاْ أَخْرِجُوهُم مِّن قَرْيَتِكُمْۖ إِنَّهُمْ أُنَاسٌ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

But the answer of his people was only that they said, "Evict them from your city! Indeed, they are men who keep themselves pure."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:82

Notice the "crime" of which Prophet Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and his followers were accused: *innahum unasun yatatahharun* — "they are people who keep themselves pure." Purity had become a crime. **Imam Ibn Kathir** quotes **Qatadah**: "By Allah, they reproached them for no fault at all." They could not accuse Prophet Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ of any evil, so his very goodness was made the reason to expel him. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 7:82

How can a person reach the point of seeing evil as good? The Qur'an explains the cause — the evil is **made attractive** until it looks beautiful in his eyes:

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SURAH FATIR 35:8

أَفَمَن زُيِّنَ لَهُۥ سُوٓءُ عَمَلِهِۦ فَرَءَاهُ حَسَنًا ۖ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهْدِى
مَن يَشَآءُ ۖ فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسَرَٰتٍ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌۢ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

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Then is one to whom the evil of his deed has been made attractive so he considers it good [like one rightly guided]? For indeed, Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. So do not let yourself perish over them in regret. Indeed, Allah is Knowing of what they do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/35:8

Imam Ibn Kathir explains that this verse refers to disbelievers and the corrupt who do evil deeds while believing and assuming that they are doing good. Such a person is not like one who sees truth as truth and falsehood as falsehood. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 35:8

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ foretold that this ummah would pass through such an age. He called those who hold fast to the truth in that age **al-ghuraba'** — the strangers. He also taught us a special provision for facing the greatest trial of the end of time, the trial of the Dajjal, who turns Paradise and Hell upside down: **memorising the first ten verses of Surah Al-Kahf** (Sahih Muslim, No. 809). That is why Surah Al-Kahf is the axis of this eBook. It contains the story of the youths who held on to their faith while their entire society was drowning in shirk.

This eBook is divided into four subtopics:

(1) al-ghuraba' — when the truth becomes strange;

(2) how wrong becomes normal;

(3) the upside-down age — the liar believed, and the Dajjal who inverts Paradise and Hell; and

(4) standing firm upon the truth with the provision of Surah Al-Kahf.

Note: Scientific findings in this eBook are presented as evidence of harmony, not to "prove" the truth of the Qur'an. The truth of revelation stands on its own; science is provisional and always under revision.

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1. AL-GHURABA': WHEN THE TRUTH BECOMES STRANGE

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ first called to tawhid in Makkah, he and his followers were truly "strangers". The call to worship Allah alone, to honour daughters, to give slaves their rights and to abandon riba was considered strange, mad and divisive. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ foretold that this state would return:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 145

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبَّادٍ، وَابْنُ أَبِي عُمَرَ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ مَرْوَانَ الْفَزَارِيِّ، قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّادٍ حَدَّثَنَا مَرْوَانُ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ كَيْسَانَ - عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " بَدَأَ الإِسْلاَمُ غَرِيبًا وَسَيَعُودُ كَمَا بَدَأَ غَرِيبًا فَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاءِ " .

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Islam began as something strange (gharib), and it will return to being strange as it began. So glad tidings to the strangers (al-ghuraba')."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn 'Abbad and Ibn Abi 'Umar, from Marwan ibn Mu'awiyah al-Fazari, from Yazid ibn Kaysan, from Abu Hazim al-Ashja'i, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith (Kitab al-Iman), chapter: Islam began as something strange and will return to being strange, Hadith No. 145.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:145

COMMENTARY OF THE SCHOLARS

Imam al-Nawawi, in his commentary on Sahih Muslim, explains that Islam began with a small number of people, then spread and prevailed; then it will decrease again and suffer deficiency until it remains only among a small number, as it was at the beginning. The word *tuba* is explained by the scholars as joy and delight, and some explain it as a tree in Paradise.

Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali wrote a whole treatise on this hadith entitled *Kashf al-Kurbah fi Wasf Hal Ahl al-Ghurbah*. He explains that the strangeness of the believers at the end of time is not because they isolate themselves physically, but because **they hold fast to the Sunnah when people abandon it**, and reform themselves when people become corrupt. In other narrations outside Sahih Muslim, al-ghuraba' are described as righteous people among many who are evil.

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In short, being a "stranger" is no disgrace. It is a **sign** — a sign that one still holds to what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Companions held to at the beginning of Islam. Yet the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not hide how hard that state would be:

HADITH — JAMI' AL-TIRMIDHI, NO. 2260

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ مُوسَى الْفَزَارِيُّ ابْنُ بِنْتِ السُّدِّيِّ الْكُوفِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ شَاكِرٍ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ الصَّابِرُ فِيهِمْ عَلَى دِينِهِ كَالْقَابِضِ عَلَى الْجَمْرِ " . قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ غَرِيبٌ مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ . وَعُمَرُ بْنُ شَاكِرٍ شَيْخٌ بَصْرِيٌّ قَدْ رَوَى عَنْهُ غَيْرُ وَاحِدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ .

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "A time will come upon the people when the one among them who is patient upon his religion will be like one holding a burning ember."

Abu 'Isa (al-Tirmidhi) said: This hadith is gharib through this chain. 'Umar ibn Shakir is a shaykh from Basrah; more than one of the people of knowledge narrated from him.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Tirmidhi: from Isma'il ibn Musa al-Fazari (grandson of al-Suddi), from 'Umar ibn Shakir, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Tirmidhi in Jami' al-Tirmidhi, chapters on trials (Abwab al-Fitan), Hadith No. 2260.

GRADE: SAHIH (li ghayrihi) — graded authentic by Shaykh Ahmad Shakir and Shaykh al-Albani (al-Silsilah al-Sahihah) because it is supported by other chains; Darussalam graded it hasan (as shown on sunnah.com). An honest note: al-Tirmidhi called it gharib, and the narrator 'Umar ibn Shakir was considered weak by some scholars — but its meaning is supported by other authentic hadiths.

Source: https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:2260

The image of "holding a burning ember" is very apt. The commentators of hadith explain that one who holds a burning ember cannot keep holding it without being burned, and if he lets go, he loses what he was holding. So it is with one who holds to the religion in an age of trials: his patience costs him pain, but letting go means losing his religion. **Imam al-Mubarakfuri** in *Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi* explains that this is because helpers will be few and corruption widespread.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE YOUTHS OF THE CAVE

Surah Al-Kahf opens its story with a group of youths living in an idol-worshipping society under a tyrant king. They were the *ghuraba'* of their time:

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:13–16

نَّحۡنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيۡكَ نَبَأَهُم بِٱلۡحَقِّۚ إِنَّهُمۡ فِتۡيَةٌ ءَامَنُواْ بِرَبِّهِمۡ وَزِدۡنَٰهُمۡ هُدٗى ١٣

It is We who relate to you, [O Muhammad], their story in truth. Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.

وَرَبَطۡنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمۡ إِذۡ قَامُواْ فَقَالُواْ رَبُّنَا رَبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ لَن نَّدۡعُوَاْ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ إِلَٰهٗاۖ لَّقَدۡ قُلۡنَآ إِذٗا شَطَطًا ١٤

And We made firm their hearts when they stood up and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Never will we invoke besides Him any deity. We would have certainly spoken, then, an excessive transgression."

هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوۡمُنَا ٱتَّخَذُواْ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ ءَالِهَةٗۖ لَّوۡلَا يَأۡتُونَ عَلَيۡهِم بِسُلۡطَٰنِۭ بَيِّنٍۖ فَمَنۡ أَظۡلَمُ مِمَّنِ ٱفۡتَرَىٰ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ كَذِبٗا ١٥

These, our people, have taken besides Him deities. Why do they not bring for [worship of] them a clear authority? And who is more unjust than one who invents about Allah a lie.

وَإِذِ ٱعۡتَزَلۡتُمُوهُمۡ وَمَا يَعۡبُدُونَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ فَأۡوُۥٓاْ إِلَى ٱلۡكَهۡفِ يَنشُرۡ لَكُمۡ رَبُّكُم مِّن رَّحۡمَتِهِۦ وَيُهَيِّئۡ لَكُم مِّنۡ أَمۡرِكُم مِّرۡفَقٗا ١٦

[The youths said to one another], "And when you have withdrawn from them and that which they worship other than Allah, retreat to the cave. Your Lord will spread out for you of His mercy and will prepare for you from your affair facility."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:13-16

Imam Ibn Kathir explains that they were **youths** (*fityah*). He states that the young are quicker to accept the truth and more upright in their way than the old, who have become sunk and rooted in false religion. That is why most of those who answered the call of Allah and His Messenger at the beginning of Islam were young people. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:13

Notice the three gifts Allah gave them:

(1) *wa zidnahum huda* — Allah increased them in guidance;

(2) *wa rabatna 'ala qulubihim* — Allah made their hearts firm when they stood up to declare tawhid; and

(3) *yanshur lakum rabbukum min rahmatih* — Allah poured out His mercy upon them when they withdrew from falsehood.

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Shaykh al-Sa'di explains that *rabatna 'ala qulubihim* means Allah made their hearts patient and calm, unafraid of their society and their king. This is Allah's promise to every "stranger": whoever takes a step towards the truth, Allah will increase him in guidance and make his heart firm. Tafsir al-Sa'di 18:14

2. HOW WRONG BECOMES NORMAL

No society suddenly wakes up one morning and decides that evil is good. The process happens **little by little**. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described this process with a very subtle parable — like the weaving of a mat, strand by strand:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 144A

وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو خَالِدٍ، - يَعْنِي سُلَيْمَانَ بْنَ حَيَّانَ - عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ طَارِقٍ، عَنْ رِبْعِيٍّ، عَنْ حُذَيْفَةَ، قَالَ كُنَّا عِنْدَ عُمَرَ فَقَالَ أَيُّكُمْ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَذْكُرُ الْفِتَنَ فَقَالَ قَوْمٌ نَحْنُ سَمِعْنَاهُ . فَقَالَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْنُونَ فِتْنَةَ الرَّجُلِ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَجَارِهِ قَالُوا أَجَلْ . قَالَ تِلْكَ تُكَفِّرُهَا الصَّلاَةُ وَالصِّيَامُ وَالصَّدَقَةُ وَلَكِنْ أَيُّكُمْ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَذْكُرُ الْفِتَنَ الَّتِي تَمُوجُ مَوْجَ الْبَحْرِ قَالَ حُذَيْفَةُ فَأَسْكَتَ الْقَوْمُ فَقُلْتُ أَنَا . قَالَ أَنْتَ لِلَّهِ أَبُوكَ . قَالَ حُذَيْفَةُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ " تُعْرَضُ الْفِتَنُ عَلَى الْقُلُوبِ كَالْحَصِيرِ عُودًا عُودًا فَأَىُّ قَلْبٍ أُشْرِبَهَا نُكِتَ فِيهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءُ وَأَىُّ قَلْبٍ أَنْكَرَهَا نُكِتَ فِيهِ نُكْتَةٌ بَيْضَاءُ حَتَّى تَصِيرَ عَلَى قَلْبَيْنِ عَلَى أَبْيَضَ مِثْلِ الصَّفَا فَلاَ تَضُرُّهُ فِتْنَةٌ مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ وَالآخَرُ أَسْوَدُ مُرْبَادًّا كَالْكُوزِ مُجَخِّيًا لاَ يَعْرِفُ مَعْرُوفًا وَلاَ يُنْكِرُ مُنْكَرًا إِلاَّ مَا أُشْرِبَ مِنْ هَوَاهُ " . قَالَ حُذَيْفَةُ وَحَدَّثْتُهُ أَنَّ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهَا بَابًا مُغْلَقًا يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُكْسَرَ . قَالَ عُمَرُ أَكَسْرًا لاَ أَبَا لَكَ فَلَوْ أَنَّهُ فُتِحَ لَعَلَّهُ كَانَ يُعَادُ . قُلْتُ لاَ بَلْ يُكْسَرُ . وَحَدَّثْتُهُ أَنَّ ذَلِكَ الْبَابَ رَجُلٌ يُقْتَلُ أَوْ يَمُوتُ . حَدِيثًا لَيْسَ بِالأَغَالِيطِ . قَالَ أَبُو خَالِدٍ فَقُلْتُ لِسَعْدٍ يَا أَبَا مَالِكٍ مَا أَسْوَدُ مُرْبَادًّا قَالَ شِدَّةُ الْبَيَاضِ فِي سَوَادٍ . قَالَ قُلْتُ فَمَا الْكُوزُ مُجَخِّيًا قَالَ مَنْكُوسًا .

TRANSLATION:

Hudhayfah رضى الله عنه said: We were with ‘Umar, and he asked: “Which of you heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ mention the trials (fitan)?” Some people said: “We heard it.” ‘Umar said: “Perhaps you mean the trial of a man concerning his family and his neighbour?” They said: “Yes.” ‘Umar said: “That trial is expiated by prayer, fasting and charity. But which of you heard the Prophet ﷺ mention the trials that will surge like the waves of the sea?” Hudhayfah said: The people fell silent, so I said: “I did.” ‘Umar said: “You! How excellent you are.”

Hudhayfah said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: “Trials will be presented to hearts like a mat is woven, strand by strand. Any heart that absorbs them will have a black spot put on it, and any heart that rejects them

will have a white spot put on it — until hearts become of two kinds: (the first) white like a smooth stone, which no trial will harm as long as the heavens and the earth endure; and (the second) dark and ashen, like an overturned vessel — recognising no good and rejecting no evil, except what it has absorbed of its own desires."

Hudhayfah said: I also told 'Umar that between him and those trials was a closed door that was about to be broken. 'Umar said: "Broken? May you lose your father! If it were opened, perhaps it could be closed again." I said: "No, rather it will be broken." And I told him that the door was a man who would be killed or would die — a hadith, not mere tales. Abu Khalid said: I asked Sa'd: "O Abu Malik, what does aswad murbadda mean?" He said: "Intense whiteness within blackness." I asked: "What does al-kuz mujakhkhiya mean?" He said: "Overturned."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Numayr, from Abu Khalid Sulayman ibn Hayyan, from Sa'd ibn Tariq (Abu Malik al-Ashja'i), from Rib'i ibn Hirash, from Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith (Kitab al-Iman), chapter: Islam began as something strange and will return to being strange, Hadith No. 144a.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:144a

COMMENTARY OF THE SCHOLARS

Imam al-Nawawi explains that *kal-hasir 'udan 'udan* means the trials cling to the heart one after another, just as the strands of a mat leave marks on the body of one who sleeps on it. A heart that absorbs trials — accepting and liking them — is marked with a black spot. As the spots keep increasing, the heart finally becomes like **an overturned vessel**: it can no longer hold any good. **Al-Qadi 'Iyad** states that the heart is likened to an overturned vessel because, when it is upside down, any water poured into it spills out and nothing remains in it.

Notice the end of this hadith: the overturned heart **"recognises no good and rejects no evil, except what it has absorbed of its own desires."** This is the most precise picture of this eBook's title. Such a heart does not merely do wrong; it has **lost its scales** for distinguishing right from wrong. Its only measure is desire.

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE BRAIN THAT "GETS USED" TO DISHONESTY

A study published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience* by **Garrett, Lazzaro, Ariely and Sharot (2016)** at University College London measured participants' brain activity with fMRI while they were given repeated opportunities to lie for their own benefit. The result: **the level of lying increased little by little** with each repetition. At the same time, the response of the **amygdala** — the part of the brain linked to emotion and discomfort — to the act of lying **steadily decreased**. More importantly, the greater the drop in amygdala sensitivity on one decision, the greater the lie on the next. The researchers described this as a biological mechanism for the *"slippery slope"*: small, repeated violations lead to bigger ones. This finding is in harmony

with the Prophet's ﷺ description of trials presented to hearts *'udan 'udan* — strand by strand — until the heart no longer rejects evil.

Study references:

Garrett, N., Lazzaro, S. C., Ariely, D., & Sharot, T. (2016). The brain adapts to dishonesty. Nature Neuroscience, 19(12), 1727–1732. https://doi.org/10.1038/nn.4426

THE LOSS OF MODESTY

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3483

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ يُونُسَ، عَنْ زُهَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا مَنْصُورٌ، عَنْ رِبْعِيِّ بْنِ حِرَاشٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مَسْعُودٍ، عُقْبَةُ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم " إِنَّ مِمَّا أَدْرَكَ النَّاسُ مِنْ كَلاَمِ النُّبُوَّةِ، إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَحِي فَافْعَلْ مَا شِئْتَ ".

TRANSLATION:

Abu Mas'ud 'Uqbah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said: "Among the words of (earlier) prophethood that have reached the people is: If you feel no shame, then do whatever you wish."

Chain of narration: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad ibn Yunus, from Zuhayr ibn Mu'awiyah, from Mansur ibn al-Mu'tamir, from Rib'i ibn Hirash, from Abu Mas'ud 'Uqbah ibn 'Amr al-Ansari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Narrations of the Prophets (Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya'), Hadith No. 3483. Also in al-Bukhari No. 6120 (Kitab al-Adab).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3483

Modesty (*al-haya'*) is the last barrier that holds people back from doing evil openly. **Imam al-Nawawi** included this hadith in *al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyyah* (hadith 20). Scholars, among them **Imam al-Khattabi** and **Ibn Hajar**, mention two main meanings of "do whatever you wish": **first**, it is a **threat** — if modesty is gone, do whatever you like, for you will be recompensed for all of it; **second**, it is **guidance** — if a deed is not shameful before Allah and people, then do it. When modesty disappears from a society, evil is no longer done in secret; it is displayed, even boasted about.

THINKING ONE IS DOING GOOD

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:103–104

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُم بِٱلْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَٰلًا ﴿١٠٣﴾

Say, [O Muhammad], "Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds?"

ٱلَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعۡيُهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَا وَهُمۡ يَحۡسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمۡ يُحۡسِنُونَ صُنۡعًا ١٠٤

[They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:103-104

This is the most terrible loss: doing wrong while being **certain** that one is on the right side. In Sahih al-Bukhari, **Mus'ab ibn Sa'd** asked his father, **Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas** رضى الله عنه, who was meant by this verse, and he replied that they were the Jews and the Christians. Sahih al-Bukhari 4728 **Imam Ibn Kathir** stresses that the verse is **general** — it includes anyone who worships Allah in a way that does not please Him, while thinking he is right and his deeds accepted, when in fact he is mistaken and his deeds rejected. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:103

THE MAJORITY IS NOT THE MEASURE OF TRUTH

SURAH AL-AN'AM 6:116

وَإِن تُطِعۡ أَكۡثَرَ مَن فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِۚ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا ٱلظَّنَّ وَإِنۡ هُمۡ إِلَّا يَخۡرُصُونَ ١١٦

And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/6:116

SURAH AL-MA'IDAH 5:100

قُل لَّا يَسۡتَوِي ٱلۡخَبِيثُ وَٱلطَّيِّبُ وَلَوۡ أَعۡجَبَكَ كَثۡرَةُ ٱلۡخَبِيثِۚ فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ يَٰٓأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُونَ ١٠٠

Say, "Not equal are the evil and the good, although the abundance of evil might impress you." So fear Allah, O you of understanding, that you may be successful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/5:100

One of the strongest reasons why wrong becomes normal is: **"Everyone does it."** The Qur'an firmly rejects this measure. **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains that Allah informs us of the state of most of the people of

the earth — they are astray — and they hold not to certainty, but only to false assumption. **Shaykh al-Sa'di** explains Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:100: the evil and the good are not equal, even if the evil is abundant and attractive. The abundance of evil does not make it good, and the scarcity of good does not make it evil. Tafsir al-Sa'di 5:100

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: WHY WE FOLLOW THE MAJORITY SO EASILY

Neuroscience research shows that the pressure to conform is not merely a matter of "choice" — it affects the brain directly. **Berns and colleagues (2005)** found that when participants followed the group's **wrong** answer, activity changed in brain networks involved in **perception** — as if social pressure changed how they "saw" the world. Conversely, when they stood alone against the group, activity in the **amygdala** increased, marking the emotional burden of being a "stranger". **Klucharev and colleagues (2009)** found that disagreeing with the group's opinion triggers an "error" signal in the brain — like the signal produced when we make a mistake — which pushes a person to change his opinion to match the group. These findings help us understand why the Qur'an repeatedly warns against taking the majority as the measure of truth (Surah Al-An'am 6:116), and why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ likened the patience of one who holds to the religion in an age of trials to **holding a burning ember**.

Study references:

Berns, G. S., Chappelow, J., Zink, C. F., Pagnoni, G., Martin-Skurski, M. E., & Richards, J. (2005). Neurobiological correlates of social conformity and independence during mental rotation. Biological Psychiatry, 58(3), 245–253. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2005.04.012

Klucharev, V., Hytönen, K., Rijpkema, M., Smidts, A., & Fernández, G. (2009). Reinforcement learning signal predicts social conformity. Neuron, 61(1), 140–151. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuron.2008.11.027

3. THE UPSIDE-DOWN AGE: THE LIAR BELIEVED, THE TRUTHFUL DISBELIEVED

Once the scales of the heart have been overturned in individuals, sooner or later they will be overturned collectively. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described an age in which the positions of values are completely swapped:

HADITH — SUNAN IBN MAJAH, NO. 4036

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ هَارُونَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ بْنُ قُدَامَةَ الْجُمَحِيُّ، عَنْ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ أَبِي الْفُرَاتِ، عَنِ الْمَقْبُرِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ـ صلى الله عليه وسلم ـ " سَيَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ سَنَوَاتٌ خَدَّاعَاتُ يُصَدَّقُ فِيهَا الْكَاذِبُ وَيُكَذَّبُ فِيهَا الصَّادِقُ وَيُؤْتَمَنُ فِيهَا الْخَائِنُ وَيُخَوَّنُ فِيهَا الأَمِينُ وَيَنْطِقُ فِيهَا الرُّوَيْبِضَةُ قِيلَ وَمَا الرُّوَيْبِضَةُ قَالَ الرَّجُلُ التَّافِهُ فِي أَمْرِ الْعَامَّةِ " .

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “There will come upon the people years of deceit, in which the liar will be believed and the truthful disbelieved; the treacherous will be trusted and the trustworthy considered treacherous; and the Ruwaybidah will speak.” It was said: “Who are the Ruwaybidah?” He said: “The contemptible (ignorant and unqualified) man who speaks about the affairs of the public.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Ibn Majah: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Yazid ibn Harun, from ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Qudamah al-Jumahi, from Ishaq ibn Abi al-Furat, from Sa‘id al-Maqburi, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Ibn Majah in Sunan Ibn Majah, Book of Trials (Kitab al-Fitan), chapter on the hardship of the times, Hadith No. 4036.

GRADE: HASAN according to Darussalam (as shown on sunnah.com); SAHIH according to Shaykh al-Albani (Sahih Ibn Majah). An honest note: this chain contains ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Qudamah, who has been discussed by the critics, but the hadith is strengthened by another chain in the Musnad of Ahmad.

Source: https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah:4036

This hadith lists four inversions: **the liar believed, the truthful disbelieved, the treacherous trusted, the trustworthy accused of treachery** — and at their peak, *the ruwaybidah* speaking about public affairs. **Ibn al-Athir** in *al-Nihayah* explains that *al-ruwaybidah* is the diminutive of *rabidah*, the weak and contemptible person who sits idle without doing noble deeds, with the letter *ta’* added for emphasis. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself explained it as **“the foolish man who speaks about the affairs of the public.”** In the age of social media, anyone can speak about anything to millions of people — and the loudest voice is often not the most knowledgeable one.

THE DAJJAL: THE PEAK OF INVERSION

The peak of all trials of inversion is the **Dajjal**. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described him with one trait that sums up the entire theme of this eBook:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2934A

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلاَءِ، وَإِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، قَالَ إِسْحَاقُ أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الآخَرَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ شَقِيقٍ، عَنْ حُذَيْفَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " الدَّجَّالُ أَعْوَرُ الْعَيْنِ الْيُسْرَى جُفَالُ الشَّعَرِ مَعَهُ جَنَّةٌ وَنَارٌ فَنَارُهُ جَنَّةٌ وَجَنَّتُهُ نَارٌ " .

TRANSLATION:

Hudhayfah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The Dajjal is blind in his left eye and has thick hair. With him are a Paradise and a Fire; his Fire is Paradise, and his Paradise is Fire."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Numayr, Muhammad ibn al-'Ala' and Ishaq ibn Ibrahim (Ibn Rahawaih), from Abu Mu'awiyah, from al-A'mash, from Shaqiq ibn Salamah (Abu Wa'il), from Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Trials and Signs of the Hour (Kitab al-Fitan wa Ashrat al-Sa'ah), chapter on the description of the Dajjal, Hadith No. 2934a.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2934a

"His Fire is Paradise, and his Paradise is Fire." **Imam al-Nawawi** explains that this is among the tests Allah placed in the Dajjal: what appears to people as Paradise is in reality Fire, and what appears as Fire is in reality Paradise. Whoever follows him, attracted by his "Paradise", will enter the Fire; and whoever rejects him, even if thrown into his "Fire", will be saved. This is the trial of **right becoming strange and wrong becoming normal** in its greatest form: appearance completely contrary to reality.

Scholars explain that before the great Dajjal appears, there will be many "little dajjals" — liars and deceivers who mislead people. Whenever we see falsehood beautifully wrapped and truth portrayed as ugly, we are witnessing a small shadow of the trial of the Dajjal. So the provision the Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught for facing the great Dajjal is also a provision for facing the smaller trials.

RIGHT THAT LOOKS STRANGE: THE LESSON OF MUSA AND AL-KHIDR

Surah Al-Kahf also teaches another side: **some things that are right look strange because our knowledge is limited**. Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ objected to three acts of al-Khidr — making a hole in the boat, killing a boy and rebuilding a wall without payment — because outwardly they looked wrong. Then al-Khidr explained their wisdom, closing his explanation with these words:

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:82

وَأَمَّا ٱلْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَٰمَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِى ٱلْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُۥ كَنزٌ لَّهُمَا وَكَانَ
أَبُوهُمَا صَٰلِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَن يَبْلُغَآ أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّن
رَّبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُۥ عَنْ أَمْرِى ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٨٢﴾

And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure for them, and their father had been righteous. So your Lord intended that they reach maturity and extract their treasure, as a mercy from your Lord. And I did it not of my own accord. That is the interpretation of that about which you could not have patience.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:82

Wa ma fa'altuhu 'an amri — "And I did it not of my own accord." **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains that al-Khidr did all of that by the command of Allah. The lesson is clear: **the measure of right and wrong is the revelation of Allah**, not appearances, not feelings, and not the majority. What looks strange in people's eyes may be right with Allah; and what looks normal may be wrong with Him. That is why believers always return to the Qur'an and Sunnah to judge a matter, not to current trends. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:82

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4. FIRM UPON THE TRUTH: THE PROVISION OF SURAH AL-KAHF

Having understood how right becomes strange and wrong becomes normal, the final question is: **how do we remain firm?** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave a very clear provision:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 809A

وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ هِشَامٍ، حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ سَالِمٍ، بْنِ أَبِي الْجَعْدِ الْغَطَفَانِيِّ عَنْ مَعْدَانَ بْنِ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ الْيَعْمَرِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " مَنْ حَفِظَ عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ سُورَةِ الْكَهْفِ عُصِمَ مِنَ الدَّجَّالِ "

TRANSLATION:

Abu al-Darda' رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever memorises ten verses from the beginning of Surah Al-Kahf will be protected from (the trial of) the Dajjal."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from Mu'adh ibn Hisham, from his father Hisham al-Dastuwa'i, from Qatadah, from Salim ibn Abi al-Ja'd al-Ghatafani, from Ma'dan ibn Abi Talhah al-Ya'mari, from Abu al-Darda' رضى الله عنه.

In the following narration (Muslim No. 809b), Shu'bah narrated from Qatadah with the wording "from the end of (Surah) Al-Kahf", while Hammam narrated "from the beginning of Al-Kahf", as in the narration of Hisham above.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of the Prayer of Travellers and Its Shortening, chapter on the virtue of Surah Al-Kahf and Ayat al-Kursi, Hadith No. 809a.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:809a

COMMENTARY OF THE SCHOLARS

Imam al-Nawawi, in his commentary on Sahih Muslim, explains the reason for this protection: it is said that at the beginning of Surah Al-Kahf there are wonders and signs of Allah's power, and whoever reflects on them will not be deceived by the trial of the Dajjal. Likewise at the end of the surah is Allah's word: *"Then do those who disbelieve think that they can take My servants instead of Me as allies?"* (Surah Al-Kahf 18:102).

The first ten verses of Surah Al-Kahf contain foundations that act as a shield against the trial of inversion:

(1) praise of Allah who sent down the Book **upright, with no crookedness in it** (verses 1–2) — a measure that does not change even when the times change;

(2) a warning to those who claim Allah has a son (verses 4–5) — a rejection of lies told in God's name, such as the Dajjal's claim to divinity;

(3) the adornment of the world is only a test and will become barren ground (verses 7–8) — so do not be deceived by a false "paradise"; and

(4) the supplication of the youths of the Cave (verse 10) — asking for mercy and right guidance in the affairs of religion.

Some contemporary scholars also explain that the four main stories of Surah Al-Kahf cover four great kinds of trial: **the trial of religion** (the youths of the Cave), **the trial of wealth** (the owner of the two gardens), **the trial of knowledge** (Musa and al-Khidr) and **the trial of power** (Dhul-Qarnayn). These are the trials that often become the door to the inversion of values, and the Dajjal will come bringing all of them.

THE FIRST TEN VERSES OF SURAH AL-KAHF (18:1–10) — TO BE MEMORISED

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنزَلَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَل لَّهُۥ عِوَجَاۜ ﴿١﴾

[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who has sent down upon His Servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance.

قَيِّمًا لِّيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّن لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا ﴿٢﴾

[He has made it] straight, to warn of severe punishment from Him and to give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a good reward.

مَّٰكِثِينَ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣﴾

In which they will remain forever.

وَيُنذِرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُواْ ٱتَّخَذَ ٱللَّهُ وَلَدًا ﴿٤﴾

And to warn those who say, "Allah has taken a son."

مَّا لَهُم بِهِۦ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِأَبَآئِهِمْۚ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَٰهِهِمْۚ إِن يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾

They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَٰخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلَىٰٓ ءَاثَٰرِهِمْ إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُواْ بِهَٰذَا ٱلْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا ﴿٦﴾

Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [O Muhammad], if they do not believe in this message, [and] out of sorrow.

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إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ﴿٧﴾

Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.

وَإِنَّا لَجَٰعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا ﴿٨﴾

And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَٰبَ ٱلْكَهْفِ وَٱلرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا۟ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَا عَجَبًا ﴿٩﴾

Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?

إِذْ أَوَى ٱلْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى ٱلْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا۟ رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا ﴿١٠﴾

[Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, "Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:1-10

CHOOSE COMPANIONS WHO MAKE YOU FIRM

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:28

وَٱصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلْغَدَوٰةِ وَٱلْعَشِىِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُۥ ۖ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُۥ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُۥ فُرُطًا ﴿٢٨﴾

And keep yourself patient [by being] with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance. And let not your eyes pass beyond them, desiring adornments of the worldly life, and do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever [in] neglect.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:28

This verse was also revealed in Surah Al-Kahf, as a command to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to **always stay with** those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, even if they are poor and overlooked by society. **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains that this verse commands him to sit with those who remember Allah,

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declaring His oneness, praising, glorifying and magnifying Him, whether poor or rich, strong or weak. Allah also forbids obeying one whose heart is heedless, who follows his desires, and whose affair is *furuta* — excessive and wasted. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:28

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE POWER OF ONE TRUTHFUL COMPANION

The classic experiment of **Solomon Asch (1956)** asked participants to match the length of lines — a very simple task. Yet when a group of other "participants" (actually the researcher's assistants) deliberately gave the **wrong** answer unanimously, a large proportion of the real participants followed the wrong answer at least once. Most interesting is a variation of the experiment: when **just one** member of the group gave the right answer, the rate of conformity to the wrong answer **dropped sharply**. The presence of one companion who holds to the truth was enough to strengthen a person against majority pressure. This finding is in harmony with the command in Surah Al-Kahf 18:28 to stay with those who call upon their Lord, and with the story of the youths of the Cave who **together** declared tawhid — they did not stand alone.

Study references:

Asch, S. E. (1956). Studies of independence and conformity: I. A minority of one against a unanimous majority. Psychological Monographs: General and Applied, 70(9), 1–70. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093718

DO NOT LET THE HEART STOP REJECTING EVIL

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 49A

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا وَكِيعٌ، عَنْ سُفْيَانَ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، كِلاَهُمَا عَنْ قَيْسِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ، عَنْ طَارِقِ بْنِ شِهَابٍ، - وَهَذَا حَدِيثُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ - قَالَ أَوَّلُ مَنْ بَدَأَ بِالْخُطْبَةِ يَوْمَ الْعِيدِ قَبْلَ الصَّلاَةِ مَرْوَانُ فَقَامَ إِلَيْهِ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ الصَّلاَةُ قَبْلَ الْخُطْبَةِ . فَقَالَ قَدْ تُرِكَ مَا هُنَالِكَ . فَقَالَ أَبُو سَعِيدٍ أَمَّا هَذَا فَقَدْ قَضَى مَا عَلَيْهِ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ " مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الإِيمَانِ " .

TRANSLATION:

Tariq ibn Shihab — and this is the wording of Abu Bakr — said: The first to begin with the sermon before the prayer on the day of Eid was Marwan. A man stood up to him and said: "The prayer (should come) before the sermon." Marwan said: "That has been abandoned." Then Abu Sa'id (al-Khudri) رضى الله عنه said: "As for this man, he has fulfilled his duty. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand. If he cannot, then with his tongue. If he cannot, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.'"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim through two chains: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Waki' ibn al-Jarrah, from Sufyan al-Thawri; and from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from Muhammad ibn Ja'far

(Ghundar), from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj — both from Qays ibn Muslim, from Tariq ibn Shihab, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith (Kitab al-Iman), chapter: forbidding evil is part of faith, Hadith No. 49a.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:49a

Imam al-Nawawi explains that changing evil with the heart means **hating it**, and this is obligatory upon everyone in all circumstances — no one is exempt from it. This is the last barrier that keeps the heart from becoming like the "overturned vessel" in the hadith of Hudhayfah. One who still hates evil in his heart, even if unable to change it, still has the right measure. But when the heart no longer hates it, then wrong has truly become normal. **Ibn Mas'ud** رضى الله عنه said, as quoted by **Ibn Rajab** in *Jami' al-'Ulum wa al-Hikam*: "Ruined is the one who has no heart that recognises good and rejects evil."

HADITH — SUNAN ABI DAWUD, NO. 4338

حَدَّثَنَا وَهْبُ بْنُ بَقِيَّةَ، عَنْ خَالِدٍ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا عَمْرُو بْنُ عَوْنٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا هُشَيْمٌ، - الْمَعْنَى - عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، عَنْ قَيْسٍ، قَالَ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ بَعْدَ أَنْ حَمِدَ اللَّهَ، وَأَثْنَى، عَلَيْهِ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّكُمْ تَقْرَءُونَ هَذِهِ الآيَةَ وَتَضَعُونَهَا عَلَى غَيْرِ مَوَاضِعِهَا { عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لاَ يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ } قَالَ عَنْ خَالِدٍ وَإِنَّا سَمِعْنَا النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ " إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوُا الظَّالِمَ فَلَمْ يَأْخُذُوا عَلَى يَدَيْهِ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَعُمَّهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابٍ " . وَقَالَ عَمْرٌو عَنْ هُشَيْمٍ وَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ " مَا مِنْ قَوْمٍ يُعْمَلُ فِيهِمْ بِالْمَعَاصِي ثُمَّ يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْ يُغَيِّرُوا ثُمَّ لاَ يُغَيِّرُوا إِلاَّ يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَعُمَّهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ بِعِقَابٍ " . قَالَ أَبُو دَاوُدَ رَوَاهُ كَمَا قَالَ خَالِدٌ أَبُو أُسَامَةَ وَجَمَاعَةٌ . وَقَالَ شُعْبَةُ فِيهِ " مَا مِنْ قَوْمٍ يُعْمَلُ فِيهِمْ بِالْمَعَاصِي هُمْ أَكْثَرُ مِمَّنْ يَعْمَلُهُ " .

TRANSLATION:

Qays (ibn Abi Hazim) said: Abu Bakr (al-Siddiq) رضى الله عنه said — after praising and extolling Allah: "O people, you recite this verse but put it in the wrong place: 'Upon you is (responsibility for) yourselves; those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided' (Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:105)." In the narration of Khalid: "And we heard the Prophet ﷺ say: 'When people see a wrongdoer and do not seize his hand, Allah is about to send a punishment upon them all.'"

And in the narration of 'Amr from Hushaym: "And I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'There is no people among whom sins are committed, and they are able to change it but do not, except that Allah is about to send

a punishment from Him upon them all.'" Abu Dawud said: Abu Usamah and a group of narrators narrated it as Khalid said. And Shu'bah said in his narration: "There is no people among whom sins are committed while they are more numerous than those who commit them…"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud through two chains: from Wahb ibn Baqiyyah, from Khalid ibn 'Abdullah al-Tahhan; and from 'Amr ibn 'Awn, from Hushaym ibn Bashir — both from Isma'il ibn Abi Khalid, from Qays ibn Abi Hazim, from Abu Bakr al-Siddiq رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud in Sunan Abi Dawud, Book of the Great Battles (Kitab al-Malahim), chapter on enjoining good and forbidding evil, Hadith No. 4338. Also narrated by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah.

GRADE: SAHIH — graded by Shaykh al-Albani (as shown on sunnah.com).

Source: https://sunnah.com/abudawud:4338

Abu Bakr al-Siddiq رضى الله عنه corrected a misunderstanding of Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:105. Some people thought the verse allowed them to stay silent as long as they themselves were good. Abu Bakr explained that leaving oppression and sin unchallenged — while able to act — invites a punishment that strikes everyone. The verse only applies after a person has fulfilled the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil according to his ability. The attitude of "mind your own business" is one of the biggest reasons why wrong becomes normal.

A BRIEF COMPARISON

THE OVERTURNED HEART (MUSLIM 144)	THE FIRM HEART (YOUTHS OF THE CAVE)
Absorbs trials strand by strand	Rejects trials — marked white (Muslim 144)
Recognises no good, rejects no evil	Hates evil, at least with the heart (Muslim 49)
Its measure is desire	Its measure is revelation — "I did it not of my own accord" (18:82)
Thinks it is doing good (18:104)	Asks for right guidance (18:10)
Follows the majority (6:116)	Stays with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening (18:28)
Has lost its modesty (Bukhari 3483)	Keeps its purity even when expelled (7:82)
Deceived by the Dajjal's "paradise" (Muslim 2934)	Protected by the ten verses of Al-Kahf (Muslim 809)

PRACTICAL STEPS TO REMAIN FIRM

- **Memorise and recite the first ten verses of Surah Al-Kahf** — and reflect on their meaning (Muslim 809).
- **Return the measure to revelation:** before judging something "normal" or "strange", ask what the Qur'an and Sunnah say (18:82).
- **Do not take the majority as proof:** "everyone does it" is not evidence (6:116; 5:100).

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- **Guard the heart from getting used to sin:** do not let small wrongs repeat without seeking forgiveness, for the heart can grow used to them strand by strand (Muslim 144).
- **Preserve modesty** before Allah and people (Bukhari 3483).
- **Seek righteous companions and community** who call upon their Lord morning and evening (18:28).
- **Correct evil according to your ability** — with the hand, the tongue, or at least hatred in the heart (Muslim 49; Abu Dawud 4338).
- **Practise the supplication of the youths of the Cave:** *Rabbana atina min ladunka rahmatan wa hayyi' lana min amrina rashada* (18:10).
- **Be patient as a "stranger"** — glad tidings to al-ghuraba' (Muslim 145; Tirmidhi 2260).

CLOSING: GLAD TIDINGS TO THE STRANGERS

Being right when others are wrong is indeed exhausting. We will be seen as strange, perhaps mocked, and sometimes pushed aside — just as Prophet Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was expelled for wanting to keep himself pure, and the youths of the Cave had to take refuge in a cave. Yet the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave the glad tidings: ***fatuba lil-ghuraba' — so glad tidings to the strangers.***

Right remains right even if only one person does it. Wrong remains wrong even if the whole world does it. May Allah make our hearts firm as He made firm the hearts of the youths of the Cave, and protect us from the trial of the Dajjal — the great and the small. **Rabbana atina min ladunka rahmatan wa hayyi' lana min amrina rashada.**

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaybah ibn Sa'id and 'Ali ibn Hujr, from Isma'il ibn Ja'far, from al-'Ala' ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaybah ibn Sa'id and 'Ali ibn Hujr, from Isma'il ibn Ja'far, from al-'Ala' ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

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