



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

UNDERSTANDING “HAWA”

INTRODUCTION

Generally, the Qur'an mentioned al-hawa as a negative instinct within mankind. In the Qur'an, the word al-hawa was mentioned in 29 different chapters. However, in the Qur'an (28:50), it was mentioned twice, making it 30 in total of the times mentioned. It is mentioned as a singular form (mufrad) for example al-hawa , hawa , and tahwa or in plural form (jama') like ahwa' , ahwa'akum , and ahwa'uhum (al-Baqiy, 1364 A.H.).

Hawa is the inclination of the disposition (character, personality or nature) to what suits it. This inclination is created in man and it is essential for his existence. Had it not been for his inclination (desire) for food and drink he would not eat and drink. Had it not been for his need to fulfill his sexual desire he would not get married. Therefore, it is not correct to dispraise Hawa in general, but the excessive type of it is dispraised as it trespasses (goes beyond) bringing any benefit or averting harm. [Ibn al-Jawzi]

The word Hawa has two basic components, one is praiseworthy and the other is blameworthy.

An example for praiseworthy Hawa is the desire for food, drink, sleep, sexual pleasure, etc. But one needs to be aware that the praiseworthy desire can turn into a blameworthy desire if there is no Jihaad an-Nafs, i.e. no self-restraint. An example of dispraised Hawa is eating excessively, which causes surfeit (glut) and harms the body.

If there is no Jihaad, Hawa may lead a person to commit Zina (fornication), killing, stealing and other major sins. All these sins started because of responding to Hawa (self-desire).

The Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: *"Indeed, what I fear for you most is the erroneous passion of your bellies and private parts and misleading whims."* [Reported by Ahmad and authenticated by al-Albaani in Saheeh at-Targheeb no. 52]

Ash-Shaatibi (Rahimahullaah) said: *"Desire is called Hawa because it makes its owner to Yahwee (i.e. fall down) in Hell-Fire."* [Reported on the authority of ash-Sh'abi]

IN THE QUR'AN

The word Hawa is mentioned abundantly in the Qur'an. Hawa is dispraised to an extent that it is described as an ilaah (god) besides Allaah (ilaah other than Allaah).

Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat al-Furqaan (25:43):

وَكَيْلٌ عَلَيْهِ تَكُونُ أَفَانْتَهُ هَوَاهُ إِلَهُهُ اتَّخَذَ مِنْ أَرَأَيْتَ

"Have you seen him who has taken as his god his own desire?

Would you then be a "Wakeel" [a protecting guide] over him?"

Also Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat al-Jaathiyah (45:23):

عَلِمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأَضَلَّهُ هَوَاهُ إِلَهُهُ اتَّخَذَ مِنْ أَفْرَأَيْتَ
غِشَاوَةً بَصْرِهِ عَلَى وَجَعَلْ وَقَلْبِهِ سَمِعِهِ عَلَى وَخْتَمَ
تَذَكَّرُونَ أَفَلَا ۚ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَنْ يَهْدِيهِ فَمَنْ

"Have you seen him who takes his own lust (vain desires) as his ilaah (god), and Allaah knowing (him as such), left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who then will guide him after Allaah? Will you not then remember?"

Hawa could be in one's way of thinking, in dealing with others, in giving advice, etc.; all these could be performed in compliance with one's desire, without exerting one's utmost to strive against his desire.

Accordingly, there are two opposite concepts: Hawa (desire) and Mujaahadah (striving against oneself).

The word Hawa in the Qur'an

Ibn 'Abbaas (Radia-Allaahu 'anhuma) said: "Allaah (Ta'ala) has not mentioned Hawa except that He (Ta'ala) defamed and dispraised it." [Tafseer al-Qurtubi]

Allaah (Ta'ala) commanded His Messenger (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in many verses, not to follow the desire of the People of the Scriptures, the disbelievers, etc. saying (interpretation of the meaning):

أَهْوَاءَهُ تَتَّبِعَ وَلَا

"Do not follow their vain desires." (5: 49)

This indicates that one can be impressed and affected not only by his own desires but also with the whims and desires of others.

In Surat al-Baqarah (2:120), Allaah (Ta'ala) says to his Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam):

تَتَّبِعَ حَتَّى النَّصَارَى وَلَا الْيَهُودَ عَنْكَ تَرْضَى وَلَنْ
 اتَّبَعْتَ وَلَئِنْ ۖ الْهُدَىٰ هُوَ اللَّهُ هُدَىٰ إِنْ قُلَّ ۖ مِلَّتَهُمْ
 اللَّهُ مِنْ لَكَ مَا ۖ الْعِلْمُ مِنْ جَاءِكَ الَّذِي بَعْدَ أَهْوَاءِهِمْ
 نَصِيرٍ وَلَا وَلِيٍّ مِنْ

"Never will the Jews or the Christians be pleased with you [O Muhammad (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam)] till you follow their religion. Say: 'Verily, the guidance of Allaah that is the (only) Guidance.' And if you were to follow their (Jews and Christians) desires after what you have received of knowledge (i.e. the Qur'an), then you would have against Allaah, neither any waliy (protector) nor any helper."

In Surat al-A'raaf (7:176), Allaah (Ta'ala) tells us about him, to whom He granted knowledge, but he sought satisfaction in his lusts and vain desires and became interested in the adornment of this life and its delights and was deceived by it:

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ
هَوَاهُ ۚ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلُ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ
تَتْرُكُهُ يَلْهَثُ ۚ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ
فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And had We willed, We would surely have elevated him therewith, but he clung to the earth and followed his vain desire. So his description is the description of a dog: if you drive him away, he lolls his tongue out, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls his tongue out. Such is the description of the people who reject our Ayaat (signs, verses, etc).”

In Surat ar-Ra’d (13:37), Allaah (Ta’ala) warns against following those who follow their desire, that they will not have a waliy (protector) or defender against Him:

أَهْوَاءَهُمْ اتَّبَعَتْ وَلَئِن ۙ عَرَبِيًّا حُكْمًا هُنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا وَكَذَلِكَ
وَلَا وَلِيٍّ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ لَكَ مَا الْعِلْمُ مِنْ جَاءِكَ بَعْدَمَا
وَاقٍ

“And thus We have sent it (the Qur’an) down to be a judgment of authority in Arabic. Were you (O Muhammad, Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) to follow their (vain) desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you will not have any waliy (protector) or defender against Allaah.”

In Surat al-Kahf (18:28), Allaah (Ta’ala) commands His Prophet (Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) to patiently keep company with the believers, and He forbids him from obeying those who are distracted by this world from being committed to the religion, and from worshipping their Lord:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ
يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ ^ص وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ^ص وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا
وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

“And keep yourself (O Muhammad, Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affairs (deeds) have been lost.”

In Surat Ta-Ha (20:15-16), Allaah (Ta’ala) forbade following the way of the person who does not believe in the Hour (Day of Judgment) and who only pursues his desires in this worldly life. He disobeys his Lord and only follows his desires; surely he has failed and lost:

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا
تَسْعَىٰ
فَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ
فَتَرَدَىٰ

“Verily, the Hour is coming - and My Will is to keep it hidden - that every person may be awarded for that which he strives. Therefore, let not the one who believes not therein (i.e. in the Day of Resurrection, Reckoning, Paradise and Hell, etc.), but follows his own lusts, (divert you therefrom), lest you perish.”

Allaah (Ta’ala) is telling and warning His Messenger (Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in Surat al-Ma’idah (5:48-50) not to follow the people of the Scriptures and their vain desires:

مِنْ يَدَيْهِ بَيْنَ لِمَا مُصَدِّقًا بِالْحَقِّ الْكِتَابَ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
 ۞ اللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ بِمَا بَيْنَهُمْ فَاخُكُمُ ۞ عَلَيْهِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا الْكِتَابَ
 جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ ۞ الْحَقِّ مِنْ جَاءَكَ عَمَّا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ تَتَّبِعْ وَلَا
 أُمَّةً لَجَعَلَكُمُ اللَّهُ شَاءَ وَلَوْ ۞ وَمِنْهَا جَا شِرْعَةً مِنْكُمْ
 فَاسْتَبِقُوا ۞ آتَاكُمْ مَا فِي لِيَبْلُوكُمْ وَلَكِنْ وَاحِدَةً
 كُنْتُمْ بِمَا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ جَمِيعًا مَرْجِعَكُمْ اللَّهُ إِلَى ۞ الْخَيْرَاتِ
 تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ

وَأَنْ أَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
 وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۞
 فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ
 ذُنُوبِهِمْ ۞ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ
 حُكْمًا اللَّهُ مِنْ أَحْسَنُ وَمَنْ ۞ يَبْغُونَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ أَفْحُكْمُ
 يُوقِنُونَ لِقَوْمِ

“And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad, Salla-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam),
 the Book in truth, confirming the Scriptures that came before it and a witness over
 them. So judge between them by what Allaah has revealed and do not follow their
 vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you. To each of you,
 We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allaah willed, He would have made
 you into a single community, but (He wanted) to test you by what He has given
 you, so race to do good. You will all return to Allaah and He will inform you
 about that in which you used to differ.

So judge between them by what Allaah has sent down and do not follow their
 vain desires, and beware of them lest they tempt you away from any part of what

Allaah has sent down to you. If they turn away, then know that Allaah's Will is to punish them for some of their sins. Most people are indeed transgressors.

Do they seek judgment according to the time of pagan ignorance? Who can be better in judgment than Allaah for those who have firm faith?"

Shaikh as-Sa'dee (Rahimahullaah) said:

"The Exalted says: We have sent down to you [i.e. the Prophet, (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam)], the Book (Qur'an), which is the greatest and the most esteemed of all Books in truth. Allaah has sent the Qur'an with truthfulness, and all its information, commandments, and prohibitions are true, and confirm the Scriptures that came before it. The Qur'an attests to the previous divine Scriptures and complies with them; so its information, news, major laws and regulations are in accordance with the laws and regulations of the previous Books. It also supersedes them, by comprising everything that was in the previous Books, and includes even more divine commands and morals.

It commands, encourages, and guides people towards the various paths of righteousness that will take its followers to the truth. It contains narratives of the previous and future generations, and commandments. As well, He has given us the wisdom that is required to verify the commandments of the previous Books. Therefore, whatever it attests to is true and whatever it refutes is false. This is because the previous Books have been largely altered and modified, and the Qur'an would never refute that which is from Allaah.

So judge between them in accordance with the commandments of the Shari'ah (Islamic law) that Allaah has revealed to you and do not follow their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you.

وَرَسُولُهُ اللَّهُ قَضَىٰ إِذَا مُؤْمِنَةٌ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنٍ كَانَ وَمَا
يَعْصِ وَمَنْ قُلُّ أَمْرِهِمْ مِنَ الْخَيْرَةِ لَهُمْ يَكُونُ أَنْ أَمْرًا
مُبِينًا لَا لَأَضَّ ضَلَّ فَقَدْ وَرَسُولُهُ اللَّهُ

It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error. 33: 36

Do not make their false and evil whims and desires a substitute for this truth, since by doing so, you will accept an inferior thing in return for a superior one. To each of you, Allaah has fixed a path of righteousness and a way of pious living. These [previous] laws changed according to the change in people and the era; therefore, these changes were in perfect agreement and harmony with the circumstances of the era of that legislation. However, the major principles never change and remain effective in every Shari'ah, because they are based on wisdom.

Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat Ma'idah (5:42)

يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
 بِالْقِسْطِ بَيْنَهُمْ فَأَحْكُمْ حَكَمَتَ وَإِنَّ
 الْمُقْسِطِينَ

“And if you do judge, then judge between them with justice. Allaah loves those who deal justly.”

This noble verse proves the obligation and importance of observing justice, the source of which are the commandments of Allaah's divine Shari'ah that is based on ultimate justice and fairness; whatever is in opposition to it is nothing but oppression and injustice. Allaah then repeated the prohibition of following their whims and desires because of the gravity of doing so. Additionally, the context of the previous noble verse was both a commandment and a legal verdict, (and it is far reaching); whereas the context of this verse is that of a commandment. Both of these noble verses prohibit following the desires of those people because they contradict the truth. Thus, Allaah decrees [(interpretation of the meaning): “But beware of them lest they tempt you away from any part of what Allaah has sent down to you”], that is, be cautious lest they tempt you and make you leave some of what was revealed to you. Therefore, following their desires is a sign of abandoning the truth, the obedience of which is mandatory on all.

Do they seek judgment according to the time of pagan ignorance? By turning away from you, do they desire to seek a judgment of the pre-Islamic era? Included in this [misguidance] is every judgment that contradicts what Allaah revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Hence, there are only two types of judgments:

1. The judgment of Allaah and His Prophet Muhammad (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam), and
2. The judgment of the pre-Islamic era.

Whoever turns away from the judgment of Allaah and His Prophet will indulge in the second type of judgment which is based on ignorance, oppression and misguidance. It is for this reason that Allaah attributed it to the pre-Islamic era. As for Allaah's judgment, it is always based on knowledge, justice, authenticity, enlightenment and guidance.

Who can be better in judgment than Allaah for those who have firm faith? The bearer of certainty is the one who, on the basis of his conviction, can recognize the difference between these two types of judgments; meaning, he can identify the beauty and wisdom inherent in Allaah's judgments, which have to be followed intellectually and legislatively. The word certainty (yaqeen) refers to the perfect and infallible knowledge that necessitates actions." [End quote- Tayseer al-Kareem- paraphrased and summarized]

Based on the previous discussion, one either follows the Shar' (law) or Hawa (desire).

Many times it happens that one thinks he is following the law (the Book and the Sunnah), but he is following his desire or the desire of those around him which make him take a certain decision.

For example: when Allaah guides someone to the right path and his friends who are around him are not upright (i.e. they are astray); they try to make the good seem ugly to him or they persuade him to commit certain sins, etc. They do that, following their evil desires. They put pressure on him to make him change his belief, make him feel that he is not right or that he is strange, while they are right, etc.

So Allaah (Ta'ala) is commanding (interpretation of the meaning): "And follow not their vain desire."

In Surat al-Baqarah (2:145) Allaah (Ta'ala) says:

الْعِلْمِ مِنَ جَاءَكَ مَا بَعْدَ مِنْ أَهْوَاءِهِمْ اتَّبَعْتَ وَلَئِنْ
بَيْنَ الظَّالِمِ لَمِنْ إِذَا إِنَّكَ

“Verily, if you follow their desires after that which you have received of knowledge (from Allaah) then indeed you will be one of the wrongdoers.”

It means – after Allaah granted us knowledge about Him and His laws, we should have trust in Allaah and rely on Him. One will wrong himself if he follows the desires of those who have no knowledge.

The reaction of the one who has been granted knowledge should be different from the one who is ignorant.

Accordingly, man is warned about following his own desires, or the desires of others, either out of fear of them or because of not considering/ thinking of Allaah’s pleasure.

The Correct Attitude

-Surat al-An’aam (6:56) shows the correct attitude that should be taken:

اللَّهُ دُونَ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ الَّذِينَ أَعْبُدَ أَنْ نُهَيْتُ إِنِّي قُلٌّ
 مِنْ أَنَا وَمَا إِذَا ضَلَلْتُ قَدْ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ أَتَّبِعُ لَا قُلٌّ
 الْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Say: ‘I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke (worship) besides Allaah.’ Say: ‘I will not follow your vain desires. If I did, I would go astray and I would not be one of the rightly guided.’”

-Beware of being driven to Fitnah

In Surat al-Ma’idah (5:49), Allaah (Ta’ala) says:

أَهْوَاءَهُمْ تَتَّبِعُ وَلَا اللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ بِمَا بَيْنَهُمْ أَحْكَمٌ وَأَنْ
 إِلَيْكَ اللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مَا بَعْضٍ عَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ أَنْ وَاحْذَرَهُمْ

“And so judge between them by what Allaah has revealed and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they Yaftinooka (i.e. cause Fitnah) and turn you far away from some of that which Allaah revealed to you.”

If we follow our desires this will cause Fitnah for us, i.e. following one's own desire or the desires of others means falling into Fitnah. One could have a correct belief but the people around him may pressure him by their Hawa (desire) to change his belief.

-Mujaahadah

Those who strive against them (desires) will be saved.

In Surat al-Ankabut (29:69), Allaah (Ta'ala) says:

لَمَعَ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّ ۖ سُبُلَنَا لَنَهْدِيَهُمْ فِيْنَا جَاهِدُوا وَالَّذِينَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“As for those who strive hard for Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our Paths (i.e. Allaah’s Religion). And verily, Allaah is with the doers of good.”
So they may turn one far away from some of that which Allaah has sent down of law.

And if one advises them and calls them to what one has of truth and they turn away, then know:

بِبَعْضٍ يُصِيبُهُمْ أَنْ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنَّمَا فَاعْلَمُ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنْ
لَفَاسِقُونَ النَّاسِ مِنْ كَثِيرًا وَإِنَّ ۖ ذُنُوبِهِمْ

“...And if they turn away, then know that Allaah’s Will is to punish them for some sins of theirs. And truly, most of men are Fasiqun (rebellious and disobedient to Allaah).” [Al-Ma’idah 5:49]

When one’s faith increases and he obeys Allaah (Ta’ala) and his obedience is continuous, his heart will become strong, so he will not follow his desires or the desires of the people. However, when one’s faith becomes weak due to his sins, he will become weak and fall into following one’s desire or the desires of the people. Committing sins and weak obedience to Allaah drag one to follow his desires.

What will save one is detailed and not superficial knowledge about Allaah and the articles of faith. Knowledge motivates one to follow what has been revealed in the Qur’an and Sunnah.

The Importance of this topic

First- People are not aware of the different ways they could be following their desires; they give no thought as to why they take a certain action or certain decision, so in actuality they are following their desires.

Some examples of following desires:

- **When Judging People**

There are some people who are zealous (chauvinist) towards their own people, country or nationality (patriotism). This zeal is one of the impacts of Jahiliyyah (the time of ignorance before Islam), and whoever is attributed with such a character is having one of the traits of the people of Jahiliyyah. Such people see themselves as pure, noble and good, whilst thinking others are not. Consequently, if any people other than their own make mistakes, they criticise them, despise them, abuse them (defame them) imprudently, while at the same time they overlook the mistakes of their own folks.

An example of excessiveness is the criticizing or praising of some scholars, which is done by many students of knowledge who are following their desires. They give themselves legal excuses in doing that, such as protection of the Deen from Bid'ah, Gheerah, etc.

They follow up the little mistakes of the scholars and make it big to cause an aversion of the people from them.

For example, there are some students of knowledge who are acquiring knowledge with a certain Shaikh or scholar. They criticize everyone other than their Shaikh and consider the actions of the other groups as wrong. However, if their Shaikh makes a mistake, they give him an excuse, or overlook his mistake. Erroneously, the wrong and right is in accordance to one's whims in this case.

- **In One's Actions**

Many of a person's actions could be controlled by his desire without him being aware of that; thus, he will be performing actions in compliance to his desire (Hawa).

For example, when greeting others:

Al-Bukhaari reported a Hadeeth on the authority of 'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr (Radia-Allaahu 'anhu), that a man asked the Messenger of Allaah (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam): "Whose Islam is good or what sort of deeds (or what qualities) of Islam are good?" The Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) replied: *"To feed (others) and greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know."* [Kitab al-Iman- the Book of Belief]

Al-Bukhaari reported in "Adab al-Mufrad" that Ibn Mas'oud (Radia-Allaahu 'anhu) passed by a man. He (the later) said: "As-Salaamu 'alaika O Abu Abdur-Rahmaan." He (Ibn Mas'oud, Radia-Allaahu 'anhu) replied to his greeting and then said: "A time will come when the people will greet only those whom they know."

If a person greets everyone he meets, whether he knows them or not, he will not be following his desire in this action, but if he greets only people whom he knows, then he is following his Hawa and not the Shari'ah.

- **In One's Reactions**

Some people may react according to their Hawa (desire). For example: anger. It is a praiseworthy anger when one becomes angry when Allaah's prohibitions are violated. But it is a blameworthy anger when one becomes upset over worldly things which are not important, such as when something is broken in the house, or someone gets a promotion while he does not, etc.

Everyone has something which makes him angry and causes him distress. Accordingly, this makes them express their anger in a way of accusation, defamation, finding fault in others, etc.; all these attacks on someone's character are the result of Hawa.

- **In One's Thoughts and Beliefs**

Everyone who opposes the Book, the Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah, and calls people to apply man-made laws or calls people to secularism or outrageous ideologies in the name of modernization or civilization is corrupt and following his Hawa (desire).

He should not be followed or assisted in carrying out his erroneous actions. Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat al-Ma'idah (5:48):

(Interpretation of the meaning):

"And follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you."

عَمَّا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ تَتَّبِعُ وَلَا ۖ اللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ بِمَا بَيْنَهُمْ أَحْكُمُ
الْحَقِّ مِنْ جَاءَكَ

e.g. Many of those who appoint themselves as guardians over the graves, tombs or shrines do not agree with demolishing the tombs and shrines because of the huge amounts of money and gifts they receive from the grave worshippers.

This is exactly like the priest whom Ibn al-Qayyim (Rahimahullaah) presented Islam to and the priest replied: "If I become Muslim, then the people will shun me, will not give me gifts, and I will be begging people in the markets."

This is an example of following one's whims (vain desires) in accepting and not accepting the religion.

Practicing Bid'ah (innovations), visiting the graves, invoking the dead, etc. (all aspects of Shirk), are all examples of following desires (Hawa) that will take one to Hell-Fire. One needs instead, to cling to what was revealed of acts of worship because nothing will save one from following his desires except following the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Disobedience to the Muslim rulers and rebelling against them is another example of following desires, as people are protesting against the ruler in the name of reformation.

The Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: *"I admonish you to fear Allaah, to listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave is appointed as a ruler over you. Because whosoever among you shall live after me, will soon see much discord. So hold fast to my Sunnah and the examples of the rightly guided Caliphs who will come after me. Adhere to them and hold fast to them. Beware of new things (in religion) because every heresy is a misguidance."* [Abu Dawoud and at-Tirmidhi]

- **In Giving Advice**

Advice could be given according to one's desire.

Remember Shaytaan misled Adam when he said he was a sincere adviser. Or it could be that someone is jealous of a sister, so she advises her to divorce her husband.

- **Using evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah that agrees with one's desire to justify one's actions**

For example, a woman intends to have guests (friends) come visit her, so she tells her husband, "The Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: 'Whoever believes in Allaah and the Hereafter, let him entertain his guests. [Al-Bukhaari]'"

However, whenever the husband has guests and she does not want to serve him, she says: "The extravagant (wasteful) are the brothers of devils. [Surat al-Isra' 17:27]"

وَكَانَ ۖ الشَّيَاطِينِ إِخْوَانَ كَانُوا الْمُبْذِرِينَ إِنَّ
كَفُورًا لِرَبِّهِ الشَّيْطَانُ

- **Relationships and Dealings with Others**

Some wives' actions with their husbands occur because they follow their desires. For example, a wife will do anything that goes along with her desires, and if anything is contrary to her desires, she will not do it. She gives no thought to seeking nearness to Allaah in doing that matter.

Even one's relations with others can be overcome by one's desires when one does not consider the rights of others, such as one's parents, neighbors, brothers, sisters, etc.

Accordingly, one will not be saved from his desires except by following the truth that has come to him and taking his self to account for every action he does; is it for Allaah's sake or not?

- **Speech**

The desire to talk is natural; however, the Shari'ah has set a limit for it. The Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "He who believes in Allaah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent." [Muslim]

Imaam an-Nawawi (Rahimahullaah) said: "Every adult should restrain his tongue from all talk except that in which there is good and in which there is an interest. In the case that talking and abandonment from talking become equal in interest, the Sunnah is holding back from it, because the allowable talk might lead to forbidden or disliked speech. It is better to be on the safe side.

The aforementioned Hadeeth is a clear proof that it is incumbent upon a person not to talk except if there is good, for which its interest is manifest. Whenever one doubts its goodness or interest, he should not talk."

The tongue expresses what is established in the heart.

e.g. whenever one sits with someone he likes, he speaks good with him, and whenever he sits with someone whom he does not like, he hardly even greets him; thus this person utters his words according to his Hawa. He sits with religious people and talks about religious topics, and when he associates with the people of Duniya he talks like them, (instead of calling them to good and taking that opportunity to advise them, etc.).

1. Mut'ah Marriage (temporary marriage) is an example of following desires. Allaah's Messenger (Salla Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) forbade it in the year of Khaibar, as reported by al-Bukhaari and Muslim. However, it is still practiced by some deviated sects.

In conclusion, Hawa an-Nafs (the desire of the self) extends to details of people's lives and may reach to an extent that it becomes a law to rule the people with.

Second- Tawheed (the Oneness) of Allaah will not be completed and perfected, except by rejecting the Hawa.

Our utmost concern should be to please Allaah (Azza wa Jall), and live our lives in a manner that Allaah is pleased with.

[We may sometimes live for few hours in a day in a manner in which we only want the pleasure of Allaah, but the rest of the day we live as we like.] For many, the

thought as to whether or not it pleases Allaah does not cross one's minds when doing an action.

Recently, in one of the Muslim countries, a crime of Zina happened in one of the families of the students of knowledge who was with his Shaikh. The student took a weapon to go and kill that person.

The Shaikh asked him: "What is the Hukm (command) of Allaah?"

The student answered: "Four witnesses first."

The Shaikh said: "This has not been fulfilled in your case. And you are not the one who should execute the penalty; the Ruler (or whoever is in authority) should do it."

The student said: "How can I accept this in my family? This is my honor."

The Shaikh said: "This is the religion of Allaah."

The student said: "These are the customs of my people."

What ruled the student was his Hawa, instead of following the Shari'ah.

Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat Yusuf (12:40):

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

"The command is for none but Allaah."

Many tribes rule their people with other than Allaah's law or Hukm, and are following their whims. Allaah says in Surat al-Ma'idah [5:50]:

يَبْغُونَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ أَفْهَمَ

"Do they seek judgment according to the time of pagan ignorance?"

So, one of the two matters should be established in one's heart: either magnifying Allaah and His Law, or following the desire.

Third- Shaytaan easily overpowers those who follow their desires. The Shaytaan encourages the act (beautifies and adorns the wrong action) and the person follows. What will bring him out from Hawa is Mujaahadah (striving with the self).

When one discovers that what he is following is his Hawa, he needs to strive against his self; and this is the most difficult kind of Jihaad.

The Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: *"The best Jihaad is the striving of the person against his self and desire."* [Saheeh al-Jami'e 1099]

The Remedies for Hawa

In order to overcome vain desires and follow the right path, the following means are needed:

The first remedy: Acquiring knowledge

Knowledge about Allaah (Ta'ala) and what pleases Him,

Knowledge about the Shar' (law), and

Knowledge about one's good and bad inborn qualities.

If one does not know his inborn qualities, Hawa can control a person in his weak points.

People do many forbidden actions out of habit because they are following their desires – e.g. It is known that it is forbidden to serve food and drinks etc. at gatherings of mourning. However, many argue and say: 'what will the people say about us? This is the habit (custom) in our country, etc.'

The fact is that this custom agrees with their desires; they do not want to hear any criticism or be defamed by the people because they want the community to accept them, etc.

Allaah created us with good qualities and bad qualities, both of which are trials.

One needs to check his good and bad inborn qualities in order to discover his weak points. When he realizes his weak points, he can determine if his character is motivated by Hawa or not.

An example of one's quality that is motivated by Hawa:

A person is generous by nature, he cannot withhold his hand; if someone asks him, he gives immediately.

This is good; however, it can be a dispraised Hawa when his Ihsaan is according to his desire- when he gives whomever he loves and he does not give whomever he does not like.

One needs to look into his good characteristics, his generosity, his kindness, his smile, etc. and determine if he is using them according to his desire or according to what Allaah likes?

An example of a bad quality and how Hawa controls it:

Everyone tries to shine his image in front of the people, but trials will come to disclose (expose) one's defects and bad quality to make the reality (of that bad character) apparent to him, i.e. does he have Hasad (envy), suspicion, etc. This Hasad (envy) will cause one to follow up other's defects and criticize them, and overlook his own or his folks' defects.

One should check his intention to know what motivates him to do a particular action.

The second remedy: Practicing Taqwa (Piety)

The Taqwa of the pious person is based on one's belief in Allaah and in the Hereafter, and on how firmly established is his remembrance of that Day. He prepares an answer for every question in order to be excused and pardoned by Allaah on the Day of Resurrection.

As he goes through trials, situations, etc. he knows that Allaah is testing him, and that He (Ta'ala) will ask him about his actions in this world, so he prepares an answer for every question.

This means that one will not be a Muttaqi (one who fears Allaah) unless he remembers the Day of Resurrection.

Accordingly, this Taqwa will help (benefit) the person to abandon his Hawa (vain desires) and respond to the truth when he is reminded of it - the truth based on what Allaah (Ta'ala) has said in the Qur'an and what the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) has said in the authentic narrations.

One's Hawa is revealed in situations and incidents that one goes through. It is in these situations and incidents that a person's hastiness in taking action and making

decisions indicates a lack of Taqwa. Also, how one deals with others in situations is based on one's Taqwa.

Allaah (Ta'ala) has described the Muttaqeen (the pious) in the beginning of Surat al-Baqarah (2:1-5):

(Interpretation of the meaning):

(1) "Alif. Lam. Mim."

(2) "This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, guidance unto those who fear Allah"

(3) "Who believe in the Unseen, and establish Salaat (prayer), and spend of that what We have bestowed upon them"

(4) "And who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad, Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and that which was revealed before thee, and who are certain of the Hereafter."

(5) "These are on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful."

First Allaah praises the Book (the Qur'an) saying that it is a Book which there is no doubt about. It is a guidance for those who are Muttaqeen (those who fear Allaah and are conscious of Allaah). So the Book (i.e. the Qur'an) will benefit one if he is a Muttaqi.

The Muttaqeen are those:

- Who believe in the unseen, and the greatest unseen is Allaah and His Perfect Attributes.

One's belief in Allaah's Perfect Attributes makes him explain every situation according to His Names and Attributes, and he acknowledges that everything Allaah does is in accordance to His Wisdom, Knowledge, Mercy, etc.

- Who establish the Prayer,
- Who spend out of what Allaah has provided for them,
- Who believe in what has been revealed to the Prophet (Salla-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam), and what was revealed before him,
- Who have certain faith in the Hereafter- meaning they believe with certainty that they will meet Allaah (Ta'ala) on the Day of Resurrection and will be asked about everything they used to do.

Allaah (Ta'ala) is Watchful over every one, He knows exactly what is established in the hearts of everyone and what motivates a person to take a certain action. Even if a person deceives all the people, he cannot deceive Allaah. Allaah knows what one's intention is, and He will deal with him according to what is established in his heart.

A man does what may seem to the people as the deeds of the dwellers of Paradise, but he dies with a bad end. This is because of a sickness or ill secret which is hidden in his heart and he is showing contrary to it to the people, and with it he deceives many people. His reality will be revealed in this life before the Hereafter.

In order to rid one's self of Hawa, one should have the knowledge to distinguish between truth and falsehood. But knowledge alone is not enough, because one may manipulate (play) with knowledge according to his desires if he does not have Taqwa.

One should control and discipline his behaviors and actions and rid himself of Hawa. He should practice Taqwa (fear of Allaah) in all the situations that he goes through and seek forgiveness if he acts wrongly. In addition to that, he should remind himself of what he had previously gone through in similar situations when he had used his Hawa. In this way, he takes care that his reaction and action will be correct in the future.

e.g. A person does good to people (one's relatives) and in return they offend him. Allaah (Ta'ala) is testing him. He needs to question himself, is he seeking Allaah's reward when he does good to them, (i.e. keeping good relations) or is he waiting for praise or some worldly compensation from them?

Allaah (Ta'ala) has mentioned the statement of the pious when they do good to the people, in Surat al-Insaan (76:9):

إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا

“We feed you only for the Countenance of Allaah. We wish for no reward or gratitude from you.”

The people may return the good with gratitude, or the opposite to that which requires him to show patience.

The previous situations are like a nurturing for the person, to benefit him. He should not expect anything in return from the people, and even if they thanked him, it should be established in his heart, "We wish not from you, reward or gratitude."

Situations and events will continually present themselves to a person in order to perfect him and purify him from Hawa.

The third remedy: Having a good companion

The third matter which helps one get rid of Hawa is having a good companion (the carrier of musk, perfume).

Ibn 'Abbaas (Radia-Allaahu 'anhuma) used to say: "Do not sit with people of Hawa (desire) because sitting with them causes sickness of the hearts." [Al-Ibaanah al-Kubra by Ibn Battal]

Abu Qilabah said: "Do not sit with people of desire or talk to them, for I do not feel secure from indulging you in their misguidance or raising doubts in what you know." [Siyar A'laam an-Nubalaa' by Imaam adh-Dhahabi]

This means that sitting or accompanying such people may raise doubts in a person and cause one to criticize the Shar'ia, etc., or make one follow his or their desires.

One may pass through a situation in which he tries to be pious and fear Allaah. He does not want to behave in a way that displeases Allaah, but certain people (companions) will put pressure on him and make him follow his desire by saying to him: "This is natural, do not complicate it, it is easy, logical; tomorrow you will regret, etc.," in order to make one think that following the desire is something natural, and quitting the Hawa is a crime.

The most dangerous friends to us are those who are close to us, such as one's husband, spouse, wives, children, family, relatives, and so on.

One could find the whole environment around him making his desire (Hawa) a deity besides Allaah. If he is weak in his faith and Taqwa, then they may pressurize him and affect him.

Life is based on Mujaahadah (struggle, strife), and truthfulness with Allaah will not appear except when oppositon happens. This is the reason we are afflicted (tried)

with such people who cause distraction in our lives. One's reward is a consequence of his patience, of not despairing of Allaah's Mercy.

As much as the Shaytaan strengthens them (those who are around the person), that much Allaah is testing him. He needs to strive and fight hard against their Hawa.

Bear in mind that one is not commanded to change people, but to stay firm in opposing their evil desires and to be patient, and if Allaah sees one's truthfulness, He (Ta'ala) will create an impact for his having strove hard (Jihaad) even after his death!

Invoke and implore Allaah (Ta'ala) while showing humility to Him. Ask Him for beneficial knowledge every day after Fajr prayer, and in your prostration and Salaat.

Ask Him for a good provision. One of the greatest provisions is to have a good companion who helps you in obedience to Allaah. Ask Him to provide you with self-richness (contentment) that prevents you from running after and coveting the worldly enjoyment.

All this will increase your benefit from your knowledge and your life which is your capital investment. Your utmost concern should be to have knowledge, Taqwa and a good companion, and those cannot be attained except by imploring Allaah and showing Him humility.

The fourth remedy: Taking oneself to account and checking one's characters, speech, reaction and weak points, as explained previously.

The fifth remedy: Seeing the impact of opposing the desire:-

1- Broadness in the breast

Whoever opposes his vain desires and follows what Allaah (Ta'ala) has commanded him with, and fears Allaah in all his affairs, Allaah will make his heart be enlightened and broadened. Accordingly, his self will be at rest and he will pursue doing good with joy and enthusiasm. If he is given (a blessing) he shows gratitude, and if he is not he shows patience. With this broadness in the heart, the believer will live a good life, thanking Allaah at times of prosperity and showing patience at times of adversity, and doing what pleases his Lord. Allaah (Ta'ala) says in Surat an-Nahl (16:97)

مُؤْمِنٌ وَهُوَ أَنْتَىٰ أَوْ ذَكَرٍ مِنْ صَالِحًا عَمِلَ مَنْ
مَا بِأَحْسَنِ أَجْرِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ ۖ طَيِّبَةً حَيَاةً فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ
يَعْمَلُونَ كَانُوا

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer- We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward (in the Hereafter) according to the best of what they used to do.”

2- Gathering of the heart (Khushu) during the performance of the acts of worship, i.e. the heart will not be distracted.

3- Attaining honor and dignity with Allaah and with people.

Al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah was asked: “How did you attain this status?” He replied: “By firmness (high resolution) and disobeying the Hawa.” [Rawd al-Muhibbeen]

Al-Fudail ibn ‘Iyad said: “Whoever is overcome with Hawa and following the Hawa, the means of guidance and success will be cut off from him.” [Dhamm al-Hawa]

4- Paradise will be one’s final abode if he opposes his Hawa, and Hell-Fire will be the abode of the one who follows his Hawa. Allaah (Ta’ala) says in Surat an-Naazi’aat (79:37-41) (interpretation of the meaning):

طَغَىٰ مَنْ فَأَمَّا

الدُّنْيَا الْحَيَاةَ وَآثَرَ

الْمَأْوَىٰ هِيَ الْجَحِيمَ فَإِنَّ

الْهَوَىٰ عَنِ النَّفْسِ وَنَهَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَقَامَ خَافَ مَنْ وَأَمَّا

الْمَأْوَىٰ هِيَ الْجَنَّةَ فَإِنَّ

“So as for he who transgressed,
and preferred the life of the world,

**Then indeed, Hell-Fire will be (his) abode.
But as for he who feared standing before his Lord and prevented the soul from
inclination (Hawa),
Then indeed, Paradise will be (his) abode."**