

Vanguards of Khurasan Article Urges Muslims Fulfill Obligations for God's Mercy March 15, 2010

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Terrorism: Vanguards of Khurasan Article Urges Muslims Fulfill Obligations for God's Mercy
On 26 February, a forum participant posted to a jihadist website a statement that contains various links to the 16th issue of the "Vanguards of Khurasan" Magazine. The 68-page issue includes an article by Shaykh Mustafa Abu-al-Yazid entitled: "The Benefits of Seeking God's Mercy and the Way To Attain It." The article urges Muslims to "aspire" to receive God's mercy, but notes that Muslims need to fulfill the obligations and preconditions for this mercy. He uses a Koranic verse to highlight these obligations, which include travel and jihad for the sake of God. Using religious books and Koranic interpretations, he describes as "foolish" those who think they can receive forgiveness from God without having met these conditions. The magazine was produced and disseminated by the Al-Fajr Media Center. OSC filed the table of contents of the 16th issue of the "Vanguards of Khurasan" Magazine as GMP20100227121002.

A translation of the article follows:

" Divine Instruction

" The Benefits of Seeking God's Mercy and the Way To Attain It

" Shaykh Mustafa Abu-al-Yazid

"Thanks be to God, the lord of all creation. Prayers and peace on the last of the prophets and messengers and all of his people and companions. And now:

"We continue on our path with the instructions of our kindly and generous God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, when the almighty says: 'Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah, they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' (Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah, 2:218) We ask God that we are among them.

"We have chosen that the topic of this article is the seeking of God's mercy as the last article was about the fear of God. This is to follow in the tradition of the scholars who in their books write about the link between fear and the aspiration (for God's mercy) because of its importance in the person progressing toward his almighty God.

"God, the most knowledgeable, has linked between the two in more than one location in the Koran, such as when God says: 'Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord, even those who are nearest: they hope for His Mercy and fear His Wrath: for the Wrath of thy Lord is something to take heed of.' (Koranic verse, Al-Isra, 17:57)

"Imam Ibn-al-Qiam, may God have mercy on him, says in the Madarij al-Salikin : 'The heart, when it moves toward God almighty, is like a bird: love is in its head and fear and aspiration in its wings. When the head and wings are correct, then the bird flies well. When the head is cut off, the bird dies, and when it loses its wings it is vulnerable to every hunter and animal. However, the predecessors preferred that fear be stronger in the wing than in the aspiration. At the time of death, the wing of aspiration is stronger than that of fear. This is the way of Abi-Sulayman and

others. He said: 'The heart must be mostly fear. If it is overcome with aspiration (for God's mercy), it will be corrupted.' Others said: 'The best situation is the moderation between aspiration and fear and the dominance of love. Love is the vessel, aspiration the steering, and fear the driver, while God delivers with his mercy and kindness.'

" Explanation of Verse

"For God almighty's words: 'Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah, they have the hope of the mercy of Allah. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful' (Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah, 2:218), Shaykh Al-Sa'di explained the verse by saying: 'These three actions are the key to happiness and the epitome of obedience to God. This is how a human knows winning and losing. As for faith, do not ask about its benefits. How can you ask about something that is the division between the people of happiness and the people of sadness and the people of paradise and the people of hell? If this is with a person, then his good deeds are accepted; if this is absent in him, then nothing will be accepted from him, no action and no giving.'

"As for exile (traveling for God's sake): This separating oneself from what is familiar and loved for the sake of God almighty. The migrant leaves his home, money, people, and relatives to move closer to God and champion his religion. As for jihad: This is exerting effort in fighting the enemy and the complete striving to champion God's religion and suppress the devil's religion. This is the pinnacle of good deeds and has the best reward. This is the main reason for the spread of Islam, the defeat of the idol worshippers, and the security Muslims have over themselves, their wealth and their children.

"He who does these three actions, given their hardship, will complete others that are more difficult. He deserves to aspire to God's mercy, because he has done what warrants mercy. This is evidence that this aspiration is only after doing what leads to happiness. As for aspiration that comes with laziness and not doing the actions, then this is inability and pride. This is a sign of the weakness of this person and his limited mind. This is like someone wanting children without intercourse and grain without seeds or watering, and so on. God's saying: '...they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah...' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah, 2:218), notes that when a man arrives (before God) with actions that he has not carried out, then he should not rely on them, but should seek God's mercy and hope that his actions are accepted, his sins forgiven, and his weaknesses hidden. That is why God said: '...And Allah is oft-forgiving...' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah, 2:218), which means to those who have clearly repented. Oft-forgiving with his mercy covering everything, with his presence and mercy for everyone.' End (of Al-Sa'di explanation).

"Shaykh Al-Uthaymain, may God have mercy on him, writes in explaining this (verse): 'Aspiration is a greediness to receive what is near. It is known that this greediness for what is near is only by doing what brings this closer. They have done what will make this mercy close to them. What they did was faith, exile, and jihad. If they do not aspire to mercy, then who can aspire to it? These are the people of aspiration; aspiration must have its reasons and hoping must also have its reasons. One of the benefits of the verse is that the human must not expect that his actions will be accepted, but should hope for this. However, he hopes in a way that this aspiration thinks well of God almighty. God almighty says: '...they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah...' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah, 2:218), because they are not deceived by their deeds and do not point them at God. They do them while aspiring to God's mercy.' End (of Al-Uthaymain explanation).

" Meaning of Aspiration

"Regarding the meaning of aspiration, the author of the Mukhtasar Manhaj al-Qasidin writes: 'Aspiration is happiness in waiting for what is dear to one. However, what is expected must have a reason. The term aspiration is true for when one is awaiting something the preconditions of which have been met by the person and all that remains is what is beyond his control. This is God almighty's grace in banishing the corrupting hurdles.'

"Ibn al-Qiam, may God have mercy on him, writes: 'Aspiration is a direction that takes hearts to the lands of the beloved God, and the ever after, where it wanders in good. It has been said it is the expectation of the goodness and blessings of God almighty, and the comfort in witnessing his kindness. It has been said that it is confidence in God almighty's grace. The difference between this and hope is that hope comes with laziness and does not put the person on the path of seriousness and effort. Aspiration comes with the exerting of effort and good reliance (on God). The former is like the situation of someone who wishes he had a land to seed and harvest, while the latter is like the situation of someone who prepares a land, ploughs and seeds it, then hopes that the crops will grow. Those with the knowledge have agreed that aspiration only comes with action. Ahmad bin-Asim was asked: What are the signs of aspiration in a human? He replied: When he is surrounded by goodness, he is thankful and asks God that he complete his blessings to him in this world and in the afterlife and grant him forgiveness in the afterlife. In its totality, aspiration is necessary for the person who wants it and knows it. If he forsakes it for an instant, he will be ruined. He is in between a sin that he hopes will be forgiven, a fault that he hopes will be corrected, a good deed that he hopes will be accepted, steadfastness that he hopes to achieve and maintain, nearness to God, and a stature that he hopes to achieve. No one is outside of these issues.' End (of Ibn al-Qiam explanation).

" Expanse of God's Mercy

"The reason that there is aspiration in the heart of the believing person and that this aspiration increases and strengthens is the knowledge of the expanse of God's mercy. He is the most merciful and most generous. His mercy encompasses everything. He is more merciful on the person than a mother is on her son. God almighty says: 'Say: O my servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' (Koranic verse, Al-Zumur, 39:53) God almighty says: '...and the angels celebrate the praises of their Lord, and pray for forgiveness for (all) beings on earth: Behold! Verily Allah is He, the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Shura, 42:5) And God says: '...But verily thy Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind for their wrong doing, and verily thy Lord is (also) strict in punishment.' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Ra'ad, 13:6)

"Abi-Hurayrah, may God be content with him, said: 'The messenger of God, God's prayers and peace on him and his people, said: By God, if you did not sin, God would do away with you and bring forth a people that did sin and would ask for forgiveness, and he would grant it to them.' Narrated by Muslim (Hadith). Abi-Zir, may God be content with him, said: 'The prophet, God's prayers and peace on him, said: God almighty says: He who has a good deed will get 10 times or more its worth, and he who commits sin will get one like it, or be forgiven. He who moves one inch toward me, I will move an arm's length toward them. He who moves an arm's length toward me, I will move more toward him. He who walks toward me, I will run toward them. He who commits a sin, that does not entail disbelieving in me, I will meet him with forgiveness.' Narrated by Muslim (Hadith).

"Umar Ibn-al-Khatab, may God be content with him, said: 'The messenger of God, God's prayers and peace on him, came to a woman who found a boy, so she took him (the boy), drew him to her, and nursed him. The messenger of God, God's prayers and peace on him, said: 'Do you see the woman throwing her son in the fire?' We said: 'No, by God.' He said: 'God is more merciful with his followers than she is with her son.' Agreed upon (Hadith). Abi-Hurayrah, may God be content with him, said: 'The messenger of God, God's prayers and peace on him, said: When God created creation, he wrote in a book, which is up in his throne: My mercy defeats my anger. In the two correct books (of the sayings of the prophet), A'isha, may God be content with her, said that the prophet, God's prayers and peace on him, said: Move, be close, and look forward (to the afterlife), for no one will enter paradise with his deeds. They said: Not even you messenger of God? He said: Not even me, except if God grants me some of his mercy.'

"In the two correct books, there is what Abi-Sa'id al-Khardi, may God be content with him, said that the prophet, God's prayers and peace on him, said: 'On the Day of Judgment, God almighty says: Adam (man). He (the man) will say: I am at your service.' In another version, he adds: 'With the goods in your hands, so he will shout out: God commands you to move out with your decedents into hell. He says: Oh God, and who goes into hell? He (God) says: (One out of) every 1,999. This is when the pregnant woman delivers her child and the child turns grey.' '...thou shalt see mankind as in a drunken riot, yet not drunk: but dreadful will be the Wrath of Allah.' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Hajj, 22:2) This will affect people until their faces are transformed.

"Some narrators added that: they said: 'Messenger of God, where is that man? The messenger, of God, God's prayers and peace on him, said: From Gog and Magog there will be 1,999 and one from you. You will be among the people like a black hair on a white bull, or a white hair on a black bull.'

"In another version: '(the prophet added) or like a point on a donkey's arm. I hope that you are one-quarter of the people in paradise. Hence, we (those listening to the prophet) praised God. He then said: one-third of the people in paradise. So, we praised God. He said: Half of the people in paradise. We praised God.' Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. The words are by Al-Bukhari.

" Errors in Jihad, Seeking God's Forgiveness

"As has been our method with you, we will try to reflect these words onto our reality and our blessed jihadi quest. We say:

"First, those who fight jihad for the sake of God and strive as much as they can to have their jihad be according to God almighty's laws by learning the rules and principles of jihad, adopting them, and referring the incidents and developments that happen to them to the trusted people of knowledge, for them we hope that God accepts their actions and rewards them for whatever mistakes they made if they are unintentional. Regarding the reason for the sending of this (Koranic) verse, it was said that after the battle of Abdullah bin-Jahsh, may God be content with him, in which they killed Ibn-al-Hadrami, the non-believers admonished the Muslims for fighting during the forbidden month. God almighty sent this: 'They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: Fighting therein is a grave (offense); but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its members...' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah, 2:217) The companions, may God be content with them, thought that they had no reward for this incident, because they could have made a mistake and so God sent this verse.

"Imam Al-Tabari, in explaining this verse mentioned that Urwah bin-al-Zubayr, may God be content with both of them, said: God almighty sent down the Koran as an order. God relieved the Muslims about the situation of Abdullah bin-Jahsh and his companions, meaning when they killed Ibn-al-Hadrami. When Abdullah bin-Jahsh and his companions saw their situation after the Koranic verse was sent down, they wanted the reward. They said: Messenger of God, can we seek a raid in which we are rewarded like the mujahidin? So God almighty sent down: 'Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah; they have the hope of the mercy of Allah. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' (Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah, 2:218) Thus, God placed them higher than their aspiration.

"In the Zad al-Mi'ad, Imam Ibn-al-Qiam wrote: 'What is meant is that God almighty ruled justly and fairly between his supporters and enemies. He did not exonerate his supporters from committing the sin of fighting in the forbidden month, but said that this was significant. God says that this act that you condemn them for, even if it is significant, then your non-belief in God, your renunciation of him, your displacement of Muslims, the polytheism you are in, and the sedition that you have caused is graver to God than them fighting during the forbidden month. Most of the predecessors have interpreted the sedition here as polytheism, such as when God almighty says: 'And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression...' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah, 2:193) They (the non-believers) are more deserving of condemnation and punishment, especially if God's supporters were confused in their fighting or somewhat lacking in a way that God can forgive because of the monotheism, obedience, and exile with the messenger that they went through. They had chosen what is with God.' End (of Ibn-al-Qiam explanation).

" Can Abandoner of Jihad Seek God's Mercy?

"Second, he who claims that he aspires for God's mercy while he abandons jihad for the sake of God, something that is an obligation for Muslims in our current times, must rethink himself. He must review the conditions and the three acts that God almighty mentioned in this Koranic instruction in order seek his mercy. One of them is jihad for the sake of God. Our dear scholars showed that aspiration without action and reasons is inability, false hope, pride, and foolishness. You must not fool yourselves or be fooled by your desires, or by the demonic or human devils who say that today's jihad is neither possible nor within the ability (of Muslims). The open arenas of jihad and the blessed victories by the mujahidin, their spite against the enemies of God, and their foiling of their plans and strategies bear witness to the falsity of this trick and this claim.

"Third, the mujahidin must renew their intentions for their jihad to continue to be purely for the sake of God and his contentment and for the word of God to be supreme. The verse about aspiration is like the other verses that deal with the accepted jihad that must be for the sake of God, not a person, a tribe, or a nation, not for the world, wealth, or for power or a ruler. God almighty says: '...whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner.' (Partial Koranic verse, Al-Kahf, 18:110)

"Abu-Hurairah, may God be content with him, said: 'A man said: Oh messenger of God, a man wants to wage jihad for the sake of God seeking something material from life. The prophet, God's prayers and peace on him, said: There is no reward for him.' Narrated by Abu-Dawud and Al-Albani, who said that it is a correct saying of the prophet. Abu-Musa, may God be content with him, said: 'An Arab said to the prophet, God's prayers and peace on him: A man fights for the bounty, (another) man fights to be remembered, and (another) fights for his stature. Which one is for the sake of God? He (the prophet) said: He who fights for the word of God to be

supreme is (fighting) for the sake of God.' Narrated by Al-Bukhari (Hadith). Mu'az bin-Jabal, may God be content with him, said that the messenger of God, prayers and peace on him, said: 'There are two (types) of raids; he who seeks the face of God, respects the imam (leader), spends kindly (for the sake of God), is good to his partners, and avoids sin, then all of his time both asleep and awake is rewarded. As for he who raids for pride, boasting, reputation, disobeys the imam and causes corruption on the earth, he will return with nothing.' Narrated by Abu-Dawud and Al-Albani, who said it is an acceptable saying (Hadith).

"Fourth, the mujahidin must be good in their aspiration and think well of God almighty at all times of their jihad, especially during times of hardship, calamities, and misery. They must know that everything they are facing is destined by God, is with his permission and knowledge, and is according to his wisdom. Their reward will be good as long as they are righteous and faithful to the commands of God almighty. Abu-Hurairah, may God be content with him, said that the messenger of God, God's prayers and peace on him, said: 'God almighty says: I am with my subjects when they think of me. I am with them if they mention me; if they mention me within themselves, I do the same within myself; if they mention me out loud, I mention them loudly with more good.' Agreed upon (Hadith). They (the mujahidin) must not be like those who think ill of God almighty and think like those of pre-Islamic ignorance that he (God) does not champion his religion and his prophet, God's prayers and peace on him. This is as God almighty says: 'After (the excitement) of the distress, He sent down calm on a band of you overcome with slumber, while another band was stirred to anxiety by their own feelings, and moved by wrong suspicions of Allah, suspicions caused by ignorance. They said: "What affair is this of ours?" Say thou: "Indeed, this affair is wholly Allah's." They hide in their minds what they dare not reveal to thee. They say (to themselves): "If we had had anything to do with this affair, we should not have been in the slaughter here." Say: "Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death"; but (all this was) that Allah might test what is in your breasts and purge what is in your hearts. For Allah knoweth well the secrets of your hearts.' (Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154)

"In the Zad al-Mi'ad, Imam Ibn-al-Qiam wrote: 'This inappropriate ill-thinking about God has been explained such that he does not champion his messenger and that his (the prophet's) call will weaken and God is leading him to be killed. The 'suspicions' were explained that what happened to them was not according to God's destiny or fate and had nothing to do with him. This rejection of the wisdom was explained as a rejection that the messenger's call would be completed and all of his religion revealed. This is the ill-thinking that the hypocrites and polytheists had for God almighty. This was the ill-thinking and the thoughts of pre-Islamic ignorance attributed to the people of ignorance. This was wrong because it thought in a way that was inappropriate for God's good names and his supreme attributes, which are free of any lacking or weaknesses, as well as his wisdom, grace, and divinity, his true promise that is always fulfilled, and his previous words to his messengers that he will always champion them and never let them down, as well as to his soldiers that they will be triumphant. He who thinks that God will not champion his messenger, not fulfill his call, not support him and his party, make them supreme and victorious over their enemies, and not champion his religion and book is choosing non-belief over monotheism and falsity over the truth and (choosing) that the truth and monotheism will be defeated, never to rise again. They have thought ill of God. This is counter to what God deserves with his wisdom, majesty, and attributes. His grace, glory, wisdom, and divinity are above them and will not allow his party and soldiers to be humiliated or that the final victory be to his polytheistic enemies. Those who believe this do not know him, nor do they know his names, his attributes, and his perfection.' End (of Ibn-al-Qiam explanation).

"Shaykh Al-Sa'adi in his explanation (of the verse) wrote: 'After (the excitement) of the distress... (partial Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154)' that befell you, '...He sent down calm on a band of you overcome with slumber...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154) There is no doubt that this is mercy from God, a blessing and a steadying of their hearts, and an increase in confidence. This is because a person who is afraid does not fall asleep because of the fear in his heart. When the fear is gone from the heart, then he is able to fall asleep. This group that blessed with slumber are the believers who have no concern except the establishing of God's religion and his contentment and that of his messenger, as well as the interests of their Muslim brethren. As for the other group, those who '...was stirred to anxiety by their own feelings...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154), they have no other concerns because of their hypocrisy and the weakness of their faith. That is why they did not succumb to the slumber that befell others. '...They said: "What affair is this of ours?"...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154) This is a condemning question, meaning 'we have no interests in this matter; the fighting and the victory.' They thus thought ill of their God, his religion, and his prophet. They believed that God will not fulfill the call of his messenger and that the defeat will be decisive and final against God's religion. In his answer, God said: '...Say thou: "Indeed, this affair is wholly Allah's"...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154) This includes both the matters of fate and religion. All matters are according to God's will and fate. The reward of victory and supremacy is to his supporters and those who obey him, even if what happened to them occurred.' End (of Al-Sa'adi explanation).

"The author of Al-Zilal writes about the verse: 'As for the other group, they have a weak faith and have been stirred themselves into anxiety. They have not renounced the thoughts of pre-Islamic ignorance and have not given themselves fully to God and not entirely surrendered to his will. Their hearts have not been assured that what has befallen them is a test (from God) and not God forsaking his supporters for his enemies. It is not a ruling by God almighty in favor of a final victory by non-belief, evil, and falsity. '...while another band was stirred to anxiety by their own feelings, moved by wrong suspicions of Allah, suspicions due to ignorance. They said: "What affair is this of ours?"...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154) This belief teaches its followers, as is known, that they have no say in anything, they are all to God. When they go out for jihad in his sake, they go out for him, move for him, and fight for him, without there being any other goal for themselves in this jihad. They are surrendering themselves to his power and accept what this destiny grants them, whatever this fate is. God responded to their words '...They said: "What affair is this of ours?"...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154) and said: '...Say thou: "Indeed, this affair is wholly Allah's"...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-Imran, 3:154) No one else has the power, not them, and not anyone else. The issue of this religion and the jihad to establish it and set its system on the earth and guide the hearts to it is all in the hands of God. Humans have no power in this, except to do their duty and fulfill their obligations. It is then up to God.

"Fifth, the mujahidin, for the sake of God, must give all they can, do all that is in their power, and be skilled in their tasks. They must be very keen to not be absentminded and be lacking in their actions. However, they must rely on God and trust him. It is after this that they can hope that God almighty accepts their actions, grant them victory and supremacy, and raises the word of God almighty. As we have seen from the words of the scholars, the aspiration can only come after the possible conditions are met.

"The author of the Manhaj al-Qasidin gives an example: 'The aspirations of the person are compared to the hopes of the farmer. Anyone who seeks good land and plants good, unspoiled seeds, then waters it when needed, clears the land of thorns and weeds and other things that ruin crops, then sits and waits for God almighty to prevent lightning and harmful parasites until the crops are grown; this is what is called aspiration. As for someone who plants seeds in a harsh

soil where there is no water, does not look after it, and then sits hoping, then this is called foolish waiting and pride, not aspiration. If the person plants the seeds of faith, waters them with obedience, clears the heart of the thorns of bad behavior and waits for God almighty to steady him on this until death and a good ending that leads to forgiveness, then this waiting is good aspiration that leads to a persistence on obedience and fulfilling the duties of faith until death. Cutting off the seeds of faith from the waters of obedience, or leaving the heart filled with bad behavior, along with keenness on the pleasures of life while awaiting forgiveness is foolishness and pride, God almighty says: 'After them succeeded an (evil) generation: They inherited the Book, but they chose (for themselves) the vanities of this world, saying (for excuse): "(Everything) will be forgiven us"...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-'Araf, 7:169) God disliked those who say: '...Even if I am brought back to my Lord, I shall surely find (there) something better in exchange...' (partial Koranic verse, Al-Kahf, 18:36)

"May God protect us from this and make us among those who aspire for his forgiveness while fulfilling the obligations that lead to it.

"Our final prayer is thanks be to God, the lord of all creation."