

# CULTIVATING THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION IN FACING HUMAN BARBARISM: THE SYRIAN CASE AS A MODEL

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## Cultivating The Religious Dimension in Facing Human Barbarism: The Syrian Case As A Model

### Abstract

The study commenced by articulating the importance of the religious dimension in confronting human barbarism inflicted on the Syrian populace. The Syrian case was chosen as a model due to its prominence on the international stage, surpassing the Palestinian case in terms of barbarism. This study defined human barbarism and its manifestations, including murder, rape, displacement, and deprivation of human rights. It delved into the historical aspects of events in Syria, elucidating the geography, borders, and historical progression of the Syrian tragedy, starting from French colonization and the historical links between it and the Assad family (referred to as the “beast family”). The research defined the concepts of good and evil, exposed the abhorrent sectarianism of barbarism within the savage Assad family, and highlighted the importance of the religious dimension in standing against this barbarism. It emphasized the necessity of appreciating divine wisdom, having faith in the absolute justice of God in holding the perpetrators accountable and supporting the oppressed, and in diminishing the value of worldly life while understanding the importance of attachment to the hereafter.

**Keywords:** Human Barbarism, Syrian Case, Divine Justice, Divine Wisdom, Bashar al-Assad, Hafez al-Assad, Tyranny, religious dimension

## İnsan Barbarlığı Karşısında Dini Boyutu Geliştirmek: Bir Model Olarak Suriye Örneği

### Öz

Çalışma, Suriye halkına uygulanan barbarlıkla yüzleşmede dini boyutun önemini dile getirmektedir. Suriye vakası, barbarlık açısından Filistin vakasını geride bırakarak uluslararası sahnede öne çıkması nedeniyle model olarak seçilmiştir. Çalışma ayrıca insan barbarlığını ve cinayet, tecavüz, yerinden edilme ve insan haklarından mahrum bırakılma gibi tezahürlerini de tanımlamıştır. Suriye’deki olayların tarihsel boyutlarını inceleyen araştırma, Fransız sömürgeciliğinden başlayarak Suriye trajedisinin coğrafyasını, sınırlarını ve tarihsel seyrini ve “canavar aile” olarak adlandırılan Esad ailesi ile arasındaki tarihsel bağları ortaya koymuştur. Araştırma, iyi ve kötü kavramlarını tanımlamış, vahşi Esad ailesi içindeki barbarlığın iğrenç mezhepçiliğini ortaya koymuştur. Araştırma ilahi hikmeti takdir etmenin, Tanrı’nın mutlak adaletine inanmanın ve suçluları sorumlu tutmanın gerekliliğini vurgulamakta ayrıca, ezilenleri desteklemenin önemini ve dünyevi yaşamın değerini azaltmanın yanı sıra ahirete olan bağlılığın önemini anlamamız gerektiğini de belirtmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler :** İnsan Vahşeti, Suriye Sorunu, İlahi Adalet, İlahi Hikmet.



## introduction

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and the best prayers and complete peace be upon our Master Muhammad and his family and companions. Allah has created man and honored him, subjected many things in this universe for him, and instilled in him tendencies for both good and evil. This distinguished him from other creatures. Allah chose not to leave man to his own intellect and instincts; He revealed books and sent messengers to guide him on the path of good and evil. Perhaps the most important thing Allah asks of man is to be His servant And Allah the Great is truthful in saying (وما خلقت الجن والانس إلا ليعبدون (56) } (Adh-Dhariyat: 523), which entails treating others as equals in humanity and not being arrogant or oppressive.

However, often due to innate tendencies, man ignores these divine teachings. We find this in the brutal Assad regime, where humanity is abandoned, and people become predatory towards their own kind. Allah has made religion a basis for standing against the brutality that man exercises against his fellow man, and opposing it is a form of defending the truth against falsehood, as many verses and Hadiths make this act a martyrdom for the sake of Allah and the elevation of the word of truth.

Based on the above, this study aims to explore the forms of brutality inflicted on Syrians and the necessity of relying on religious dimensions to counter it. The crux of the study lies in answering the main question: Is what happened in Syria a divine punishment or a trial? Answering this requires delving into the details of the Syrian reality, revealing the record and behavior of the regime, and how religious orientation can be utilized in standing against brutality.

The Syrian issue was chosen because it surpasses all other issues. The sectarian aggression by Iran along with the Assad regime and with the support of Russian weapons has surpassed the Zionist aggression on the Palestinian people. The main factor in choosing this issue is to reveal the true image of the brutal Assad regime, especially since there is a desire to reintroduce it to the international scene.

The primary purpose of the study is to leverage Islamic religious development for the Syrian people - and for everyone in this situation - in resisting the enemy and converting pain, injustice, and displacement into energy for resistance and awakening spirits. It's crucial to seek understanding of divine wisdom and the purposes of Islamic law in what is happening, self-accountability, and finding areas of shortcomings, especially in abandoning the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil and supporting just causes.

The study aims to find religious solutions to mitigate the impact of these crises, especially the Syrian and Palestinian issues, as well as the issues in Kashmir, Burma, and Turkistan. The intention is not just to absorb the crisis, which is important, but to go beyond that to arm oneself with solutions against human brutality. It is no secret that faith in Allah and its implications create solutions and alternatives.

The scope of the study focuses on the Syrian issue, from an unbiased perspective, devoid of politicizing the subject. By non-politicizing, I mean that the topic is not politically motivated by personal interests of the researcher, but it is a religious and human duty to make the world face its ethical obligation to lift the injustice off the Syrian people and all oppressed peoples, regardless of their religious beliefs.

As for the methodology, the nature of the study required the use of the historical approach to dig into roots and link ideas, and reliance was placed on the descriptive method that accompanied the study to clarify the picture that the Syrians have lived since the family of the beast took power in Syria.

I found no previous study that addressed this topic.

The study is divided into two research topics, and under each topic are several demands. To achieve the above, sources varied between old and new, religious, and political, and I included several links to see the real, realistic picture of pain, screaming, crying, hunger, poverty, injustice, and tyranny through websites, as the actual image reveals the truth more than written words.

## First Section: 1. The Historical Aspect and Images of Brutality

### First Subsection: 1.1 The Historical Aspect

Syria is often referred to as the Levant (Al-Sham), and the same is said about Damascus. The Levant includes Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan. Yaqut al-Hamawi describes the boundaries and cities of the Levant as follows: “Its borders extend from the Euphrates to Al-Arish, adjacent to Egyptian territories. Its width extends from Jabal Tayy to the Mediterranean Sea.”<sup>1</sup> He mentions major cities like Manbij<sup>2</sup>, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Ma’arrat al-Numan, among others.

Currently, it is bordered by Iraq to the east, the Mediterranean Sea and Egypt to the west, Turkey to the north, and Egypt and Saudi Arabia to the south.

Syria is one of the largest countries in the Levant, bordered by Iraq to the east, Turkey to the north, the Mediterranean Sea and Lebanon to the west, and a part of Palestine extending 70 km, and Jordan to the south. Syria has an area of 185,000 square kilometers. Its major cities are Damascus, the capital, followed by Aleppo, the economic capital, then Homs and Hama.

Regarding the population in Syria, the “Jusoor for Studies” institute conducted a study on the population distribution in Syria as of March 2021. The study estimates the total population to be 26,285,000, but only 16,475,000 remained in Syria as of early 2021; 8,845,000 have left Syria over the past decade, and 1,065,000 have been killed or disappeared<sup>3</sup>.

Syria, like the rest of the Levant, was under Ottoman control until 1918. Then the Arabs were surprised by a Western conspiracy where France occupied Syria and Lebanon in 1920, as did Britain with Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine, according to the Sykes–Picot Agreement. French occupation lasted from 1920 to 1949.

After that came the Ba’ath Arab Socialist Party founded by two men: a Nusayri (Alawite) from Alexandretta named Zaki al-Arsuzi, and an Orthodox Christian named Michel Aflaq<sup>4</sup>.

It is known that there is a friendly relationship between the Alawite sect in Syria and France. France changed the name from Nusayri to Alawite to improve their image. The first to use the term Alawites in Syrian history was Mohammed Amin Ghaleb al-Tawil in his book “History of the Alawites”<sup>5</sup>.

A French representative at the UN produced a document addressing the Syrian representative Bashar al-Jaafari, saying that it was your ancestors who asked us to stay in Syria, so do not accuse us of occupation. The document, No. 3547 dated June 15, 1936, is kept in French archives. It expresses the Alawites’ desire for France not to leave Syria. The document briefly states, ‘Prime Minister of France on the occasion of ongoing negotiations between France and Syria, we, the leaders and dignitaries of the Alawite community in Syria, would like to draw your and your party’s attention to the following points: The Alawite people, who have maintained their independence year after year... are a people who differ in their religious beliefs, customs, and history from the Sunni Muslim people... The Alawite people refuse to join Muslim Syria, because Islam is considered the official religion of the state... Therefore, we draw your attention to the terrifying and horrifying fate that awaits the Alawites if they are forced to join Syria when it becomes free from the mandate... Absolute independence means the control of some Muslim families... The spirit of hatred and fanaticism that has rooted itself in the hearts of Arab Muslims towards everything that is non-Muslim is a spirit that is constantly nourished by Islam. There is no hope for a change in the situation. Therefore, the minorities in Syria, in the case of the abolition of the mandate, are exposed to the danger of death and annihilation... And today we observe how the Muslim citizens of Damascus are forcing the Jews living among them to sign a document pledging not to

1 And it is my city.

2 Shahab al-Din Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Dictionary of Countries* (Beirut, Dar Sader Publishing, 2nd ed., 1995), 3/312.

3 The study relied on a set of official references issued by accredited bodies, in addition to displacement data from international and local institutions. As for the data on refugees and residents outside Syria post-2011, it is data from the United Nations and international organizations, and official data from the countries where Syrians reside, and at least one local source in each country. The study was prepared at the center by economic researcher Khaled Turkawi and researcher Abdul Wahab Assi, in collaboration with “Informagen” company specialized in data collection and analysis, and the article was published in Enab Baladi, dated 21/3/2021.

4 See: Michel Sora, *Syria the Savage State*, translation by Amal Sara, Mark Byalo, introduction by Burhan Ghalioun, Gil Kibel, the Arab Network for Research and Publishing. The writer referred to Sami Al-Jundi’s book titled “Al-Baath” (Beirut: Dar Al-Nahar, 1969) pp 27-28.

5 See: Al-Munsif bin Abdul Jalil, *The Marginal Sect in Islam* (Tunisia: University Publishing Center 2001), 195.

send food supplies to their afflicted Jewish brothers in Palestine.’

Signed: Aziz Agha Al-Hawwash, Muhammad Bek Junaid, Suleiman Al-Marshad, Mahmoud Agha Jdeed, Suleiman Al-Assad, Muhammad Suleiman Al-Ahmad.’ Suleiman Al-Assad is the grandfather of Bashar Al-Assad and is one of those who signed this document. Let’s look at the good relationship between them and the Jews from ancient times <sup>6</sup>.

Sulaiman Al-Assad mentioned in the document is the father of Hafez Al-Assad and the grandfather of Bashar Al-Assad. It is known among Syrians that this family was not originally named Al-Assad but rather Al-Wahsh. Firas Rifaat Al-Assad, a cousin of Bashar Al-Assad, posted a picture<sup>7</sup> of his grandfather under the name Al-Wahsh and not Al-Assad, and under the Nusayri sect, not the Alawite.



Content of the Above Document

Arab Syrian Republic	Height:	Tall
Governorate of Jabal Al-Alawites	Hair:	Gray
Name and Fame: Ali Al-Wahsh	Eyes:	Honey-colored
Nationality: Syrian	Nose:	Large
Sect: Nusayri	Skin:	Wheat-colored
Occupation: Farmer	ID Card No:	7/62
Residence: Jableh	Village of	Al-Qardaha
Family Status: Married to Sada Filfil and Naaesa Shaaweesh	Registry No:	83
Issued on: 1945		

## Second Subsection: 1.2 Defining Concepts of the Title

The title of the study reads as “Developing the Religious Dimension in Confronting Human Brutality: The Syrian Case as a Model.” We have already talked about the historical aspect of Syria; what remains is defining the concept of brutality and the concept of religious development.

The term “brutality” refers to human behavior similar to that of predatory animals, and we began with brutality before development, in accordance with the historical context. Brutality came first, followed by Islamic religious development to resist this brutality. The individual is described as brutal because their behavior deviates from that of a normal, upright human being. This understanding aligns with the Arabic linguistic sources for the root word (وَحَشٌ) which is the antonym of (أَنْسٌ). Ibn Faris states: “The root (وحش) indicates the opposite of (إنس), and a land described as (موحشة) is desolate.”<sup>8</sup> And it is said that the most desolate of a home is its inhabitants, meaning it is desolate, barren,

<sup>6</sup> See: Orient, “Orient Television. Access 01 February 2024

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/FirasAl Assad66> or <https://www.facebook.com/syriancommunityinturkey/photos/a.785339628178882/2579753595404134/?type=3>

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad bin Fares bin Zakariya al-Qazwini, *Dictionary of Language Metrics*, edited by Abd al-Salam Muhammad Harun (Damascus, Dar al-Fikr, 1399- 1979) 1/91.

and empty<sup>9</sup>. In religious terms, the term “wild beasts” in the Qur’anic verse {وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ (5)} (Al-Takwir: 5) refers to untamed animals that are not accustomed to humans<sup>10</sup>.

Development refers to the increase in something and is derived from the verb (نمى) which means to grow or increase<sup>11</sup>. The aim here is for the individual to grow in the religious, doctrinal aspects to be able to confront human brutality.

The term “religious” refers to any religion that stands up for the oppressed against the oppressor, even if its texts have been distorted, such as Judaism and Christianity. Employing religion to stand against oppression is a requirement for everyone to prevent human brutality. There is no religion on the face of the Earth that has given a higher global status to human rights than Islam. Therefore, the title refers to all religions, but the geographical reality for Syrians as a Muslim majority has made them more subject to oppression than Jews and Christians. Thus, the religion referred to in this research is Islam.

The word “religion” (دين) essentially refers to submission and obedience. This is evident in Ibn Faris’ work “Maqayis al-Lughah,” where he seeks to define the root of the word, saying about the root (دَيْن): “The root has one origin to which all its branches refer, and it is a type of submission and humiliation. Religion (دين) is obedience; it is said that he (دان له يدين ديناً) accompanied, submitted, and obeyed him. And a people are described as (دُيِّنَ), meaning obedient and submissive.”<sup>12</sup>

### Third Subsection: 1.3 Forms of Human Brutality

First: Hafez Al-Wahsh and Brutality

The brutality began with Hafez the Beast, who joined the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party. Images of savagery started with Hafez al-Assad, who appointed his relatives in the army and security to assume high positions<sup>13</sup>.

The party played a major role in executing plans hostile to the nation. The beginnings of Hafez’s brutality were marked by his ability to form a group around him, primarily composed of members from his sect, which occupied high sovereign positions, followed by sons of other sects present in Syria, setting them against the Sunnis. The third group were businessmen and others with vested interests<sup>14</sup>. His betrayal of the nation by dealing with the Zionist entity, which he did in June 1967 when he was the Minister of Defense, was exemplified when he announced, ‘Statement No. 66’, declaring the fall of the Golan Heights 21 hours before the actual entry of the Jewish forces. This cannot cover up the manifestations of corruption, such as the spread of bribery, mismanagement of public funds, election rigging, intimidation of people, fighting religiosity, and creating an aura around him, elevating him to near worship. In fact, it can be said that he reached a stage of worship<sup>15</sup>, as evidenced by slogans supporting him in the late 1990s like ‘Oh, God! It is time to give your place to Hafez’ or ‘No one left for us but you’, which resemble the famous religious line ‘there is no god but God’<sup>16</sup>.

**Tadmur Prison Massacre, June 27, 1980<sup>17</sup>:** After the security campaign against the Syrian people intensified and security interfered in everything, especially in religious matters, an opposition movement in Syria emerged against the rule of Hafez Al-Wahsh in many places in Syria, particularly in Hama. Rifaat Al-Wahsh, Hafez Al-Wahsh’s brot-

9 Ahmed Reza, *Language Text Dictionary* (Beirut, Dar Maktabat al-Hayat Publishing, Beirut, 1380) 5/719.

10 Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashour, *Liberation and Enlightenment*, 30/143.

11 See: Ali bin Ismail bin Said al-Mursi, *Al-Muhkam and Al-Muheet Al-Azam*, edited by Abdul Hamid Hindawi (Beirut, Dar al-Kitab al-Ilmi, 1421- 2000), article on the letter Nun, Meem, and Ya, 10/508.

12 Ibn Fares, *Dictionary of Language Metrics*, article on religion, 2/320, and also see Muhammad Abdullah Draz, *Religion* (Cairo: Henadi Publishing 2012), 30-32. For more clarification on the concept of religion and the linguistic meanings that the word may imply, see Hasan Al-Khattaf, *Religion and Religiosity from Integration to Intersection*, Adiyaman University Magazine / Turkey, December 2020.

13 See: Seema Kassab, “The Resiliency of Authoritarianism: The Assad Regime of Syria,” *Proceedings of the National Conference on Undergraduate Research* (NCUR) 2015, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA, April 16-18, 2015. 1-2.

14 See: Bilal Salaymeh, “Syria Under al-Assad Rule: A Case of Neopatrimonial Regime.” 148, 151.

15 See: Bilal Salaymeh, “Syria Under al-Assad Rule: A Case of Neopatrimonial Regime.” 148, 151.

16 See: Eylaf Bader Eddin, “Al-Abad: On the Ongoing,” *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 15/4 (2022)

17 Tadmur Prison is named after the city of Tadmur, a city located in the Syrian Tadmur desert. The prison was built in a panopticon system, a type of prison designed in a specific way that allows guards to see all prisoners inside the cells. The word originates from Panoptes, a mythical Greek giant with 100 eyes. Former prisoners told Amnesty International that the prison had seven yards with between 40 to 50 dormitories or collective cells, as well as 39 smaller cells, in addition to 19 underground cells for solitary confinement. All dormitories (sleeping areas) have windows covered with barbed wire at the top, allowing guards to closely monitor prisoners. See: BBC, “British Broadcasting Channel”, Access 01 February 2024.



her, vowed to take revenge. On June 27, 1980, orders were issued by Major Muein Nasif, Rifaat Al-Wahsh's deputy and son-in-law, to units of the Defense Companies to go to Tadmur and kill all imprisoned Muslim Brotherhood members. About 550 prisoners from the Muslim Brotherhood were brutally shot dead in their cells<sup>18</sup>. Some estimated their number at 500, and since then, membership in the Muslim Brotherhood became a crime punishable by death. A picture of Tadmur Prison is shown<sup>19</sup>.



**Hama Massacres, February 28, 1982:** Hama is located in central Syria and is the fourth-largest city in terms of population, with all its inhabitants being Sunnis, and some Alawites (Nusayris) living on its outskirts<sup>[20]</sup>. The Washington Post published some paragraphs from a recorded audio testimony of one of the survivors of the Hama massacre committed in April 1981 in its issue dated June 25, 1981. It stated that helicopters landed in the nearby cemetery, and soldiers emerged who closed off the entrances to the Al-Masharqiyah neighborhood. They began attacking homes and, upon gathering 15 or 20 men, would execute them and move on to others. This witness heard the voice of his married brother in the street screaming: “They left no man or child in the neighborhood!” He descended a few steps and collided with a pile of corpses, then another pile, then another. There were ten or fifteen such piles, each with 15 or 20 or 30 bodies. Their faces were completely disfigured; they were shooting at face level, as he saw brain matter on the ground and walls. Their heads were completely pulverized! They were of all ages. The exact number of those killed by them is unknown due to the absolute secrecy; some estimate 12,000, some 25,000<sup>[21]</sup>, Amnesty International estimated the number of dead to be between 10,000 and 25,000. The main reason for the uncertainty in these figures is attributed to the absence of journalists to report the events<sup>[22]</sup>. but the people of Hama estimate around 40,000 dead.

And it was not limited to Hama and the Tadmur prison massacre; many other regions also received a share of these massacres<sup>[23]</sup>.

## Second: Bashar Al-Wahsh and Brutality

After Bashar Al-Wahsh took office on June 17, 2000, he followed in his father's footsteps. The situation worsened, and security interventions became more violent due to his lack of experience and weak personality.

18 See: Nicolaos Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Sectarian, Regional, and Tribal Politics 1961-1995* (Cairo: Madbouli Library 1995) p. 301. One of the Alawite participants in this massacre said: “We took planes towards Tadmur, arrived around six-thirty in the morning on the same day. There, we landed and were divided into two groups, an assault group and another stayed at the airport... The total number that moved to the prison was about sixty... and about 550 of the Muslim Brotherhood were killed in the prison... [The operation] took about half an hour.”

19 For those who did not die in Tadmur prison, they suffer torture unprecedented in human history. Abdullah Omar, one of the prisoners, says: “Among the atrocities you will face... one of the torturers explained to his colleague how the captain ‘Hamad’—one of the most brutal investigators—picked up a brick with his hands, crushed the prisoner’s testicles with it, and killed him in an instant.”

20 See: Kathrin Nina Wiedl, “The Hama Massacre - reasons, supporters of the rebellion, consequences,” Seminar paper. 8-9.

21 See: Nicolaos Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Sectarian, Regional, and Tribal Politics*, 133, 161.

22 See: Kathrin Nina Wiedl, “The Hama Massacre - reasons, supporters of the rebellion, consequences”, *Ben-Gurion University of the Negev MA Program for Middle East Studies Course: Israel and Arabs – Between War and Peace Spring Term 2006*, Seminar paper. 8-9.

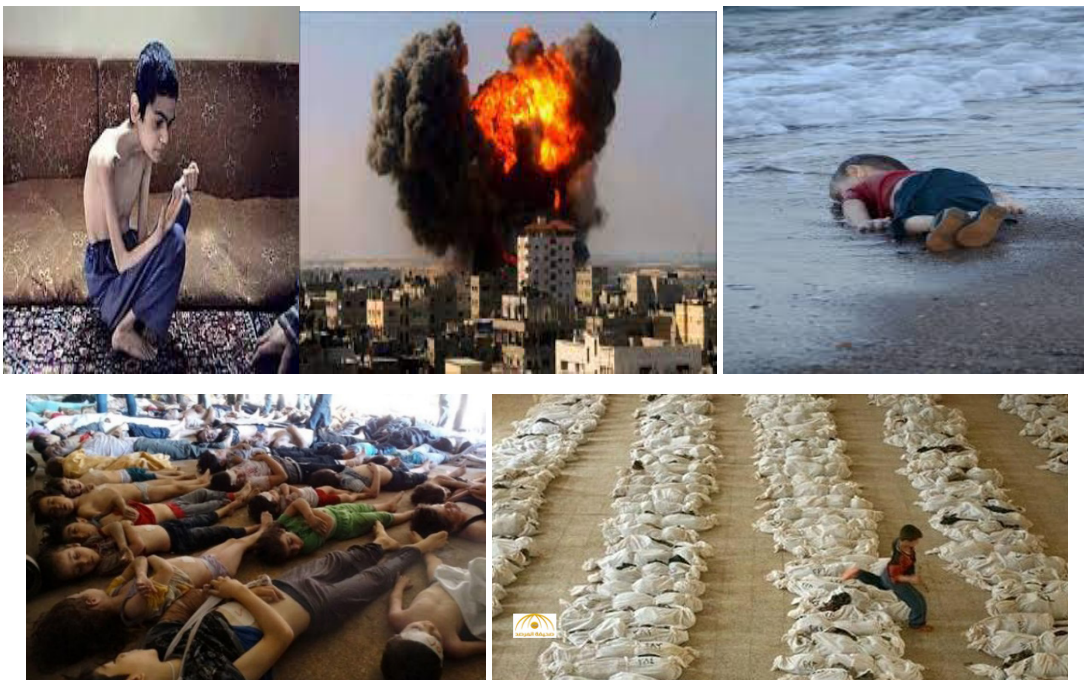
23 In Aleppo in August 1980, 80 people were shot in front of their buildings. See: Nicolaos Van Dam, p. 133. Idlib province also had its share of this crime, as they entered the city of Jisr al-Shughur and killed more than two hundred of its sons, and arrested many of them.

## The Syrian Revolution and the Regime's Repression in Syria:

Discussing the Syrian Revolution would require multiple volumes, so we will only briefly touch upon it here. The Syrian Revolution began on March 15, 2011, with just demands for dignity, freedom, rights, and a stand against corruption. It initially erupted in the city of Daraa, inspired by the Arab Spring that began in Tunisia. Instead of listening to these demands, the regime met them with killing, turning the situation into a widespread popular revolution. To distort the real demands of the Syrian people, the regime in Syria resorted to various tactics to give it an Islamic color, aiming to mobilize the Alawite sect to which it belongs, as well as other minorities like the Druze, Ismailis, and Christians. He released some extremists from his prisons and left weapons at certain centers. These individuals then took the weapons, proving to the world that the Syrian revolution was a terrorist revolution represented by ISIS, not popular demands. This gave him support from other countries that wanted him to remain in power<sup>[24]</sup>.

Many countries, primarily Safavid Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon<sup>25</sup>, and Russia, supported the Syrian regime. The regime used all kinds of weapons, including chemical ones, destroyed cities, mosques, shops, and markets, and killed and displaced millions. Tens of thousands of men and women are imprisoned or have been killed<sup>26</sup>.

It is impossible to cover everything that the brutal regime has done, from starvation to chemical weapons to displacement and death at sea. Some images can somewhat express what has happened.



One of the most brutal aspects is the leak of 55,000 photos by “Caesar,” a pseudonym for a former lieutenant photographer in the Syrian military police who defected in 2013, carrying with him 55,000 pictures that show torture and violations in Syrian prisons. He collaborated with another colleague, who called himself “Sami,” out of fear of the regime’s retribution<sup>27</sup>.

This Picture of Our Martyred Colleague Dr. Mohammed Nadaaf: He was a professor at the Faculty of Sharia at Damascus University. His eyes were gouged out.

The Syrian security apparatus, in all its formations, is considered the most lethal force against the Syrian people,

24 See: Seema Kassab, “The Resiliency of Authoritarianism: The Assad Regime of Syria,” *Proceedings of the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)* 2015, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA, April 16-18, 2015. 1-2.

25 Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah in Lebanon, revealed in an interview how he opposed the Syrian revolution from the beginning by coordinating with Iran and Russia. YouTube, “Al Mayadeen Programs”, Access 01 February 2024.

26 There are many sources for this, including articles, books, pictures, and websites. Among them is these YouTube videos [https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=xkqu\\_mWL2II](https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=xkqu_mWL2II)

<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=IZMCxGKEchU>

<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=yqPqga4CKh0>

27 Published on June 17, 2020, on Al Arabiya, “Alarbiya Channel Net”. Access 20 February 2024.

and Bashar inherited these agencies from his father, Hafez<sup>[28]</sup>.



### Some Stories from Syrian Prisons after the 2011 Revolution:

The reports about the crimes committed in Syrian prisons<sup>29</sup> are many, and we will take some of the narratives that describe what happened. For example, the torture of children: “One of them stepped on the child’s head, securing it firmly between his feet. Another person came carrying all the obscenities of the world, and he dropped two burning charcoal pieces from a hookah onto the child’s back. The child screamed a scream that tore the veil of silence, shouting until I thought the sky would fall on us. The child’s flesh started to burn, emitting that sizzling sound that rises when meat is grilled. The father screamed to the heavens... The child defecated and urinated several times while convulsing... then he was kicked several times in the head with military boots until his features were covered in blood... As soon as they closed the door, the father crawled to his child, crying and sobbing, he took his feet and started kissing them, saying: ‘Kanaan, my blood, my part, my heart, respond to me, Kanaan. They burned you, my son, I wish I had died before this.’<sup>30</sup>”

### Displacement and Migration:

More than half of Syria’s population has been displaced worldwide. We don’t want to discuss the conditions of Syrians abroad, many of whom suffer, especially under the influence of Hezbollah militias in Lebanon. Let’s briefly discuss the displaced within Syria, specifically in the opposition-held northern Syria.

About five million people live in this region, half of whom are displaced and live in tents. These tents do not protect them from the cold of winter or the heat of summer, and they are frequently targeted by air strikes from the regime and Russia.

According to United Nations statistics, their total number in all of Syria is 2.8 million<sup>31</sup>. Special needs, child labor, and lack of education are monitored by the “Omran” program, organized by the Qatari relief campaign and broadcast on their national television<sup>32</sup>.

28 See: Joseph Holliday, “The Assad Regime: From Counterinsurgency to Civil War,” *Middle East Security Report* 8, March 2013. 54.

29 Among these programs is “Ya Hurriya,” aired by Syrian Television. <https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=98QQ93H73ZE>  
<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=CDnod-cXu7o>

30 Wael Al-Zahrawi, “This is Why We Hid the Dead,” Istanbul: Itqan Publishing, 2020, pp. 88-89.

31 See: The “I Am Human” website, based on United Nations statistics. [Web Link]

32 The Omran program hosted by Qatar Charity includes 25 officially documented episodes.

<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=5NdV32PTWK4>

<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=O-wyWikyZBo>.

<https://youtu.be/TJkW3XeOvIs>





## Second Section: Foundations for Developing the Religious Dimension in Confronting Human Brutality

Development is based on several foundations, the most prominent of which are three: the concept of good and evil and their connection to divine wisdom, divine justice, and what happened in Syria between punishment and tribulation.

### First Subsection: 2.1 The Concept of Good and Evil and Their Connection to Divine Wisdom<sup>33</sup>

The concept of good and evil is not dictated by human intellect; rather, the criterion is set by God Almighty. This is because God is the creator of man and knows what benefits him and what harms him. The philosophy behind this is that the one who creates something knows best what benefits or harms it. Divine revelation has come to distinguish the beneficial from the harmful for us. The human measure of good and evil, based on the benefits they derive, cannot be relied upon. Al-Ghazali (505 AH) says about good and evil, “These are two additional matters, differing in individuals and varying for a single individual based on circumstances, and differing in a single situation based on symptoms; perhaps an act may agree with a person in one aspect and disagree with him in another, thus being good from one angle and ugly from another. For someone who has no religion, he may find adultery with another’s wife commendable and considers conquering her a blessing... With this terminology, some who do not avoid the act of God Almighty may call it ugly when it does not align with their purpose. Therefore, you see them cursing fate.”<sup>34</sup>

Al-Shahrastani (d. 548 AH) did well when he cited the sages, as if he adopted their opinion, which is that evil is included in divine decree and will incidentally, not inherently. He gives an example of this with rain, which contains widespread good but also destroys the house of an old woman, leading her house to ruin. Here, the good is intended, while the evil is not intended but comes as a consequence<sup>35</sup>. Al-Amidi (d. 631 AH) followed this line of thought<sup>36</sup>.

Moreover, the measure of wisdom is not always utility. Even if a matter is completely devoid of utility—this does not occur from a wise human, so how could it occur from the Lord of the Worlds—it is not a negation of wisdom or an occurrence of absurdity. Because wisdom is for something to happen according to the knowledge defined by Allah Almighty, not according to the narrow interests seen by people. People may see good as evil and evil as good. And Allah the Great is truthful in saying, { كَيْبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ } (Al-Baqarah: 216).

If good and evil are in the hands of God Almighty, it is the duty of the Muslim to do what God requires of him and to reckon the reward for what he does not know the wisdom behind. This is because adversities, despite their intensity, may contain good that we do not know. Punishment may carry meanings of mercy, as God said about the people of Pharaoh, { وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ } (Al-A'raf: 130). Let’s note the saying of the Almighty, { لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ } Sheikh Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur (1393 AH) says: “لعل” is for hope, meaning they are hoped to be reminded, because the calamities and damages, which are parallel to Moses reminding them of their Lord and the release of His servants, are such that their recipients are hoped to remember that this is a punishment for their neglect and for their failure to remember.<sup>37</sup>

33 Also see Hasan Al-Khataf, “The Doctrinal and Ethical Dimensions of Diseases and Epidemics,” in the proceedings of the Third International Conference on Contemporary Islamic Studies and Emerging Issues, 2020, *University of the World City*, Malaysia, 165 and beyond.

34 Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali Al-Tusi, *Al-Iqtisad fi Al-I'tiqad*, Beirut/Lebanon, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya, First Edition, 1424 - 2004, 11.

35 Muhammad bin Abdul Karim bin Abi Bakr Ahmad Al-Shahrastani, *Nihayat al-Iqdam fi Ilm al-Kalam*, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya, 114.

36 Ali bin Muhammad Al-Amidi, „Abkar Al-Afkar fi Usul Al-Din,“ 2/157.

37 Muhammad Al-Tahir bin Ashur, “Al-Tahrir wa Al-Tanwir,“ 9/64.



And let's not forget that ordeals have benefits, including "that the believer and the disbeliever, and the truthful and the hypocrite, are not equal. For God, named the Just, would never oppress even the weight of a mustard seed. He sends His soldiers, among them trials, to sift and differentiate among His servants. For God's reward is precious, and only those who succeed in this test may enter it".<sup>38</sup>

Here it is important to note that our belief in the existence of divine wisdom in what has happened in our countries does not mean silence and submission. The existence of wisdom is one thing, and the effort to not be content with the status quo is another. We need to strive to get rid of this status quo. Although this reality is by the will of God, God is not pleased with this reality for us. If we change ourselves, the reality will change, as God has laid down this principle, saying, { (إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ (11) } (Al-Ra'd: 11).

If what is happening in our countries is by the will of God, it is not with His approval. We must distinguish between divine will associated with human actions, whether good or bad, and approval of these actions. There is no correlation between approval and will. God may will something but not approve of it, as stated, { وَلَا يَرْضَى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا } (Az-Zumar: 7), And He does not approve for His servants disbelief. And if you are grateful, He approves it for you.

## Second Subsection: 2.2 What Happened in Syria Between Punishment and Tribulation

Only God Almighty knows what has happened in Syria in all its cities, involving destruction, killing, rape, and displacement. This act has raised many questions, especially in the minds of young people. Among the most prominent of these questions is: Is what happened in Syria a test and tribulation from God Almighty to give reward for patience? Or is it a collective punishment? And how can it be a collective punishment when there are children who have not committed any sin?

To answer the question, it can be said that the observer in the Quranic approach speaking about trials and tribulations has two main levels:

The First Level is the Level of Collective or Individual Punishment:

This level is usually preceded by committing sins, whether it is disbelief or less than that among the major sins, along with not fulfilling the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil. This punishment may encompass an entire nation. However, within this nation, you may find those who enjoin good. You may also find children, the young, and the insane. Nevertheless, the majority in the nation is involved in committing sins and remaining silent about them. Therefore, the punishment here encompasses everyone. History provides us with lessons and morals. For a minor disobedience by the Prophet Muhammad during the Battle of Uhud, seventy companions were martyred, his incisor was broken, and his face was wounded<sup>39</sup>. All of this happened because some archers disobeyed the Prophet's orders to stay on their positions on the mountain, even though some of them did it out of their own interpretations, having observed the retreating lines of the polytheists.

Leaving wrongdoings unaddressed leads to ruin. This is what we understand from His saying, { وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ } (Al-Anfal: 25). Sheikh Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur says: "The intellectuals... when they see the onset of corruption among their general populace, should hasten to explain what has afflicted people with delusion in their souls. They should expose its essence, its doubts, and its consequences, and prevent them from it by whatever means of admonition and authority they have. If they neglect this and show laziness, corruption will soon spread among souls and transfer contagiously from one to another until it becomes widespread or nearly so, making it difficult to eradicate from souls. This imbalance spoils the righteousness of the righteous and makes their lives miserable despite their righteousness and integrity. Therefore, it becomes clear that tribulation, when it afflicts a people, does not exclusively affect the wrongdoer but rather encompasses him and the righteous. By this, you know that tribulation could be a punishment from Allah in this world. It takes the rule of worldly punishments that affect nations, as it is habit not to single out the criminals if the majority of people are corrupt."<sup>40</sup>

38 Israa Mahmood EID."The Quranic Perspective on the Wisdom of the Affliction and the Pestilence and the Muslim's Duty Towards them", *Social Mentality And Researcher Thinkers Journal (Smart Journal)*, ((2020) 2607.

39 Muhammad Al-Tayyib Al-Najjar, *Al-Qawl Al-Mubin fi Sirat Sayyid Al-Mursalin*, Beirut: Dar Al-Nadwa Al-Jadida, 249.

40 Ibn Ashur, *Al-Tahrir wa Al-Tanwir*, 9/317.

This reminds us of the Hadith of Zainab bint Jahsh, who asked the Prophet, “O Messenger of Allah, will we be destroyed while there are righteous among us?” He said, “Yes, when wickedness becomes widespread.”<sup>41</sup>

The upshot of what preceded is that humans are the cause for the descent of punishment from God Almighty, beginning without any cause. That is, the punishment from God Almighty does not encompass people unless they have distorted and changed. This is grounded in His saying, { وَوَأَنْتُمْ أَمْتُوا وَأَتَّقُوا لِقَاتِنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكَاتٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ كَذَّبُوا } (Al-A'raf: 96). Had the people of those societies been faithful and mindful of Allah, We would have overwhelmed them with blessings from heaven and earth. But they disbelieved, so We seized them for what they used to commit. And His saying, { (ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ } (Ar-Rum: 41) Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].

The principle is that people should live in well-being and health, as guided by the two preceding verses. This principle remains general unless there comes a punishment of uprooting associated with injustice. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (died 606) says, ‘The punishment of uprooting does not come merely because people believe in polytheism and disbelief. Rather, that punishment comes when they behave badly in dealings, and spread harm and injustice... The evidence for this is that the people of Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, and Shu’ayb only received the punishment of uprooting because of what Allah Almighty narrated about them regarding harming people and oppressing creation.’<sup>42</sup>

Anyone who has lived in Syria knows that this epidemic that occurred in the country came for great reasons related to causes, the most prominent of which is not fulfilling the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil, giving bribes unnecessarily, the spread of financial corruption, belittling the religion, and glorifying the oppressors. We have learned from our religion that Allah is jealous for His prohibitions. From Hudhayfah bin Al-Yaman, may Allah be pleased with him, from the Prophet, peace be upon him, he said: “By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, you will certainly enjoin good and forbid evil, or else Allah will send upon you a punishment from Him, then you will call upon Him, and He will not respond to you.”<sup>43</sup>

#### The Second Level is the Level of Tribulation

This level may be individual, such as someone whose child dies or becomes disabled. These may fall under a group that has been inflicted with the general punishment that we spoke about at the first level, such as those who have fulfilled their duty of calling [to Islam] or were children or insane. What befalls them here is a tribulation and a test from God Almighty, in which there are rulings. Among the most prominent of these rulings in the Syrian situation is the clarification of the reward of the patient and their status with Allah Almighty. This patience is, in fact, associated with wisdom. Whoever does not know wisdom will not have patience over calamities, and whoever is not a believer will not know patience. Therefore, the war waged by criminals in Syria, involving systematic killing, rape, gouging out eyes, cutting off limbs, burning with fire, and burying people alive in the soil, requires two things. The first is the necessity to invest in the religious aspect and stand against the criminals. Our religion has taught us that whoever dies defending his religion, or his honor, or himself, or his money, then he is a martyr. Just as a person must defend himself, he must also defend others. It is not permissible for a person to compromise his honor or the honor of his Muslim brothers. If he dies for that, then he is a martyr. This is a well-known topic in the books of jurisprudence under repelling the assailant<sup>44</sup>.

The second is what the soul leans towards when looking comprehensively at the Syrian situation is that the matter is not entirely related to the issue of tribulation and testing and affirming the reward for the patient. Rather, it leans towards being a general punishment in the Syrian affair—although tribulation is possible in many cases. That is because we have learned from the Qur’anic Sunans that tribulation is usually for individuals, whereas punishment is more widespread.

41 Sahih Al-Bukhari, Book of Prophets’ Sayings, the story of Ya’juj and Ma’juj, Hadith No. 3346.

42 Mohammed bin Umar Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *Keys to the Unseen*, Publisher: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi - Beirut, Edition: Third - 1420, 18/1, 410. Also see in this regard Hasan al-Khattaf, ‘The Doctrinal and Ethical Dimensions of Diseases and Epidemics’, Book of the Third International Conference for Contemporary Islamic Studies and Emerging Issues 2020, ‘Epidemics and Diseases and the Islamic Perspective’, University of the City World, Malaysia, 1/1173 and beyond.

43 Muhammad bin Isa Al-Tirmidhi, “Sunan Al-Tirmidhi,” Book of Tribulations, Hadith No. 2169, Tirmidhi said the hadith is Hasan.

44 See for example: Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Khatib Al-Sharbini, died 977 AH, ‘*Mughni al-Muhtaaj ila Ma’rifah Ma’ani Alfaadh al-Minhaj*’, published by Dar al-Kitab al-Ilmiyya, first edition, 1415- 1994, 5/528. Mansour bin Younis Al-Bahuti Al-Hanbali, ‘Kashaf al-Qina’ al-Iqna’, edited by a specialized committee in the Ministry of Justice, published by the Ministry of Justice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, first edition, (1421 - 1429 ) = (2000 - 2008), 14/1, 193.

What should be pointed out is that ignorance of wisdom is not a justification for remaining silent about oppression. Silence contradicts the divine will and obligation. Allah wants man to be with the truth and stand against oppression. From here comes the status of enjoining good and forbidding evil as a great moral value. Remaining silent about the oppressors leads to the expansion of evil people over good people, and society turns into its individuals being wolves.

Therefore, a Muslim must sense through the reality he lives the reasons behind this destruction carried out by this criminal gang. Perhaps the reason is the laxity in enjoining good and forbidding evil. This laxity does not mean laxity only from the people of the region. These geographical borders are colonial borders that are not correct. That is, laxity from the Ummah, even in other places, may have its effect in other places because the Islamic Ummah is like one body.

And the failure of Muslims to support their brothers in Syria to lift the oppression that has befallen them heralds—God forbid—a punishment that will encompass all Islamic countries, according to what we have previously mentioned.

### Third Subsection: 2.3 Divine Justice

Divine justice is one of the attributes of Allah, and it is one of the necessary attributes that reason points to. Being a Creator God necessitates Him to be just. He, in His glory, has obligated this upon Himself without any external compulsion. Allah the Exalted says, { (إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ } (44) } As long as Allah is just, He does not approve of killing, displacement, and injustice. What happened in Syria is not approved by our Lord, the Exalted. Allah the Exalted says, { (إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ } [ (Az-Zumar: 7)

Therefore, as those who are tested, we must trust in the justice of Allah and His retribution against the oppressor. To understand this justice from multiple angles, we need to realize that Allah will punish the wrongdoers for their injustice. This is part of our belief in Allah; the punishment for injustice may happen in this world before the Hereafter. However, it is not certain that Allah will punish the wrongdoers in this world. It may happen, as in the punishment that befell Pharaoh and others. But what is agreed upon is that there will be punishment in the Hereafter. Also, the punishment in this world may be a test that we have not seen with our own eyes.

Allah's punishment for the wrongdoers in the Hereafter is a continuation of another type of punishment in this world that we have not seen; it is the punishment of misguidance and its persistence. This may be accompanied by Allah giving them more so that they may increase in wrongdoing and tyranny. This, in reality, is a punishment. As Allah the Exalted said, { (وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ } (42) فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ } (44) { (وَرَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ } (43) فَلَمَّا تَسَوَّا مَا دُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ } (Al-An'am: 42 - 44)

## CONCLUSION

The study showed that the Arab Ba'ath Party, to which the Al-Wahsh family belongs, has been based on lies, deception, and betrayal of the nation since its inception. This study has further revealed these betrayals that preceded this savagery under the rule of the father and his son.

Hafez Al-Wahsh ruled the country with iron and fire, silencing mouths, causing disappearances in prisons, and starving people. In return, betrayal was a part of his character. He announced the fall of the Golan Heights and the city of Quneitra before the Israeli enemy entered, who then found the area empty of resistance. He was also a traitor to the Arabs when he stood with Iran throughout the Iran-Iraq War, siding with it throughout the Iran-Iraq war, while pretending to be a defender of Arab identity and its causes.

We have shown that his father, Sulaiman Al-Wahsh, was among those who signed a petition asking France not to leave the country, stating that all sects, including Jews, did not want Sunni rule. The letter also showed their closeness to the Jews against the Sunnis.

Bashar Al-Wahsh followed in his father's footsteps after his death. The Syrian constitution was amended, and the minimum age for the presidency was lowered from 40 to 34, which was Bashar's age at the time.

The Syrian revolution began on March 15, 2011, with just demands. It was confronted with planes, tanks, and chemical weapons, clearly supported by many countries, led by Russia, which protected him in every Security Council session. The Security Council was not keen on change in Syria to maintain the security of Isra-

el, as they are ignorant of the future. The son, like his father, was a good keeper of its borders, as Israel admits. As for Iran and its militias, and the Hezbollah militia, they have committed crimes only God knows, based on their Shia beliefs that permit the killing of Sunnis.

The effects of the regime's planes, and those with him, and Russia, have been devastating on the Syrian human; causing displacement, killing, poverty, and distance from education. Those who enter prisons rarely come out, and thousands of pictures that have been leaked have been documented, some of whose owners were our colleagues. This study showed the need to develop a religious dimension to stand against all these criminals. Among this is the need to return to God and repent to Him. God forbid that He oppresses His servants, as divine laws do not know flattery. If people abandon enjoining good and forbidding evil, God will empower their enemies over them. This is one of the laws that should be sensed from our reality, and this is what the study has shown. It also that what happened in Syria falls under the divine decrees that God has willed. Almighty God does not do anything without wisdom, so Syrians should discern the wisdom behind this. The wisdom may be the need to turn back to God Almighty by abstaining from sins, and taking the hand of the oppressor. The wisdom may also be to distinguish the patient from the impatient, and the righteous from the misguided. God Almighty has truthfully said, {أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَلْعَمِ اللَّهُ} (الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ الصَّابِرِينَ) (142) [Aal-E-Imran: 142]. Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while Allah has not yet made evident those of you who fight in His cause and made evident those who are steadfast? Whatever the case may be, there are wisdoms, whether we know them or not. Denying wisdom from God Almighty is an affirmation of absurdity, and absurdity is not fitting for God.

The study also warned that while the Muslim believes in the existence of wisdom in what happened, he must resist injustice with all the strength he has been given. Submission and subservience are not part of our religion after the truth has been distinguished from falsehood. And there is a difference between divine will and divine approval. Approval is only for things that God loves, whereas will encompasses everything that happens in this universe, whether good or evil. The killings committed by the Assad family are something willed by God because they occurred, but they are not approved by Him because they involve injustice. God does not prevent a person from committing sins but rather warns them against doing so.

The study warns of the necessity to keep God's justice in front of our eyes, for God does not leave the oppressor. He may grant him respite, but He, Glory be to Him, does not neglect him. The punishment may not be apparent in this worldly life as physical torment, but our certainty in God Almighty assures us that He will punish him in the Hereafter, and this is conclusive. As for this worldly life, one of the worst kinds of punishment—many of us are unaware of this—is that God may grant the oppressor respite to increase in tyranny and injustice.

It is clear that the Hereafter is the eternal abode, and that is where the Muslim should direct his focus. One should belittle worldly matters when religion, self, and honor are at risk. From this standpoint, Syrians must draw from religion to confront Assad's brutality. Drawing from religion obliges the Muslim to defend his faith, his self, and his honor, and it requires defending his Muslim brother; a Muslim does not let down his brother. Even if Syrians – who stand against brutality – find physical wounds, loss of wealth, displacement, and martyrdom, the enemy experiences what we experience and more. Allah the Almighty says, {وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا تَأْلَمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ} (مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا) (104) (An-Nisa4:104). It suffices us that what we experience is in the path of God Almighty.

This is the case if the violation is against the self and below, then what about the Muslim if the violation by these savages is against religion? We have seen dozens of mosques destroyed, alcohol consumed in their halls, and the Quran desecrated. We have also seen Bashar the savage being deified by his sect. Therefore, Syrians and their Arab and Muslim brothers should neither become complacent nor weaken, for Allah aids the servant as long as the servant aids his brother.



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