

## *Tawba to Purify the Imagination*

Pope Valley Ramaḍān Retreat ~ September 13, 2009, in the morning

Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh, Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh, Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh  
Allāhu, Allāhu, Allāh ~ Muḥammad rasūlu-llāh

Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh, Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh, Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh  
Allāhu, Allāhu, Allāh ~ Ibrāhīm rasūlu-llāh

Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh, Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh, Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh  
Allāhu, Allāhu, Allāh ~ Mūsā rasūlu-llāh

Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh, Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh, Lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāāāāāh  
Allāhu, Allāhu, Allāh ~ 'Īsā rasūlu-llāh 'alayhim ṣalātu-llāh

Allāhumma anta-s-salām wa minka-s-salām  
wa ilayka ya'ūdu-s-salām  
tabārakta rabbanā wa ta'alayt  
yā dhū-l-jalāli wa-l-'ikrām

As salāmu alaykum wa raḥmatu-llāh wa bārakatahu. Now we are in the last third of the blessed month of Ramaḍān. This month is the month, honored by Allāh, in which He sent down the Qur'ān. Allāh made its beginning mercy, its middle forgiveness and its end salvation from the Fire.

We do not really know who is granted happiness in this month, who gains the mercy of Allāh and who gains the forgiveness of Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*). We do not know if we are truly one of those who have been granted salvation. We do not know the ones who were saved, whose hearts, bodies, spirits and intellects were saved. We do not know who has been saved from the Fire. We do not know if any person obtained forgiveness.

We must bring ourselves to accountability. We must judge ourselves and ask ourselves, "What did we do this Ramaḍān?" Did we really contemplate the Book of Allāh? Did we contemplate and study the Book of Allāh that was sent in Ramaḍān? Did we really spend Ramaḍān fasting in a true way? Did our intellects fast the true fasting? Did our intellects transform as a result and are we using the white intellect instead of black intellect? Did our spirits transform from being dark spirits to being luminous spirits? Did our spirits and our hearts transform from being full of darkness to being full of purity and mercy? Did our souls and our selves transform their evil qualities? Did we remove ourselves from the illusions, pictures and the evil

qualities that are not from Allāh, nor are they from the example of His Messenger (*ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*)? Did we stop claiming to see Allāh and to hear Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta‘ālā*)?

Know that Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta‘ālā*) is the one who sees and hears. Allāh gives me the hearing and the seeing through which I hear and see. There are still some people who claim while teaching others to see a jinn or something inside them. I tell them, “Fear Allāh. Do not lie to people, because no one can know the unseen except Allāh.” Allāh knows the unseen. Allāh is the one who informed His prophets. Allāh is the one who teaches the prophets. If you are one of those who claim something out of yourself and related to Allāh or related to the gnostics who know Allāh, know that you will be brought to judgment and it will be recorded against you. If you lie against Allāh, it will be recorded.

The one who makes a lie against Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta‘ālā*) makes a lie against His Prophet and Messenger (*ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), and he will have to face suffering in the Hellfire. The Messenger of Allāh said:

Whoever lies with intention will have his seat in the Hellfire.

Knowledge must come directly from Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta‘ālā*)—direct knowledge comes from the Book of Allāh and from the Sunna of the Prophet (*ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). All knowledge should have a reference in the Book of Allāh or the Sunna. It must be in accordance with the *sharī‘a*, the law of Allāh. It is not the *sharī‘a* that we create in a picture or illusion. Allāh says in the Qur’ān:

For those who lie against Allāh,  
Allāh prepares a Hellfire of suffering. (See Qur’ān 10:60, 29:68.)

Allāh does not look to your outer picture. He looks to your inner hearts and spirits and souls. Do not feel that you are so big and walk on the earth arrogantly. Do not claim you are something. You are nothing in truth and origin. By Allāh you become everything.

I was nothing, but then I became everything by Allāh. In You, Allāh, I became everything. I became productive and I produced goodness. Nothing comes from myself because I am nothing. I am not equal to a mustard seed’s weight. If I walk with a stick and walk arrogantly so that people can think I am big, that does not count.

Allāh asked the Prophet Mūsā (Moses) (*‘alayhi-s-salām*) once:

(Allāh asked) “And what is that in your right hand, oh Mūsā?”  
 He said, “This is my stick that I lean on and use to beat down  
 branches for my sheep, and for which I find other uses.” (20:17-18)

This is the true meaning of using a stick. I wish I did not carry one, but when you become old, you need it. This is something natural. I support myself with a stick just as Mūsā (*‘alayhi-s-salām*) did. Not everyone who carries a stick can claim to be Mūsā. This is not the purpose of it. No one who carries a stick can claim he is now in Mūsā’s station because he is carrying a stick. Mūsā carried the stick and Pharaoh carried the stick, but each one has a different purpose.

People must be aware. My children must be careful of those who claim to have attained Mūsā’s station because they carry a stick. You should not be listening to anyone who says, “I see this in you.” Do not believe that. It is not acceptable in the law of Allāh. It is a lie, an absolute lie. It is not from our teaching. Our teaching depends on the law of Allāh and on the *fiqh*,<sup>12</sup> the true understanding and jurisprudence of Allāh and the understanding of His law.

Do not claim, “I see.” Mūsā himself (*‘alayhi-s-salām*) asked Allāh:

“Oh my Lord, show me Yourself that I may look upon You.”  
 Allāh told him: “You cannot see Me.” (7:143)

Mūsā (*‘alayhi-s-salām*) was the messenger of Allāh. Why did Allāh not give him the permission to see Him? Because he had not finished walking completely toward Allāh. At that point he had not yet received the law or the understanding of the law of Allāh. He was in the station of talking with Allāh and Allāh told him:

“Look at the mountain.” (7:143)

What is the mountain? It is a symbol for the heart where Allāh sits atop it. It is not the dark heart, the dark soul or the dark mind. We are talking about the pure heart that walks toward Allāh fully.”

You have many books but I ask you, “Did you read these books? Did you write these books? Did you abide by the teachings in these books and adorn

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<sup>12</sup> *Fiqh* is the development of the *ṣhar‘a*, Islamic law, based on the *Qur‘ān*, the *Sunna* and rulings and interpretations made by Islamic jurists. In Sunni Islām there are four schools of jurisprudence: Hanbali, Shafi‘i, Maliki and Hanafi.

yourself with the qualities and ethics of the prophets (*‘alayhim as-salām*)? Where is your knowledge coming from? From Iblīs?”

Surely it is coming from Iblīs if you did not study and adorn yourself with the qualities of the Prophet (*ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). You are taking your knowledge from Iblīs and from people who are not taking directly from Allāh, but from their own minds.

We take our knowledge from the prophets only. From Mūsā (*‘alayhi-s-salām*) and from ʿĪsā (Jesus) (*‘alayhi-s-salām*). We believe in them, and we take from them; we take from the Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (*‘alayhi-s-salām*) and from the knowledge and teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*).

We, the people of Sufism, the people who are purifying ourselves, say, “We listen and we obey.” Allāh (*subḥānahu wa taʿālā*) has mentioned in the Qurʾān that the Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) believes in his Lord and in his holy books and the angels and the prophets (*‘alayhim as-salām*). If you do not believe in these things, then you cannot be following the way. You cannot be following Buddhism or Hinduism or worshipping illusions. You have to follow the way of the prophets and say to Allāh, “We listen and we obey.” We do not listen to any other. We do not listen to pictures and illusions and the dark mind.

We believe in the light of Allāh, the divine light. If you say, “I saw the light of Allāh.” I ask you, “How did you see it?” Make me understand how you saw it. Allāh is the light of the heaven and the earth. I ask you, “How did you see the divine light?” Did you first walk the road of the prophets on the same path? Did you study the laws and ways and follow them? You cannot just claim to see the light without following Allāh’s teachings and commands and avoiding His prohibitions. You must affirm that Allāh is one.

Beware because Iblīs says to Allāh:

(Iblīs) said: “Oh my Lord! Because you misled me,  
I will indeed adorn the path of error for them (humankind)  
on the earth, and I will mislead them all.  
Except Your chosen, slaves among them.” (15:39)

And:

(Iblīs) said: “Oh my Lord!  
Give me then respite  
until the Day they will be resurrected.” (17:62)

In both of these instances Iblīs said, “My Lord,” affirming that he has a Lord. He knows God exists. He affirms His presence. All you who claim to know, know that you do not know anything. If you do not take knowledge directly from Allāh and from His messengers and holy books, then it is impossible for you to know anything. Your knowledge will be lacking just as Iblīs’ knowledge is. He knows his Lord but his knowledge is lacking.

You have to follow the prophets’ way to complete your knowledge. Iblīs did not walk the path that Allāh commanded him to walk because when Allāh ordered the angels to prostrate themselves to Ādam, they all obeyed except for Iblīs.

Iblīs said:

I am better than he (Ādam) is.

You created me from fire and you created him from clay. (7:12)

Iblīs became rebellious against Allāh and rejected His command. Iblīs knew, understood and saw.

Allāh says in the Qur’ān:

Truly, he (Iblīs) and his soldiers from the jinn or his tribe  
see you from where you cannot see them. (7:27)

Do not follow Iblīs’ way and be like his students. Do not do that and claim to see. Know that you are not an angel and you are not able to see. Are you a noble angel who can see more? Also, you are not yet an heir of Muḥammad (ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam). You have not inherited the praiseworthy qualities. You must first understand the law of Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta’ālā*), the *sharī’a*—the *sharī’a* that was affirmed by all of the prophets (*‘alayhim as-salām*). You must do the practices, pray ṣalāh, pay charity (zakāh), fast (during Ramaḍān) and everything. You must understand the rules of the *sharī’a*.

Speaking from your black intellect, saying that you know and you see is not right. Look at the Prophet Ibrāhīm (*‘alayhi-s-salām*):

When he saw the moon rising up he said, “This is my Lord.”  
But when it set he said, “Unless my Lord guides me,  
I will surely be among the people who went astray  
because I cannot worship an absent God.”

When he saw the sun rising up he said,

“This is my Lord. This is greater.” (6:77-78 and tafsir)

He said this because he still had not attained the white intellect. Then at night the sun was not there. He said, “I do not believe that God disappears.” He said, “There must be a God beyond all that, who created everything in excellence and originated everything.”

He prayed, “Please, Allāh, guide me to You.” Then Allāh spoke to him saying, “We have given you the great attainment. You have become a prophet and messenger of God. You must destroy all of the idols.”

Ibrāhīm destroyed all the idols. He had to struggle with his own father. His own father used to make the statues, the idols, and sell them to people. He even challenged his own father. He said “What are you doing, Father? You make idols with your own hands and give them to people to worship? They cannot hear. They cannot listen. They cannot see. They cannot talk. Know that the only one who can see and hear is Allāh.”

The Prophet Ibrāhīm first had to destroy the idols within himself, in his own mind. This is the true repentance. Through repentance and returning to Allāh, you destroy your own idols. You destroy your own ego, because your ego is like an idol. Illusion is an idol. Imagination and fantasy are idols. Envy is an idol. Hate is an idol. Arrogance is an idol. Conceit is an idol. The Garden is an idol.

You must purify these selves and destroy these idols first. You must absolutely purify your heart of these idols so that you can become a white and pure self. It is mentioned in the Qur’ān:

And I do not acquit myself.  
Truly, (every) nafs is inclined to evil. (12:53)

Oh one who claims to see, to know and to hear, did you destroy your own idols first? Did you walk through all seven stations: the commanding self, the blaming self, the inspired self, the peaceful self, the contented self, the well-pleased and pleasing self to the perfected self? Have you walked until you arrived at the contented self? This is the contented self that returns to its Lord, as mentioned in the Qur’ān:

Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with yourself)  
and well pleasing (to your Lord)! (89:28)

Did you just put your hand on something and all of a sudden know everything? Does putting your hand on someone lead to true comprehension and understanding? What do you perceive? What do you understand? The way is not like that. The way is to humble yourself to Allāh. You surrender to Allāh. You wholeheartedly direct yourself toward Allāh.

The one who comes to Allāh wholeheartedly with a full heart will be granted salvation (see Qur'ān 26:89). You surrender totally to Allāh by studying and contemplating the *ṣharī'a* and following its rules. Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*) says in the Qur'ān:

The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him  
by his Lord. (2:285)

The first step is to believe, to believe in what was sent to the prophets and follow it.

Believe in the *ṣharī'a* that was sent down to the Prophet (*ṣalla-llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Do not follow what your dark self, your dark ego tells you. Do not follow the way of Iblīs and his troops. You must purify yourself. I have explained how to purify yourself. You must destroy the idols of the self. You must destroy these psychological diseases, the diseases of the self. You must destroy them, heal them and clear them just as the Prophet Ibrāhīm (*'alayhi-s-salām*) did, so that you can arrive at the station of Ibrāhīm. You must look at how he arrived at that station and walked toward his Lord. He said:

I am emigrating to my Lord. (37:99)

You have to walk to pursue Allāh by purifying the self because Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*) says in the Qur'ān:

Allāh wishes only to remove sins from you,  
oh members of the family (of the Prophet),  
and to purify you with a thorough purification. (33:33)

Who are the people of the household of Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*)? Those who follow His way and love each other without discrimination. Everyone is equal to them, regardless of nationality, race or ethnicity, because our most beloved Prophet said:

All people are the children of Allāh,  
and the most beloved to Him  
are the ones who are most beneficial to His children.

He did not claim to see a jinn inside of someone. Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*) did not order us to claim this, to lie like this. Allāh commanded us to be truthful. He promised to be with the truthful ones, not with the liars. Allāh is not with the liars.

### **Destroying the Idols of the Self**

We must first pursue Allāh by purifying our hearts, our bodies and our selves. Selves must be purified. We must never use our limbs and senses in a way that is not pleasing to Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*), starting with our seeing, hearing and touching. We should not use them in actions that are not pleasing to Allāh. This is the meaning of destroying idols.

If we walk on the earth, we should not walk arrogantly. We should humble ourselves. We should not walk arrogantly because we cannot be as high as mountains and we cannot pierce through the earth. We are just humble creatures. We must not drive our cars arrogantly, feeling big. Understand that you are only one like anyone else—one among the people. Do not expose yourself to distraction and do not destroy others with your arrogant ways. As Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*) says in the Qur'ān:

And walk not on the earth with conceit and arrogance.  
Truly, you can neither rend nor penetrate the earth,  
nor can you attain a stature like the mountains in height. (17:37)

This means walk humbly and politely. If you are not polite you can hurt many small creatures that you cannot even see. You can drive your car so fast that you can hurt a child running or an elderly man walking slowly. Allāh tells us how to walk on the earth. It is not the police we should fear. It is not the police who teaches us. Allāh teaches us before anyone else how to walk in the polite way and to walk gently, because He cares about us and He cares about all people. This is the teaching of Allāh.

### **Destroying the Idols of the Body**

Let people gain and accumulate what they accumulate, but they cannot gain knowledge of Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*) except by pursuing the true teachings and following them. You must destroy the idols within yourself. To destroy the idols of the body means to not use our limbs for anything that is not pleasing to Allāh, such as destroying, hurting or harming others. We must use them to build, to construct and to do good in accordance with Allāh's way.

Allāh (*subḥānahū wa ta'ālā*) gives to us and provides us with everything, but He orders us to use what He gives us in the right way. This is the meaning of



destroying the idols of the body. Allāh created the heart in a pure way. We are talking about the heart, not the piece of flesh, but the innermost meaning that is the house of our Lord. Allāh says in a ḥadīth qudsī to His Prophet (ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam):

My heavens and My earth cannot contain Me.  
Only the heart of My faithful servant contains Me.

This heart must never be a center for lies, illusions, fantasies or dirt.

### **Destroying the Idols of the Intellect**

There is a difference between fantasy and the pure perceived imagination, the perception that you receive from Allāh. Fantasy is something you induce. You imagine and you fuel your imagination and you think that you see because you are better than others, in a higher, particular station.

When you are walking on the street, you can see a shadow. Did you make this shadow? No. Allāh created you and made a shadow for you when you walk. This shadow is actually a holy shadow because it resembles the human being. This is different from the induced imagination, the fantasies of seeing yourself as big or important, or seeing things in others, or imagining that things exist within others. This is not right.

When a healer or teacher imagines that there is a jinn inside you and he or she is going to take it out it is called an induced imagination or a fantasy. There is a difference between induced imagination/fantasy and the imagination talked about by the Sufis. The Sufi's imagination is the pure perception that comes from Allāh's inspiration. Just as everything has a shadow, a reflection, the Sufi sees a divine reflection that you cannot create. It comes to you, just as when you walk and you see a shadow that is a reflection of your image.

Induced imagination and fantasy comes from the black intellect. You have to distinguish between the black and white intellects. I do not want to provide a more in-depth explanation than this. but I am giving you an example so that you can be discerning.

You can read more on this topic in the book *The Reality of Imagination*,<sup>13</sup> in which I explain this subject in detail. Has the one who claims to see and hear

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<sup>13</sup> Sidi Muhammad, *The Reality of Imagination*. Petaluma: Sidi Muhammad Press, 2008. You can purchase this book at [sufimaster.org](http://sufimaster.org) or [sufigifts.com](http://sufigifts.com).

read this book, written this book, understood this book and followed it? I cannot claim what I imagine; that would be lies. I believe in what I see and I see only the Book of Allāh. I see the teaching of Allāh. I see the teaching of the prophets of Allāh and the messengers of Allāh (*'alayhim as-salām*). Anything outside of these teachings is not real.

This is why the intellect must declare its repentance, destroy its idols, rid itself of its darkness and ask Allāh to guide it. It must become white, a pure consciousness and intellect that can see the Real and believe in the divine reality. The repentance of the spirit must be to purify itself so that it sees the Real and follows the Real. These are subtle realities.

The true mutaṣawwif,<sup>14</sup> the one who follows the Sufi path, the path of purification, must truly repent physically and spiritually. His heart must repent and his intellect must repent and return to Allāh.

Now, we are living in the material world. When you repent you can move to the realm of the divine dominion, al-Malakūt. From the divine dominion, you can even move to the realm of potency and divine power, al-Jabarūt, and eventually you can arrive at the divine realms. If you walk through the stations and the realms you can arrive, but only by contemplating, studying and following the teachings.

I wrote a book in which I talk to all people. This book is between your hands now. It is called *How the Arrival is Realized, O People of Hearts and Souls and Intellects*.<sup>15</sup> It tells people of the physical bodies, of the spirits, of the hearts and of the intellects, and how to arrive. I wrote it and I gave it to you. It is a divine message that came through the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣalla-llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and his teachings, and all of these secrets are alluded to in this book.

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<sup>14</sup> Mutaṣawwif is a the technical term for a person practicing Sufism; it specifically refers to the aspirant and his or her relationship with Allāh. The term *murid*, commonly translated as “student,” points also to the aspirant’s relationship with his or her ṣaykh. The term *ṭarīqa* brings in a more social dimension. Faqīr and dervish, additional terms used to refer to an aspirant, emphasize the practice of seeing oneself as poor and dependant upon Allāh.

<sup>15</sup> *How the Arrival is Realized, O People of Hearts and Souls and Intellects*.

Did the one who claims to see and hear read it? Did you read it or did you put it on the shelf? We do not want the human being to become like a donkey. He can be carrying a lot of books but he cannot read them or comprehend them. Put a thousand books on top of the back of a donkey and ask the donkey what is in these books. He cannot answer you. We want the knowledge and the sciences to be inside people's hearts and intellects so that the human being can abide by the teachings.

Excuse me for prolonging this introduction; I did so because I was eager to share this teaching. I care so much about this teaching that I want to protect it. I want people to follow only the teachings of Allāh and nothing more.

Know that Allāh gives some people special gifts. The messengers, also, were given miracles. However, the senses were given special gifts that I know of and that I have seen, but I do not want to stop with these gifts and make something big out of them. I want to give you the truth and I want for you to focus on your loftiest goal: being with Allāh. I should not give you a gift that at first you would be very happy with, but would make you forget Allāh if it left. I do not want this. Gifts can distract you from pursuing Allāh, from knowing Allāh. Knowing Allāh and having gnosis of Allāh will grant you eternal happiness in this world and in the final world. Then you will find your seat with the most powerful King.

**The reading begins on page 10, "You have to start to read the Holy Book (the Qur'ān), because when you read His Holy Book you are having a direct conversation with Him..." and continues until, "The spirit is a boundless, limitless realm. It came from the light of Allāh and it is pure. It is the light of Allāh that illuminates all of existence. This light is what sends peace, mercy and love."**

Some people say, "I see the light." I say, "All right, where is the light? How can you see the light? Show me, please. Guide me to the light." How can he guide me to the light without any knowledge? This is wrong. He plays games. Where is the light? Does he have the light? No, he does not have any light because he does not follow the straight way. He is like a plant. You put a seed in the earth and you can see the plant growing.

It is important to put the word, "lā 'ilāha 'illa-llāh" inside your heart. Then you will see. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

A righteous word is like a righteous tree  
whose root is firmly fixed and its branches (reach) to the sky.  
It gives fruit at all times, by the permission of its Lord. (14:24-25)

If you follow Allāh's commands, if you follow everything that Allāh commands you, then you will purify yourself, clean yourself and learn directly from Allāh, because Allāh is the one who describes this way. He said in the Qur'ān:

Indeed, there has come to you from Allāh  
a light and a clear book (the Qur'ān). (5:15)

He did not say that illusions or lies came to you from Allāh. You can see the divine light through the Holy Book. Allāh says that the Qur'ān was sent to everyone. It is a light for the heaven and the earth. He did not send it for one person, in particular. He sent to everyone. Allāh said:

I breathed into him of My spirit. (see 15:29 and 38:71)

And:

He is with you wherever you are. (57:4)

Allāh did not say, "I am with so-and-so alone." He said, "I am with you all wherever you go."

The children of this path live up to the divine reality. We know the Real and we follow it. We do not follow illusion. We are poor and in need of Allāh. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

Oh people, you are (the poor) in need of Allāh. (35:15)

You are always in need of Allāh. You are so poor and you have to recognize your poverty. You are always in need of Allāh.

Look at the Prophet Mūsā (*‘alayhi-s-salām*). He was a determined messenger of Allāh. He still said, "Oh Allāh, in spite of all of your bounties, I am always poor and in need of You." He was a messenger and a prophet. Our most beloved Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣalla-llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) also said:

I am not like any of you.

He feeds me and quenches my thirst.

He is with you.

He also said in the Qur'ān:

Do they not reflect within themselves? (30:8)

Allāh also said:

And We are nearer to him (the human being)  
than his jugular vein. (50:16)

He is not far away from any of you. He is with you. If you go twenty layers deep into the earth, He is still with you. What more do you need to know than this? He is with you everywhere. Do not make anyone resemble God and be like a deity to you. Do not compare Him with anything. He is transcendent beyond everything.

**The reading continues until it is finished.**

Amin.

الله