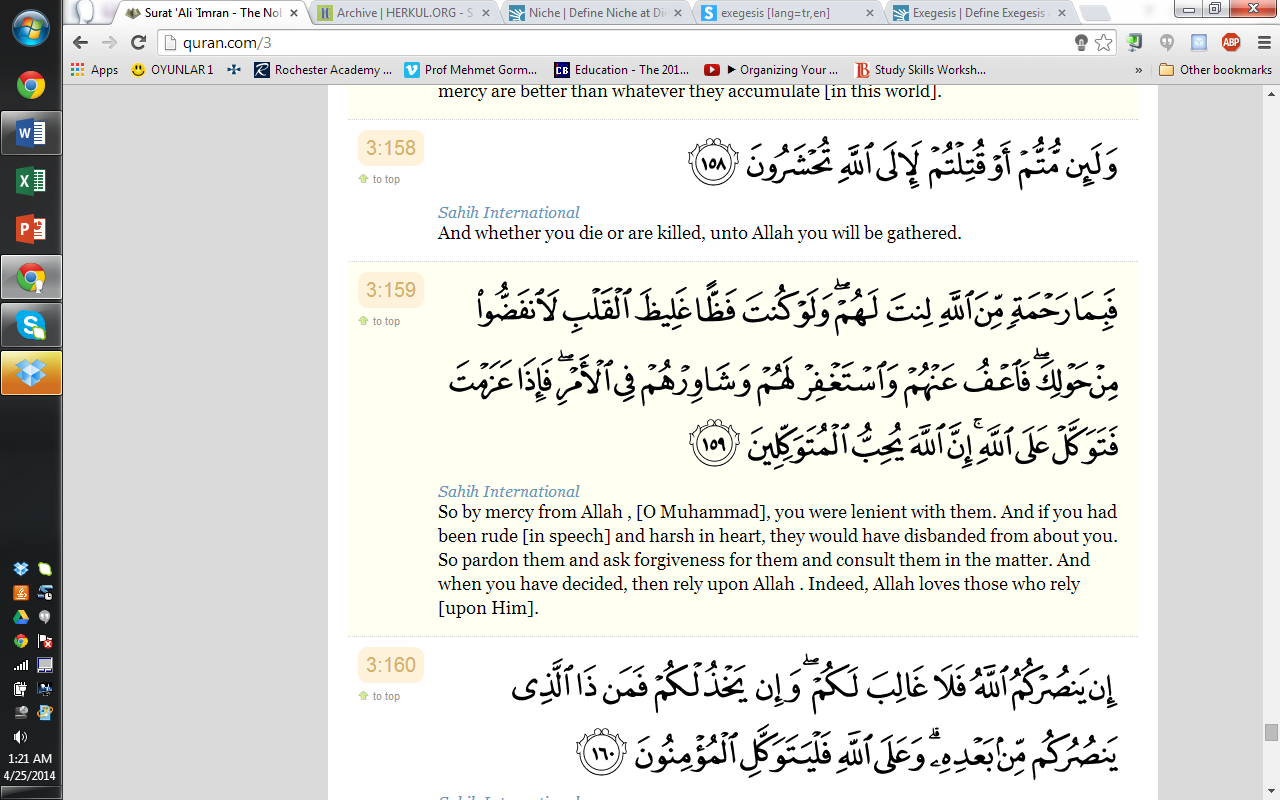
بِسْــمِ الله الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيم

اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ. اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ. اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ الَّذِى هَدَانَا لِهذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْ لاَ أَنْ هَدَانَا اللهُ. وَ مَا تَوْفِيقِي وَ لاَ اعْتِصَامِي إِلاَّ بِاللهِ. عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَ إِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ.

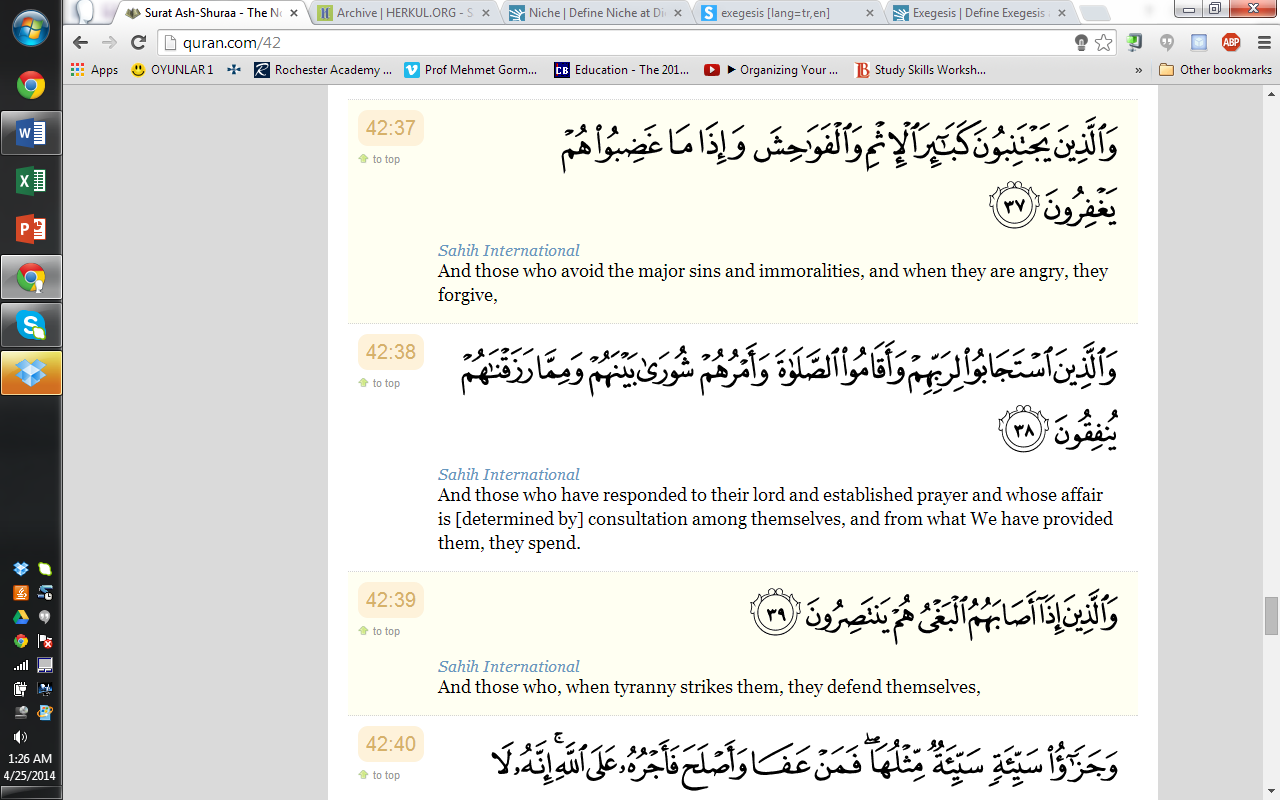
أَشْهَدُ أنْ لاَ إِلهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَ لاَ نَظِيرَ لَهُ وَ لاَ مِثَالَ لَهُ. اَلَّذِى لاَ أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْهِ. كَمَا أَثْنَي عَلَى نَفْسِهِ. عَزَّ جَارُهُ وَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُهُ وَ لاَ يُهْزَمُ جُنْدُهُ وَ لاَ يُخْلَفُ وَعْدُهُ وَ لاَ إِلهَ غَيْرُهُ. وَ نَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَ سَنَدَنَا وَ مَوْلاَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ و حِبيبُهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ. اَلسَّابِقُ إِلَى الأَنَامِ نُورُهُ. وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ظُهُورُهُ. صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى آلِهِ وَ أَوْلاَدِهِ وَ أَزْوَاجِهِ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ وَ أَتْبَاعِهِ وَ أَحْفَادِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَيَا عِبَادَ اللهِ؛ إِتَّقُوا اللهَ تَعَالَى وَ أَطِيعُوهُ. إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ. فَقَدْ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِي كِتَابِهِ الْكَرِيمِ. أَعُوذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ. بِسْــمِ الله الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيم

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam!**

Consultation, istishaarah in Arabic, is a form of worship as it is a commandment from the Qur'an. Consultation is the process of exchanging ideas on a certain topic to reach the best decision. In Surat Al-i Imran, Allah SWT says:



In SuratulShoora, verse 38:



In these verses, Allah SWT signifies the importance of consultation and the fact that it is an important principle for the believers whether it is a personal business, or an issue that concerns the community.

Ahmad IbnHanbal narrates in his Al Musnad referring to Umar and Abu Bakr R. Anhuma, Prophet Muhammad Alayhis salaam once said: "I will not act in opposition to you if you two agree upon something through consultation. Al Haythami narrates a hadith in his Majma' AzZawaaid, which reports from Rasul-I Akram SAW saying "Those who consult will never feel regret". So, Muhammad A.S. have encouraged his followers to act through consultation and he also requested the views of the Ansar when he heard the news of Abu Sufyan arriving to Badr. Moreover, he consulted his companions in many issues such as the situation of prisoners at Badr, prior to the battles of Uhud and Handak, during the ifq incident (false accusation against the decency of Aisha R. Anha, Hudaybiyah treaty, and in regards to the calling of the adhan (IbnSa'd; Al Tabaqaat 2/350-352). In another hadith from Zamakhshari in his Al KashShaaf, Muhammad A.S, said "A nation will never fall into dissension for as long as they adhere to consultation. With this hadith, Rasul-I Akram draws our attention to the fact that a person may make an error in judgment but the views of a consultation committee will be accurate. So, we as Muslims must value consultation as a commandment of Allah and as a Sunnah of His Messenger.

Let us remember the battle of Badr when Rasulullah wanted to camp near the closest water wells. Al Hubabibn Al Mundhir came to him and said: O Allah's Messenger! Did you choose this place because Allah has commanded so, and we are not permitted to go any farther? Or is it just a part of your battle strategy?. R.E. replied: "No, it is just a battle strategy". Then Al Hubab said:" O Allah's Messenger! This is not the best place to camp. We should go to the wells that are closest to the enemy. Then, we should make a small pool there and destroy the other wells so that the enemy does not benefit from them". Then R.E. replied:"This is a good idea, and he took his companion's suggestion. As we see, R.E. SAW still consulted his companions on certain matters although he was receiving Divine revelations, and this teaches us His Sunnah on the importance of consultation. Moreover, He was also sharing his views with the entire community by consulting with leaders one by one, and on other occasions by gathering all of them to discuss an issue or to solve a problem.

As we see, consultation is a form of worship as it is a commandment from the Qur'an. Therefore, those who have chosen the truths of the Qur'an as a guide must obey its commandments and deal with their tasks through consultation.

Consultation is logically a characteristic of people who love, respect, and need each other. Therefore, they value each other's opinion and they accept the notion of consultation as a fundamental principle amongst themselves, and thus act accordingly. By using the power of consultation, Rasulullah ASW encouraged everyone to take ownership of an issue. This is an important factor in human productivity. As a matter of fact, people feel honored when their opinions are valued, and hence take on responsibility in regards to the matter at hand. It is a fact that a decision made by consultation in a meeting is binding everyone, thus everyone who has the authority to vote is responsible. Since they are responsible, they will do their best to solve the issue, therefore the decision will be more accurate.

A person who does not consult with people of experience and adequate true knowledge indicates that he does not value the views of others because he believes his opinion is always better than the opinion of others. Such attitude is quite dangerous for a Muslim because consulting does not indicate deficiency, it rather proves maturity and the thought of doing a better da'wa, service. Imam Gazalisays:"Those who consult with others will not be deprived of reaching the truth.

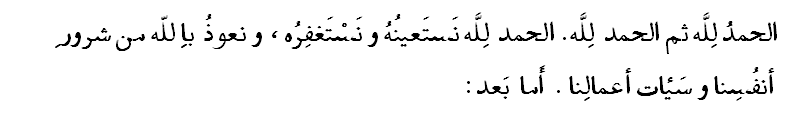
The Battle of Badr, from the beginning to the end, was managed through consultation. After the victory was achieved, Muslims came across an issue that they had not encountered before. The issue was the prisoners. How were they going to handle the prisoners? Because the Divine revelation was not revealed yet at that time, and they had no written rules in this matter. They could not just let them go because they would have rejoined their army and come back to fight again. R.E. gathered his companions and began to consult. He said:"What do you think we should do about the prisoners? Although most of them were your brothers before, now Allah has left it up to you to decide their fate." Abu Bakr R.A. suggested to release them after getting a ransom for them. He said this will strengthen our hand towards disbelief. Perhaps, this will soften their hearts and one day, they might come and support you." Then Rasulullah turned to Umar IbnulKhattab R.A. and asked his opinion, he suggested to execute them. The consultation continued. However, all the verses which were revealed to date were advising forgiveness and inviting people to Islam with kind and wise words. His character was also forgiving. Therefore, he decided to release them after getting ransom. The ones who could not afford the ransom were asked to teach 10 young Muslim men how to write and read. Some prisoners even did not know how to write and read, and for them, there was no hardship. They were asked to give their words to not speak against Islam, and to not aid those who were against it, then they were released.

Interestingly, prior to the Battle of Uhud, 2 different opinions emerged from the consultation, which are to defend the city of Medina by remaining in the city, or go outside of the city to defend it. R.E.was planning to remain in the city to defend but he went along with the views of the majority of his companions. For the Battle of Handak, R.E SAW took the suggestion of Salman Al Farisi R.A., which was to dig a big trench around the city, and it got accepted. Our Prophet had this attitude in every issue if there was not a Divine revelation from Allah in that regard. His method helped the companions become a part of the solution more easily and promptly. It is a fact that those who are not part of a solution are most likely to become a part of problems.

Great scholar Mawlana Rumi says "If you have intelligence, become friends with another intellect and seek his advice." We can describe the word "istisharah" as collecting honey from a bee. Honey means remedy. Consequently,, istisharah will provide remedy for problems at individual, family and community level. The entire history is the biggest witness to this reality.

Before commencing a project, we should take the necessary steps to consult others, and make no mistakes in the precautionary measures so later on, we do not accuse others and destiny by doubling the effects of the calamity.

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**Dear Brother and sisters in Islam!** So, who do we consult and what do we consult with others?

The process of consultation requires thoughtful selection because it has a significant impact on the result of the project. The person we seek to consult with should be intelligent, experienced, pious, virtuous, sincere, possesses solid views, wise and that he/she has the qualities of analyzing the human psychology and also the virtues of trustworthiness and honesty.

We can use one of the two methods when consultation becomes necessary:

1. A few people can be consulted individually for advice, and the point where the views join should be implemented.
2. A few people should come together where everyone could offer their own opinions on the issue. Later, these people can analyze each other's views and choose the most appropriate solution. This is a healthier way of consultation.

**Why is consultation necessary in regard to decisions that concern the entire society?**

The scholars of the interpretation of The Qur'an derived a few reasons from the Holy Qur'an and The Ehaadeeth:

1. Consultation is necessary when the issue concerns two or more people, a group, or a community. The accuracy of a decision made by one person is always questionable.
2. If a person wishes to make a decision on an issue that concerns the entire community, it would mean that this person is either thinking about his own interests, or he ranks himself higher than others. None of these is acceptable according to manners of Islam.
3. Making a decision for two or more people is a great responsibility. We could be held accountable in the Hereafter for not utilizing the istisharah.

As soon as Umar IbnulKhattab became the Caliph, he established governmental institution of consultation. Certain individuals from the Mihajereen and Ansaar were invited to these committees. Among those, we can name Uthman, Ali, Abdurrahman Bin Awf, Muadh Bin Jabal, Zaid bin Thabit and UbayyibnKa'b. This committee would come together once a week and discuss administrative and social issues, and come up with effective solutions. Ameer al mu'mineenUthman and Ali R.Anhuma also gave a great importance to consultation. The decisions made by the committee in regard to general matters were legally binding.

**Some Important Principles of Consultation**

If our views are not favored by the majority of the consultation committee, we should tell ourselves that "may be it is not the right time yet" so we should never argue or go into disputes. Sometimes, even a logical opinion may be turned down simply because the person who offers it. If we feel this will happen, in such situations, we should let someone else make the offer. What matters is the general acceptance of that view.

Another important aspect of consultation is that we should offer our views in a most beautiful way and explain our views. Moreover, if the decisions made during the meeting are not clear, one should request an explanation before the meeting is over, so that he/she does not criticize the decision after the meeting concludes. The decision of the committee should not criticized afterwards. Additionally, the decision is binding for every member of the committee even if some of them were not present, or previously opposed this decision.

أَلاَ إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ الْكَلاَمِ وَ أَبْلَغَ النِّظَامِ. كَلاَمُ اللهِ الْمَلِكِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلاَّمِ. كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى فِي الْكَلاَمِ. وَ إِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ. وَ أَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ. أَعُوذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ. بِسْـمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ:

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ. اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ. اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ حَمْدَ الْكَامِلِينَ كَمَا أَمَرَ. نَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَ نَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ النَّبِيُّ الْمُعْتَبَرُ. تَعْظِيمًا لِنَبِيِّهِ وَ تَكْرِيمًا لِفَخَامَةِ شَانِ شَرَفِ صَفِيِّهِ. فَقَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ مِنْ قَائِلٍ مُخْبِرًا وَ آمِرًا: {إِنَّ اللهَ وَ مَلاَئِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ. يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا}. لَبَّيْكَ...

بِسْــمِ الله الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيم

{ إِنَّ اللهَ يَاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَ الإِحْسَانِ وَ إِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَي وَ يَنْهَي عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ الْبَغْيِ. يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ }

(An-Nahl, 16/90) Allah enjoins justice (and right judgment in all matters), and devotion to doing good, and generosity towards relatives; and He forbids you indecency, wickedness, and vile conduct (all offenses against religion, life, personal property, chastity, and health of mind and body). He exhorts you (repeatedly) so that you may reflect and be mindful!

I ask Allah to give us all some of his divine wisdom, hikma, so that we have a light to illuminate our way through the confusion in the world out there. May Allah help us and all our future generations to know and love the beautiful Way of Islam. May we all hold fast to the rope that Allah extends for us. May we all set a good example for others, a justly balanced community, ummatanwasatan, and a witness to the nations [Quran 2:143]

Our Lord! Accept our prayers from us:

O my Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous [25:74]