

Prophet (ﷺ) forbade it; the verse states that one should set a time limit (for the temporary marriage) and agree on payment, then once the time has ended, if they mutually agree to increase or decrease the amount of payment, there is no blame on them. And Allah knows best.

﴿And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ that is, He has perfect and vast knowledge, and perfect wisdom. By His knowledge and wisdom He has decreed these laws for you and set these limits that separate what is permissible from what is forbidden.



﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكَحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَّا
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ فَنِيَاتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ
بَعْضٍ ۗ فَانْكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَءَاتُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ
مُسْفُوحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ ۗ فَإِذَا أَحْصِنَّ فَإِنَّ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْنَّ
نِصْفَ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ۗ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْ
تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٥)

- 4:25. If any of you does not have the means to marry free believing women, he may marry believing women from among the slave women whom you own and Allah knows best about your faith; you belong to one another. Marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries, according to what is reasonable. They should be chaste, not given to committing fornication or having illicit relationships. When they are married, if they commit adultery, their punishment shall be half that of free women. This is for those of you who fear that you will sin; but if you practise self-restraint, that is better for you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁷

⁷ Juz' 5 actually begins with v. 24, but as the author treated vv. 23-24 as a single passage, we included it in Juz' 4. (Translator)

That is, if anyone cannot afford the mahr to marry free believing women, and fears that he may fall into sin, namely fornication, or suffer a great deal of hardship, then it is permissible for him to marry believing slave women. These women are to be judged according to what appears to be the case, and Allah knows best who is a sincere believer and who is not. Worldly matters are to be judged on the basis of outward appearance, and in the hereafter matters will be judged on the basis of what is hidden in people's hearts.

﴿Marry them﴾, namely (believing) slave women
 ﴿with the permission of their masters﴾, whether the slave woman has one master or several.
 ﴿and give them their dowries, according to what is reasonable﴾ that is, even if they are slave women, just as it is obligatory to give the mahr to a free woman, it is also obligatory to give it to a slave woman.

But it is not permissible to marry slave women unless they are ﴿chaste﴾ that is, they refrain from immoral behaviour; ﴿not given to committing fornication﴾ openly ﴿or having illicit relationships﴾ that is, taking lovers in secret.

The point is that it is not permissible for a free Muslim man to marry a slave woman, unless four conditions, as stipulated by Allah, are met: they should be believers; they should be chaste in a real sense and sincerely; the man should not be able to afford to marry a free woman; and he should be afraid of falling into sin or suffering extreme hardship. If these conditions are met, then it is permissible for him to marry a slave woman.

Nevertheless, refraining from marrying them is better, because it will expose his children to slavery and it is not a dignified option. This applies if it is possible to restrain oneself; if a person cannot restrain himself from committing haram actions except by marrying slave women, then it becomes a must. Hence Allah says: ﴿but if you practise self-restraint, that is better for you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾.

﴿When they are married﴾ that is, if they – namely slave women – get married, ﴿their punishment shall be half that of free women﴾. This applies to that which may be halved, namely flogging. So they are to be given fifty lashes. With regard to stoning, there is no stoning for slave women, because it cannot be halved. Therefore if they are not married (and they commit fornication), there is no ḥadd punishment for them, according to some scholars; rather they are to be given a disciplinary punishment (*ta'zeer*), in order to deter them from immoral conduct. However, according to other scholars, if non-Muslim slave women commit immoral actions, they should also be given a disciplinary punishment.

This verse ends with these two names of Allah: Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, because these rulings are a mercy and kindness to people. These rulings do not place constraints on them; rather they make things very easy. Mentioning forgiveness after mention of the ḥadd punishment indicates that the ḥadd punishment is expiation, by means of which Allah forgives the sins of His slaves, as it states in the hadith. The ruling on a male slave with regard to the ḥadd punishment mentioned is the same as the ruling on a female slave, because there is no difference between them.



﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّيبَ الَّتِي فِيكُمْ وَيُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ سُبُلَ الْبِرِّ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ فِيهَا تَشْتَكُونَ﴾
 وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ
 الشَّهْوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ
 ضَعِيفًا ﴿٢٨﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٦-٢٨)

4:26. Allah wants to make things clear to you and to guide you to the [righteous] ways of those who came before you; and [He wants to] turn to you in mercy; and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

4:27. Allah wants to turn to you in mercy, but those who follow their lusts want you to drift far away from the right path.

4:28. Allah wants to lighten your burdens, for man was created weak.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of His great blessing and gift, and He highlights His care for His believing slaves and how easy His religion is.

﴿Allah wants to make things clear to you﴾ that is, everything you need to know about truth and falsehood, halal and haram.

﴿and to guide you to the [righteous] ways of those who came before you﴾ that is, those whom Allah blessed of the Prophets and their followers, in their praiseworthy conduct, righteous deeds, perfect characteristics and guided ways. Therefore He did what He wanted and explained to you what He explained to those who came before you, and He guided you to the right path in knowledge and in deeds.

﴿and [He wants to] turn to you in mercy﴾ that is, He shows mercy to you in all your situations and in all that He prescribes for you, so that you will be aware of the limits of Allah and be content with what He has permitted; then your sins will be reduced because of what Allah has made easy for you. This is by His mercy towards His slaves. By His mercy towards them, if they commit sin, He opens the gates of mercy to them and makes their hearts incline towards repentance to Him, so that they stand in humility before Him, then He turns in mercy towards them and accepts what He enabled them to do. To Him be praise and thanks for that.

﴿and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ that is, His knowledge is perfect and all-encompassing, and His wisdom is perfect. By His knowledge, He taught you that which you did not know, including these things and limits. By His wisdom, He accepts the repentance of those who His mercy and wisdom dictate that their repentance should be accepted, and He forsakes those who His wisdom and justice dictate should not be fit for repentance.

﴿Allah wants to turn to you in mercy﴾ that is, by means of repentance that helps you to start anew, fills your hearts with peace and brings you closer to Allah.

﴿but those who follow their lusts﴾ that is, those who go along with their whims and desires wherever they lead them, and give precedence to that over that which pleases Allah; they worship their whims and desires. (This refers to) all types of disbelievers, sinners and those who give precedence to their whims and desires over obedience to their Lord.

These people ﴿want you to drift far away from the right path﴾ that is, they want you to deviate from the straight path and follow the path of those with whom Allah is angry and those who have gone astray. They want to divert you from obedience to the Most Merciful to obedience to the Shayṭān, from adherence to the guidelines that lead to happiness by obeying His commands to following the one whose way leads to utter misery.

Once you realise that Allah (ﷻ) enjoins upon you that which is in your best interests and will lead to success and happiness, and that those who follow their whims and desires are enjoining upon you that which will lead to the utmost loss and misery, then choose for yourselves the better of the two callers and choose the better of the two paths.

﴿Allah wants to lighten your burdens﴾ that is, by making what is enjoined upon you easy and making it easy to refrain from what He has forbidden. Then when there is some difficulty in adhering to some of the laws that He prescribes, He permits to you that which is dictated by your deeds, such as eating dead meat, blood and the like, for the one who is in desperate need (and has no other option), or marrying slave women, for a free man, if he meets the conditions mentioned above. That is by His perfect mercy and kindness, and His wisdom and knowledge of man's weakness in all aspects, physical weakness, weakness of will and resolve, weakness of faith and lack

of patience. Because of all of that, Allah reduces for him that which he is too weak to bear and that which his faith, patience and strength are unable to cope with.



﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِ نَارًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٩-٣٠)

- 4:29. O you who believe, do not consume one another's property by unjust means, unless it is trade conducted with your mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another], for verily Allah has been Most Merciful to you.
- 4:30. Whoever does that maliciously and wrongfully, We will cast him into fire; and that is easy for Allah.

Allah (ﷻ) forbids His believing slaves to consume one another's wealth unlawfully. This includes taking it by force, stealing, taking it by means of gambling, or by other evil means. Indeed it may also include consuming one's own wealth in vanity and extravagance, because that is also unlawful and is not right.

Moreover, when Allah (ﷻ) forbids consuming it unlawfully, He permits them to consume it by means of trade and other ways of earning that are free of anything objectionable and that fulfil the conditions of mutual consent and so on.

﴿And do not kill yourselves [or one another]﴾ that is, do not kill one another, and no one should kill himself. This includes throwing oneself into risky activities or dangers that may lead to harm or death.

«for verily Allah has been Most Merciful to you» and by His mercy He protects you and your wealth, forbids you to waste it or destroy it, and He has ordained consequences for that in the form of *hudoos* punishments.

«do not consume one another's property... And do not kill yourselves [or one another]». In the original Arabic, it refers to "you" in the plural. This eloquently and concisely conveys the idea that it is not permissible to consume your own wealth or that of others, or to kill oneself or others.

Moreover, saying "your wealth" and "your property", to the believers as a whole, indicates that all believers, in their mutual love, compassion, mercy and interests are like one body, as faith unites them to achieve their religious and worldly interests.

When Allah (ﷻ) forbade consuming wealth unlawfully, which will result in the greatest harm for the one who consumes it and the one whose wealth was consumed, He permitted that which serves their interests of different ways of earning a livelihood, such as trade, crafts, professions and rentals:

«unless it is trade conducted with your mutual consent», in which case it is permissible for you.

Mutual consent is stipulated – even though it is a trade – in order to highlight that it is essential that the contract should not be usurious, because usury is not trade; rather it is contrary to the aims of trade. It is essential that each party give consent and enter into it willingly. Part of fulfilling the condition of mutual consent is that the item that is the subject of the transaction should be clearly known, because if it is not known, it is impossible to give consent. It should also be possible to deliver it, because if it is not possible to deliver an item, then it is akin to gambling. There can be no consent in any types of ambiguous transactions, therefore such transactions are invalid.

This verse also indicates that transactions are done by words or deeds indicative of consent, because Allah stipulated that there be mutual consent. Therefore in whatever way consent is indicated, the transaction becomes valid thereby.

Then Allah concludes the verse with the words: ﴿for verily Allah has been Most Merciful to you﴾. By His mercy, He protected your lives and your wealth, and He forbade any transgression against them.

﴿Whoever does that﴾ namely consumes wealth unlawfully and kills people,

﴿maliciously and wrongfully﴾ that is, not out of ignorance or by mistake

﴿We will cast him into fire﴾ that is, a huge fire; in the original Arabic, this word appears in the indefinite, which indicates that it is huge.

﴿and that is easy for Allah﴾.



﴿إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا نُهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكْفَرْنَا عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ

مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣١)

- 4:31. If you abstain from the major [sins] out of what you have been forbidden to do, We will erase your [minor] sins for you and admit you to a place of honour [paradise].

This is by the grace and kindness of Allah to His believing slaves; He promises them that if they avoid major sins, He will forgive all their (minor) sins or bad deeds, and He will admit them to a place of honour, a place of much good, namely paradise in which there is that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and it has never entered the mind of man.

Avoiding major sins includes doing the obligatory duties, omission of which constitutes a major sin, such as the five daily prayers, Jumu'ah (Friday prayer) and fasting Ramadan. As the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «The five (daily) prayers, one Jumu'ah to another, and one Ramadan to another, expiate whatever (sins) come in between them, so long as major sins are avoided.» (Muslim)

The best definition I have found for major sins is that the major sin is that for which there is prescription of a ḥadd punishment in this world or warning of punishment in the hereafter, or it is described as being contrary to faith, resulting in being cursed or incurring divine wrath.



﴿وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۗ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۖ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبْنَ ۗ وَسَأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٢)

- 4:32. Do not covet the bounties which Allah has bestowed more abundantly on some of you than on others. Men will have the reward for what they earn, and women will have the reward for what they earn. Ask Allah of His bounty. Verily Allah has knowledge of all things.

Allah (ﷻ) instructs the believers that no one should covet that which Allah has given more of to others, whether that is things that it is possible for them to acquire or things that it is not possible for them to acquire. Hence women should not covet the characteristics of men, by means of which men have an advantage over women; the one who is poor or has some imperfections or shortcomings should not merely wish to be like one who is rich or perfect, because that is

the very essence of envy, which is to wish for the blessing that Allah bestowed upon someone else to be taken from him and given to you.

Moreover, such wishes are indicative of displeasure with the decree of Allah and being content with laziness and wishful thinking, unaccompanied by any effort or earning. Rather what is praiseworthy is two things: to strive to the best of one's ability and to do that which will benefit one's religious and worldly interests, asking Allah for His bounty, and not relying on oneself or anyone other than one's Lord. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Men will have the reward for what they earn﴾ that is, of their deeds that will lead to the desired results.

﴿and women will have the reward for what they earn﴾ – so each of them will not attain anything but that which he or she has earned and worked hard for.

﴿Ask Allah of His bounty﴾ that is, for everything that has to do with your religious or worldly affairs. Doing so is a sign of wisdom and of being blessed, in contrast to the one who fails to strive or relies on himself, not acknowledging his need of his Lord; or those who do both, in which case they are forsaken and are losers.

﴿Verily Allah has knowledge of all things﴾, therefore He gives to the one who He knows deserves it, and He withholds it from the one who He knows does not deserve it.



﴿وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوْلَىٰ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدَتْ
 أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَأَوْهَهُمْ نَصِيحَتُهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ۝﴾

(سورة النساء: ۳۳)

- 4:33. We have made for everyone helpers and supporters of those whom parents and close relatives leave behind. As for those

with whom you have made a solemn covenant, give them their dues. Verily Allah is witness to all things.

﴿We have made for everyone﴾ that is, for all people ﴿helpers and supporters﴾ who support him and help him, and cooperate with him in different issues ﴿of those whom parents and close relatives leave behind﴾. This includes all relatives, ascendants and descendants, siblings and their children. These are helpers and supporters among one's relatives.

Then Allah mentions another type of helpers: ﴿As for those with whom you have made a solemn covenant﴾ that is, those with whom you have entered into an agreement to help and support one another, to share wealth, and so on. All of that is the blessing that Allah bestows upon His slaves, so that helpers and supporters cooperate in matters that some of them could not do alone.

﴿give them their dues﴾ that is, give helpers and supporters their dues that you are obliged to give of your help and support in whatever does not involve disobedience towards Allah, and give what is due of shares of inheritance to the relatives who are described as helpers and supporters.

﴿Verily Allah is witness to all things﴾ that is, He sees everything, by means of His knowledge of all things; He sees the movements of His slaves and hears all their voices.



﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنِينَاتٌ ۙ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ ۚ فَعِظُوهُنَّ ۚ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ

أَطَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَا تُبِعُوا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ (سورة

النساء: ٣٤)

- 4:34. Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made one of them excel the other, and because they spend of their wealth [on them]. Therefore the righteous women are obedient, and guard in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. As for those women on whose part you fear defiant disobedience, [first] admonish them, [next] refuse to share their beds, [and last] hit them [lightly]. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Verily Allah is Most High, Great.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that: ﴿Men are in charge of women﴾ that is, they are in charge with regard to making sure that they are doing their duties towards Allah (ﷻ), by keeping up with obligatory duties and restraining them from committing evil; men are obliged to make sure that they (women) adhere to that. They are also in charge of them in terms of spending on them, clothing them, and providing accommodation to them.

Then He states the reason why men are in charge of women: ﴿because Allah has made one of them excel the other, and because they spend of their wealth [on them]﴾ that is, because of the superiority of men over women; men are superior to women in many ways; for example, positions of political authority are only for men, as is prophethood and messengerhood. Moreover, men are singled out, to the exclusion of women, for many acts of worship, such as jihad and Eid and Jumu'ah prayers.

It is also because of what Allah has bestowed exclusively on them of wisdom, mature thinking, patience and perseverance, the like of which women do not have. Men also have the exclusive obligation of spending on their wives; moreover, there are many types of spending

that are demanded exclusively of men, by which they are distinct from women.

Perhaps this is the reason why Allah says ﴿and because they spend of their wealth [on them]﴾. No mention is made of those on whom they are to spend, so as to indicate spending in a general sense. Thus it is known that a man is like a guardian and a master to his wife, and she is like a prisoner and servant to him. Therefore his role is to do his duty towards that which Allah has put him in charge of.

The woman's role is to obey her Lord and obey her husband. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Therefore the righteous women are obedient﴾ to Allah

﴿and guard in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard﴾ that is, they obey their husbands even in their absence; the wife guards her husband with regard to herself and his wealth. That is because Allah has enjoined upon them to guard themselves, and He has guided them to that; they could not do it without His help, because the human soul is inclined to evil. But whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him and take care of everything that worries him of his religious and worldly affairs.

﴿As for those women on whose part you fear defiant disobedience﴾ that is, their refusal to obey their husbands, such as disobeying them in word and deed. In that case a husband may discipline his wife, starting with the mildest of measures.

﴿[first] admonish them﴾ that is, explain the ruling of Allah with regard to obedience and disobedience to the husband, encourage them to be obedient, and warn them against being disobedient. If the wife stops, then that is the desired result. Otherwise, the husband should refuse to share her bed, and not sleep with her or have intimate relations with her, to the extent that will achieve the desired aim. If that does not succeed, then he may hit her in a manner that does not cause pain.

If one of these means is successful and they (wives) obey you (husbands), «take no further action against them» that is, you have got what you wanted, so stop rebuking her for what happened in the past, and stop looking for faults, because that will cause harm and stir up dispute.

«Verily Allah is Most High, Great» that is, He is absolutely exalted in all aspects, in His essence, in status and in might; He is great and nothing is greater than Him or more majestic or more mighty; He is great in His essence and attributes.



﴿ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَأَبْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٥)

4:35. If you fear a breach between them, appoint an arbitrator from his family and another from hers; if they both want to put things right, Allah will bring about reconciliation between them. Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

That is, if you fear a breach between the spouses, and that they will keep away from one another, «appoint an arbitrator from his family and another from hers» that is, two men who are accountable, Muslims, of good character and wise, who are both aware of the problem. All of these qualities may be understood from the word *hakam* (translated here as «arbitrator»); no one is fit to be an arbitrator except one who possesses these attributes. They should examine the objection of each spouse against the other, then tell each one what he or she must do. Then if one of them is not able to adhere to that, they should advise the other spouse to be content with whatever is available of provision and accept whatever is the attitude of the other spouse.

Whenever it is possible to bring about reconciliation and set things straight, they should not turn to the other option.

If the matter reaches a point where it is not possible to keep them together and set things straight between them, except in a way of enmity, hostility and disobedience to Allah, and they realise that separation is better for them, the arbitrators may decide to separate them. In that case the consent of the husband is not essential, as is indicated here, because Allah called them *hakam* (translated here as «arbitrators»), which implies having the authority to issue a ruling or verdict which must be accepted, even if the one against whom it is issued is not happy with it.

Hence Allah says: «if they both want to put things right, Allah will bring about reconciliation between them» that is, by means of sound advice and gentle words that soften the hearts and bring about harmony between the spouses.

«Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware» that is, He knows all that is visible and hidden and is aware of subtleties and secrets. By means of His knowledge and awareness, He prescribes these sublime rulings and guidelines for you.



﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَاللَّوَالِدِينَ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ
بِالْجُنُبِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا
فِخْرًا ﴿٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ
مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿٣٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ وَمَن يَكُنِ
الْفَيْطَنُ لَهُ قَرِينًا فَسَاءَ قَرِينًا ﴿٤٠﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٦-٣٨)

- 4:36. Worship Allah, and do not ascribe any partner to Him. Be kind to parents, relatives, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are related to you and neighbours who are not related to you, the companion by your side, the wayfarer, and what you own of slaves. For Allah does not love those who are arrogant and boastful,
- 4:37. Those who are stingy, and exhort people to stinginess, and conceal what Allah has bestowed on them of His bounty – for We have prepared for disbelievers a humiliating punishment –
- 4:38. And those who spend their wealth to show off to people, but do not believe in Allah and the Last Day. If anyone has the Shayṭān as a companion, what an evil companion he is!

Here Allah commands His slaves to worship Him alone and not associate anything with Him. This means declaring complete servitude to Him, submitting to His commands and prohibitions out of love, humility and sincerity towards Him, in all acts of worship, both apparent and hidden. He forbids the association of anything with Him, whether that is in a major or minor sense, and whether the so-called partner is an angel, a Prophet, a “saint” (*wali*), or any other created beings that have no power to bring benefit or ward off harm from themselves, to cause death or give life or resurrect. Rather what is obligatory is to direct one’s worship sincerely to the One Who has absolute perfection in all ways and Who has absolute control which no one shares with Him or helps him in the control He has. Then after enjoining worship of Him alone and fulfilment of His rights, He enjoins fulfilling duties towards other people, the closest then the next closest:

«Be kind to parents» that is, treat them kindly and speak decent words to them, addressing them gently, doing good deeds for them, obeying their instructions, avoiding what they forbid you to do, spending on them, honouring anyone who has a connection to them,

and upholding ties of kinship, for you have no ties of kinship except through them.

Kindness has two opposites, bad treatment and failure to show kindness. Both are forbidden.

﴿relatives﴾ – we should also show kindness to relatives. This includes all relatives, close or distant. We should treat them well in word and deed and not sever ties of kinship in word or deed.

﴿orphans﴾ that is, those who have lost their fathers when they are small. They have rights over the Muslims, whether they are relatives or not, who should sponsor them, be kind to them, console them, discipline them and give them a good upbringing, and take care of their religious and worldly affairs.

﴿those in need﴾ – they are the ones who are not able to earn enough to meet their needs or the needs of those they are in charge of. Therefore Allah (ﷻ) has enjoined showing kindness to them by meeting their needs and helping them to ward off poverty, and encouraging others to do so, and doing that as much as one can.

﴿neighbours who are related to you﴾ that is, the neighbour who is related to you has two rights: the rights of a neighbour and the rights of a relative. He has the right that his neighbour should treat him kindly, in line with what is customarily regarded as kindness.

﴿and﴾ likewise ﴿neighbours who are not related to you﴾. The closer the neighbour's door is to yours, the greater his rights over you. So we should take care of neighbours by giving them gifts and charity, inviting them over, being kind in word and deed, and not annoying them in word or deed.

﴿the companion by your side﴾ – it was said that this refers to a travelling companion, a wife or companions in general, which is most likely to be the correct meaning, because it includes companions at home and when travelling, and it also includes the wife.

A person's companion has rights over him more than the rights dictated by the fact that he is a Muslim with regard to helping him in his religious and worldly affairs, and being sincere and honest with him in good times and bad, and regardless of whether one feels energetic or reluctant. He should love for him what he loves for himself and hate for him what he hates for himself. The longer the companionship lasts, the more the mutual rights are confirmed and emphasised.

﴿the wayfarer﴾ – this refers to a stranger who is in need in a foreign land, or even if he is not in need. He has rights over the Muslims because of his need and because of the fact that he is in a strange land; they should help him to reach his destination or help him partway, and they should honour him and offer him comfort.

﴿and what you own of slaves﴾ – this phrase (*lit.* “what your right hands possess”) may also include livestock and beasts of burden; kindness to them includes making sure that they have enough, not overburdening them, helping them with whatever tasks they are assigned, and disciplining them in a way that is in their best interests. The one who does these things as enjoined is the one who is truly submitting to his Lord, showing humility towards the slaves of Allah and adhering to the commands and laws of Allah. This is the one who deserves the great reward and praise. The one who does not do that is a person who is turning away from his Lord, failing to submit to His commands and is not showing humility towards other people; rather his attitude is one of arrogance towards the slaves of Allah, and he is filled with self-admiration and boasting about what he says. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿For Allah does not love those who are arrogant﴾ that is, those who are filled with self-pride and who look down upon people, ﴿and boastful﴾ that is, they praise themselves by way of pride and vanity towards the slaves of Allah.

Their arrogance and vanity prevent them from carrying out their duties; hence Allah criticises them for that, as He says:

﴿Those who are stingy﴾ that is, they refuse to spend as they are obliged to

﴿and exhort people to stinginess﴾ by their words and deeds.

﴿and conceal what Allah has bestowed on them of His bounty﴾ that is, of knowledge by means of which those who have gone astray and the ignorant could be guided. They conceal it from them and teach them falsehood that prevents them from learning the truth. Thus they combine stinginess with regard to wealth and stinginess with regard to knowledge with striving for their own perdition and the doom of others. This is the quality of the disbelievers, hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿for We have prepared for disbelievers a humiliating punishment﴾ that is, as they were arrogant towards the slaves of Allah and withheld the rights of Allah and caused others to also withhold what they owed to Allah, as a result of being stingy and not being guided, Allah will humiliate them with a painful punishment and eternal disgrace. We seek refuge with You, O Allah, from all evil.

Then Allah tells us about the spending that is motivated by the desire to show off and gain a reputation, and is not based on faith:

﴿And those who spend their wealth to show off to people﴾ that is, so that they will see them, praise them and respect them.

﴿but do not believe in Allah and the Last Day﴾ that is, their spending is not motivated by sincerity and faith in Allah, and the hope of His reward; therefore this comes under the heading of the footsteps of the Shayṭān and his works, to which he calls his followers, so that they will be inhabitants of hell. They do these deeds because they are his companions and he is pushing them in that direction. Hence Allah says:

﴿If anyone has the Shayṭān as a companion, what an evil companion he is!﴾ That is, what an evil companion is the one who seeks the doom of his companion and strives hard to achieve that.

Just as the one who withholds what Allah has bestowed upon him and conceals the knowledge with which Allah has blessed him is a

sinner and offender who is in opposition to his Lord, the one who is motivated by something other than seeking the pleasure of Allah in his spending and worship is also a sinner who is disobeying his Lord, and thus deserves punishment, because Allah only enjoined obedience to Him and adherence to His commands to be done in a sincere manner, as He says:

«Although they were enjoined only to worship Allah with sincere devotion to Him, being true in faith to Him alone, and to establish prayer and give zakâh, and that is the true religion...» (*al-Bayinah* 98: 5)

This is the type of acceptable deeds for which a person deserves to be praised and this is what Allah encourages people to base their deeds on, as He says:



﴿وَمَاذَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ ءَامَنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِهِمْ
عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٩﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٩)

4:39. What harm would it do them to believe in Allah and in the Last Day, and to spend out of what Allah has bestowed upon them? For Allah has full knowledge of them.

That is, what harm would it do them, and what trouble or hardship would befall them, if they had faith in Allah that is based on sincerity and they spent from the wealth that Allah has bestowed upon them and with which He has blessed them, thus combining sincerity and spending (for His sake)?

Because sincerity is something secret between a person and his Lord, and no one sees it except Allah, He states that He has knowledge of all their situations: «For Allah has full knowledge of them».



﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِن تَكَ حَسَنَةً يُّضْعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَٰؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٤١﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَعَصَوُا الرَّسُولَ لَوْ تُسَوَّى بِهِمُ الْأَرْضُ وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ لِلَّهِ حَدِيثًا ﴿٤٢﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٠-٤٢)

- 4:40. Verily, Allah does not wrong anyone by as much as the weight of a speck of dust. And if there is a good deed Allah will multiply it, and give an immense reward of His own.
- 4:41. How will it be when We bring a witness from every nation and bring you [O Muhammad] as a witness against them?
- 4:42. On that day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish that the earth could be levelled over them. But they will not be able to conceal anything from Allah.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the perfect nature of His justice and grace, and that He is above the opposites of that, such as injustice great or small.

﴿Verily, Allah does not wrong anyone by as much as the weight of a speck of dust﴾ that is, He does not detract from a person's good deeds or increase his bad deeds in the slightest, as He says elsewhere: ﴿So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.﴾ (az-Zalzalah 99: 7-8)

﴿And if there is a good deed Allah will multiply it﴾ that is, He will multiply it tenfold or more, according to the nature of the deed and how beneficial it was, and according to the situation of the doer in terms of sincerity, love and righteousness.

﴿and give an immense reward of His own﴾ that is, in addition to the reward for the deed itself, such as enabling him to do more righteous deeds, or to give more charity, or to show more kindness.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:

«How will it be when We bring a witness from every nation and bring you [O Muhammad] as a witness against them?» That is, how will it be, how will the great judgement be, when the judgement in which the One Who will judge has perfect knowledge, perfect justice and perfect wisdom is combined with the testimony of the best of humankind, namely the Messengers who will testify against their nations, along with the confession of those against whom judgement is passed? This, by Allah, is the most comprehensive judgement, the most just and the greatest.

Then those against whom judgement will be passed will confirm the perfect grace and justice of Allah, and will utter words of praise. At that point, some people will be blessed with triumph, success and honour, and others will be doomed to disgrace, shame and the humiliating punishment.

Hence Allah says: «On that day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger» that is, those who combine disbelief in Allah and His Messenger with disobedience towards the Messenger «will wish that the earth could be levelled over them» that is, that it would swallow them and they would become dust and become nothing, as Allah (ﷻ) tells us that they will say:

«...and the disbeliever will say: Would that I were mere dust!» (*an-Naba'* 78: 40)

«But they will not be able to conceal anything from Allah» that is, rather they will admit to Him what they did, and their own tongues, hands and feet will testify against them, speaking of what they used to do. On that day, Allah will give them in full their due recompense and they will know that Allah is indeed the Truth Who makes manifest (the true nature of all things) (*cf.* 24: 25).

With regard to what was narrated about how the disbelievers will conceal their disbelief and deny their evil deeds, that will happen at

some stages of the Day of Resurrection, when they think that their denial will avail them against the punishment of Allah. Then when they realise the true nature of their situation and their faculties testify against them, at that point things will become clear and there will be no reason to conceal anything, and there will be no benefit in doing so.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا ﴿٤٣﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٣)

- 4:43. O you who believe, do not approach the prayer when you are intoxicated, until you know what you are saying, nor in a state of major impurity [*janābah*] – except while passing through – until you have washed yourselves completely [*ghusl*]. If you are ill, or on a journey, or have relieved yourselves, or you have touched women, and cannot find water, then find some clean earth, and wipe your faces and hands with it [*tayammum*]. For Allah is Ever-Pardoning, Forgiving.

Here Allah (ﷻ) forbids His believing slaves to come near prayer when they are intoxicated, until they know what they are saying. This includes coming near places of prayer, such as the mosque, which the one who is intoxicated should not be allowed to enter, as well as the prayer itself. It is not permissible for one who is intoxicated to pray or do any act of worship, because his mind is confused and he does not know what he is saying. Hence Allah defined the times when such a person may pray and told him to postpone it until he knows what he is saying. This verse was abrogated by the complete prohibition

of intoxicants. In the beginning intoxicants were not prohibited, then Allah (ﷻ) hinted to His slaves that they would be prohibited, as He said:

﴿They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say: In them is great sin, and some benefit for people; but the sin is greater than the benefit...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 219)

Then He forbade being intoxicated when attending prayers, as in this verse. Then He forbade intoxicants altogether, at all times, as He said:

﴿O you who believe, intoxicants, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination, of Shayṭân's handiwork; therefore avoid such [abomination]...﴾ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 90)

Moreover, that becomes more emphatically prohibited at the time of attending the prayer, because of what it leads to of this evil situation, which is not being able to achieve the purpose of prayer, that which is its soul and essence, namely proper focus and presence of mind, because intoxicants befog the mind and prevent one from remembering Allah and from focusing on prayer. We may also understand from the meaning of the verse that it is not allowed to start praying when one is extremely drowsy, to the point that he is not aware of what he is saying and doing. Indeed it may indicate that the one who wants to pray should deal with anything that is distracting him, such as resisting the urge to urinate or defecate, or when one wants to eat, and so on, as is mentioned in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadiths.

Then Allah says: ﴿nor in a state of major impurity [janâbah] – except while passing through﴾ that is, do not come near prayer when one of you is in a state of janâbah (impurity following sexual activity), except in this case, which is when one is passing through the mosque and not staying in it.

﴿until you have washed yourselves completely [ghusl]﴾ that is, when you have done ghusl and removed the reason why it was disallowed

to approach the prayer, then it becomes permissible to approach the prayer. But it is permissible for the one who is in a state of janâbah to pass through the mosque only.

﴿If you are ill, or on a journey, or have relieved yourselves, or you have touched women, and cannot find water, then find some clean earth, and wipe your faces and hands with it [tayammum]﴾. Tayammum (“dry ablution”) is permissible for the one who is sick in general terms, whether water is available or not; the reason for that is sickness that makes it difficult to use water. The same ruling applies when travelling, because that is when water may be scarce. So if a traveller has no water, but he only has enough to meet his needs for drinking and so on, it is permissible for him to do tayammum.

The same applies if a person invalidates his *wuḍoo'* by urinating or defecating, or touching women. It is permissible for him to do tayammum if he cannot find water, whether he is travelling or not, as is indicated by the general meaning of the verse.

In conclusion, Allah (ﷻ) has permitted tayammum in two cases: when there is no water, which applies whether one is travelling or not, and when it is too difficult to use water, because of sickness and the like.

The commentators differed concerning the meaning of the words ﴿or you have touched women﴾: does this refer to intercourse, in which case the meaning of the verse is that it is permissible for one who is in a state of janâbah to do tayammum, and there are many *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadiths to support this view, or does it mean simply touching with the hand; this applies if there is the possibility of *madhy* being produced, which refers to touching with desire – thus this verse indicates that *wuḍoo'* is invalidated in this case?

The *fuqahâ'* quoted the words ﴿and cannot find water﴾ as supporting the view that it is obligatory to look for water when the time for prayer begins. They said: That is because we cannot say,

“he did not find water” if he did not look for it; rather we can only say that after looking for it. They also quoted that as evidence for the view that it is permissible to use water that has been changed by any pure substance; in fact one must use it to purify oneself, because that is included in the phrase ﴿and cannot find water﴾, because this is still water. Others disagreed with that.

This verse prescribes this great ruling with which Allah has blessed this Ummah, namely the prescription of tayammum, and all scholars are agreed on that, praise be to Allah.

Tayammum must be done with clean earth, which refers to anything that protrudes from the surface of the earth, whether it has dust on it or not. It may refer specifically to that which has dust, because Allah says: ﴿and wipe your faces and hands with it﴾, and one cannot wipe with that which does not have any dust on it.

﴿and wipe your faces and hands with it﴾ – these are the places to be wiped in tayammum: the entire face and the arms up to the elbows, as is indicated by the ṣaḥeeḥ hadiths. It is recommended to strike the clean dust once, as is indicated by the hadith of ‘Ammâr, which indicates that tayammum in the case of janâbah is the same as tayammum in other cases, namely wiping the face and arms.

Note:

It should be noted that the main aims of medicine focus on three principles: protecting health from what may harm it, getting rid of harmful things and prescribing an appropriate diet. Allah has referred to all of them in His Book.

With regard to protecting health from that which may harm it, He has instructed us to eat and drink but not to go to excess in doing so; He has permitted the traveller and the one who is sick to refrain from fasting, so as to protect their health, by using that which will help the body to keep going in a reasonable manner; and protecting the sick person from that which may harm him.

With regard to getting rid of harmful things, Allah (ﷻ) has permitted the pilgrim in *ihram* who has an ailment in his scalp to shave his head. This may indicate that one should get rid of that which is more serious than that, such as urine, stools, vomit, *maniy* (semen), blood and other things, as pointed out by Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him).

This verse indicates that it is obligatory to wipe the entire face and arms, and that it is permissible to do tayammum even if the time left for prayer is not short; the individual is not to seek water except when there is a reason to do so. And Allah knows best.

Then the verse ends with the words: ﴿For Allah is Ever-Pardoning, Forgiving﴾ that is, He pardons a great deal and forgives His believing slaves by making things very easy for them, as it is not difficult for a person to obey His commands, so that he will not go through hardship.

By His pardon and forgiveness, He had mercy on this Ummah and prescribed purification with dust instead of water, when it is not possible to use water.

By His pardon and forgiveness, He has opened the gate of repentance to the sinners, and He invites them to turn to Him, and He promises forgiveness of sins.

By His pardon and forgiveness, if the believer brought an earthful of sins, then was to meet Him not associating anything with Him, He will grant him forgiveness as great as it.

❁ ❁

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يَشَرُّونَ الصَّالِحِينَ وَرِيدُونَ أَن تَضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ ۗ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يَحْرِفُونَ الْقَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ، وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَاعِنَا لِيَّا بِالسِّنِّهِمْ وَطَعْنَا فِي الدِّينِ ۗ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ وَأَنْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ

﴿سورة النساء﴾ ﴿٤٦﴾ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِن لَّعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

(٤٦-٤٤)

- 4:44. Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the scripture? They purchase misguidance and want you to lose your way.
- 4:45. But Allah knows best who your enemies are. Allah is sufficient as a protector, and Allah is sufficient as a helper.
- 4:46. Among the Jews are some who distort the meaning of [revealed] words, and say: We hear and we disobey, and: Listen, may you not hear, and: *Râ'inā*,⁸ with a twist of their tongues so as to disparage religion. If only they had said: We hear and we obey, and: Listen, and: *Undhurnā*, it would have been better for them, and more proper. But Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, and only a few of them will believe.

This is a criticism of ﴿those who were given a portion of the scripture﴾ and implies a warning not to be deceived by them or fall into their traps. Here Allah tells us that they ﴿purchase misguidance﴾ that is, they love it a great deal and give it precedence like one who spends a great deal of money to get what he loves. Thus they prefer misguidance to guidance, disbelief to faith, and wretchedness to happiness, yet despite that they also ﴿want you to lose your way﴾.

Thus they are very keen that you should be misguided and they are trying their utmost to achieve that, but as Allah has been protecting His believing slaves and helping them, He explains to them how these

⁸ *Râ'inā* means "Listen to us"; *undhurnā* (mentioned later in the verse) means "Look at us". Both words convey the meaning of "Pay attention to us", but with a slight twist in pronunciation, the former had an offensive meaning in Hebrew, which the Jews took advantage of to mock the Prophet (ﷺ). Hence the believers were instructed to use a word that could not be twisted in this manner.

people are misguided and how they are misguiding others. Hence He says: «Allah is sufficient as a protector» that is, He takes charge of His slaves' affairs and bestows His grace upon them in all their affairs, and guides them to that which will lead them to happiness and prosperity.

«(and Allah is sufficient as a helper)»; He helps them against their enemies and explains to them what they should be cautious of with regard to the enemy, and what could help them against them. His protection leads to good and His help keeps them away from evil.

Then Allah explains the extent of their misguidance and stubbornness, and how they prefer falsehood to truth:

«Among the Jews» that is, some of the Jews, namely the misguided scholars among them

«are some who distort the meaning of [revealed] words» either by changing the words or the meaning, or both. An example of their distortion is how they distorted the description given in their Books, that could not be truly applicable to anyone but Muhammad (ﷺ); they suggested that it referred to someone else and that he was not the one who was meant, and they concealed it.

This is how they dealt with knowledge, in the worst manner, by turning ideas upside down and applying the true description to someone else falsely, thus denying that truth. With regard to how they act in terms of deeds and submission, «[they] say: We hear and we disobey» that is, we hear what you say and we disobey your command. This is the utmost disbelief, stubbornness and turning away from submission.

Likewise, they addressed the Messenger (ﷺ) in the most offensive and impolite manner, by saying «Listen, may you not hear» meaning: listen to us, and you will not hear what you like; rather you will hear what you dislike.

«(and: *Rā'inā*)» what they meant by this word was something offensive. They thought that because this word could be understood

as meaning something other than what they meant, they would be able to trick Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). By using this word, with a twist of the tongue, their intention was to disparage the religion and cast aspersions upon the Messenger (ﷺ), and they stated that intention clearly to one another when they were alone. Hence Allah says: ﴿with a twist of their tongues so as to disparage religion﴾.

Then He guided them to something that would be better for them than that, by saying: ﴿If only they had said: We hear and we obey, and: Listen, and: *Undhurnâ*, it would have been better for them, and more proper﴾. That is because these words sound better and they reflect a sublime etiquette when addressing the Messenger (ﷺ), show obedience to Allah and submission to His command, and demonstrate the use of kind words when seeking knowledge, so that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would listen to their questions and pay attention to them.

This is how their behaviour and attitude should have been, but because their nature was not good, they turned away from that and Allah cast them away from His mercy because of their disbelief and stubbornness. Hence He said: ﴿But Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, and only a few of them will believe﴾.



﴿يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰتَوْنَا الْكِتٰبَ ءَامِنُوْا بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ نَّطْمِسَ وُجُوْهَا فَنرُدَّهَا عَلٰى اَدْبَارِهَا اَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعْنَا اَصْحٰبَ السَّبْتِ ؕ وَكَانَ اَمْرٌ

اللّٰهِ مَفْعُوْلًا ﴿٤٧﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٧)

- 4:47. O you who have been given the scripture, believe in what We have revealed [to Muhammad], confirming what is with you, before We obliterate faces and turn them backwards, or curse them as We cursed those who broke the Sabbath. Allah's will is always done.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians, to believe in His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and in what Allah has revealed to him of the Holy Qur'an, which determines what is true in the previous Books that it confirmed because the previous Books foretold his coming, so when what was foretold came to pass, that was a confirmation of that foretelling.

Moreover, if they disbelieve in this Qur'an, that would mean that they disbelieved their own Books, because the Books of Allah confirm one another and are in harmony with one another. Hence the claim to believe in some of them but not others is a false claim that cannot be true.

﴿believe in what We have revealed [to Muhammad], confirming what is with you﴾. This is encouraging them and informing them that they, of all people, should be the first to hasten to believe in the Qur'an, because of the knowledge with which Allah has blessed them and the Book which dictates that their responsibility is greater than that of others. Hence He warned them against failing to believe. ﴿before We obliterate faces and turn them backwards﴾. This is a requital that is in accordance with their deeds, because they abandoned the truth and preferred falsehood, and turned the facts upside down, regarding falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood. Therefore their requital would be along similar lines: their faces would be obliterated as they had obliterated the truth, and their faces were to be turned backwards, so that their faces would be on the back of their heads, and this is the worst punishment.

﴿or curse them as We cursed those who broke the Sabbath﴾, by casting them far away from His mercy and punishing them by turning them into apes, as was done to their brethren who transgressed the Sabbath:

﴿...whereupon We said to them: Be apes, despised and rejected.﴾

(*al-Baqarah* 2: 65)

«Allah's will is always done». This is like the verse in which He says:

«His way, when He decrees a matter, is merely to say to it, 'Be!' and it is.» (Yâ Seen 36: 82)



﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٨)

4:48. Allah does not forgive the ascription of partners to Him, but He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. Whoever ascribes partners to Allah has indeed devised a heinous sin.

Here Allah tells us that He will not forgive the sins of one who ascribes partners to Him, but He will forgive lesser sins, whether minor or major, according to His will, if forgiveness is dictated by His wisdom.

For sins that are less grave than ascribing partners to Him, Allah has ordained many means of attaining forgiveness, such as good deeds that erase sin and suffering calamities and pain that expiate for sin, in this world, in al-barzakh and on the Day of Resurrection; He has also ordained other ways, such as the supplication of the believers for one another, the intercession of those who will intercede and, over and above all that, His mercy of which those who believe and affirm His oneness are the most deserving.

In direct contrast to that is the ascription of partners to Him (shirk), for the one who ascribes partners to Him has closed to himself the gates of forgiveness and has barred the gates of mercy. So no act of worship and obedience will be of any benefit to him if it is lacking affirmation of Allah's oneness, and no calamity will benefit him at all, and on the Day of Resurrection he will have:

﴿...no one to intercede for us and no caring friend.﴾ (ash-Shu'arā' 26: 100-101)

Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Whoever ascribes partners to Allah has indeed devised a heinous sin﴾ that is, he has committed a serious offense. What transgression can be greater than that of one who makes one who was created from dust, is lacking in all aspects and inherently dependent in all aspects, and has no power to benefit or harm himself – let alone the one who worships him – and no power to cause death, grant life or resurrect, equal with the Creator of all things, Who is perfect in all aspects and independent in and of Himself, with no need for any of His creation, in Whose Hand is the power to benefit or harm, give or withhold, and no blessing comes to His creation but it is from Him. Is there any worse transgression than that?

Hence He has made it inevitable that the one who commits this transgression will be punished eternally and deprived of reward.

﴿...Whoever ascribes partners to Allah, then Allah has forbidden paradise for him, and the fire will be his abode...﴾ (al-Mā'idah 5: 72)

This applies to the one who does not repent.

But for the one who repents, his ascription of partners to Allah, as well as his lesser sins, will be forgiven as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say [Allah says]: O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning greatly], do not despair of the mercy of Allah, for verily Allah forgives all sins...﴾ (az-Zumar 39: 53)

That is, for the one who repents to Him.



﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْكُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۗ بَلِ اللَّهُ يُرَكِّبُ مِنْ يَسَاءٍ وَلَا يَظْلُمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٤٩﴾
 أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَكَفَىٰ بِهِ إِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٥٠﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٩-٥٠)

- 4:49. Have you not seen those who claim purity for themselves? Nay, Allah purifies whomever He wills. They will never be wronged even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone.
- 4:50. Look how they fabricate lies against Allah! This in itself is a flagrant sin.

Here Allah expresses amazement concerning His slaves and rebukes those among the Jews and Christians who claim purity for themselves and others of their ilk, saying that they are good and pure, praising themselves for something that is not true. That is because the Jews and Christians say:

﴿...We are children of Allah, and His beloved ones...﴾ (*al-Mâ'idah* 5: 18)

– and:

﴿...No one will enter paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 111)

But this is a mere claim for which there is no proof; rather proof is what the Qur'an says:

﴿Nay, whoever submits himself [completely] to Allah and is a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord; they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 112)

These are the ones whom Allah praises; hence He says here: ﴿Nay, Allah purifies whomever He wills﴾ that is, for their faith and righteous deeds, and for their ridding themselves of bad attitudes and acquiring good attitudes.

As for those people (the Jews, Christians and others) – even if they praise themselves by claiming that they are pure and that they are following something good, and that the reward will be theirs alone – they are lying; they have no share of the attributes of the pure because of their wrongdoing and disbelief, not because of any injustice on Allah's part. Hence He says: ﴿They will never be wronged even

by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone». This is in general terms; that is, they will not be wronged at all, and not even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone.

«Look how they fabricate lies against Allah» that is, by praising themselves and saying that they are pure. This is one of the greatest kinds of fabricating lies against Allah, because the implication of their self-praise is the idea that Allah has made what they are following true and what the believing Muslims are following false, and this is one of the worst kinds of lie, which turns facts upside down by regarding truth as falsehood and falsehood as truth. Hence Allah says: «This in itself is a flagrant sin» that is, it is blatant and obvious, and it deserves a far-reaching and painful punishment.



﴿لَمْ تَر إِلَى الَّذِينَ أَوْثُوا نَصِيْبًا مِّنَ الْكُتُبِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْجَنَّةِ وَالطَّغْوَتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَتُّوْلَاءَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنَ الْبَلَدِ ۚ أَمَانُوا سَبِيْلًا ﴿٥١﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۖ وَمَن يَلْعَنِ اللَّهُ فَلَن مَّجْدَلَهُ ۖ نَصِيْرًا ﴿٥٢﴾ أَمْ لَمْ نَصِيْبْ مِّنَ الْمَلِكِ فَإِذَا لَا يُؤْتُونَ النَّاسَ نَقِيْرًا ﴿٥٣﴾ أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ ۖ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ الْكُتُبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ ۖ وَآتَيْنَاهُم مَّلَكًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿٥٤﴾ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ ءَامَنَ بِهِ ۖ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ صَدَّ عَنْهُ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيْرًا ﴿٥٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصَلِّيْهِمْ نَارًا ۚ كَمَا نُصَلِّيَتْ جُلُوْدُهُمْ بَدَلَتْهُمْ جُلُوْدًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَرِيْبًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّٰلِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرَىٰ مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا أَبَدًا ۖ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيْهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ ۖ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيْلًا ﴿٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة النساء:

- 4:51. Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the scripture? They believe in *jibt* and *ṭāghoot*,⁹ and they say to the disbelievers that they are more rightly guided than the believers as to the way.
- 4:52. Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed, and whomever Allah curses, you will not find any helper for him.
- 4:53. Or do they have a share in dominion? Even if [that were so], they would not give people as much as the speck on a date stone.
- 4:54. Or do they envy [other] people for what Allah has given them of His bounty? But We gave the family of Ibrâheem the scripture and wisdom, and gave them a great kingdom.
- 4:55. Some of them believed in him [Muhammad], and some of them turned away from him. [For the latter] hell will suffice as a raging fire.
- 4:56. [As for] those who reject Our revelations, We will cast them into fire; as often as their skins are burnt through, We will replace them with fresh skins, so that they may continue to taste the punishment. Verily, Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.
- 4:57. But [as for] those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. There they will have pure spouses, and We shall admit them to cool refreshing shade.

This passage refers to some of the bad attitudes of the Jews and their envy of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers. The bad attitude and evil inclinations prompted them to give up belief in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) and replace it with belief in *jibt* and *ṭāghoot*, which refers to believing in worship of anything other than Allah or ruling according to a system other than Islamic Sharia.

⁹ *Jibt* and *ṭāghoot*: these words may refer to everything that is worshipped instead of or alongside Allah, whether it is an idol, a stone, a grave, a devil or a human being; they may also refer to sorcery or witchcraft.

That includes magic, sorcery, worship of anything other than Allah, and obedience to the Shayṭān. All of that comes under the heading of jibt and ṭāghoot. Similarly, their disbelief and envy prompted them to prefer the way of those who disbelieve in Allah – the idol worshippers – to the path of the believers.

﴿and they say to the disbelievers﴾ that is, to appease them and flatter them, and out of hatred towards faith ﴿that they are more rightly guided than the believers as to the way﴾ that is, as to the path they follow. How foolish and stubborn they are, and how lacking in reason!

How could they follow this blameworthy path?

Do they think that this will be acceptable to any wise person or even that it would convince any ignorant person?

How could anyone prefer a religion based on idol worship and on the prohibition of good things and the allowing of evil and prohibited things, a religion that spreads injustice among people, regards the Creator as equal to created beings, and promotes disbelief in Allah and His messages and Books, over a religion that is based on worship of the Most Merciful and sincerity towards Allah in private and in public; rejection of anything that is worshipped besides Him, such as idols, rivals and liars; upholding ties of kinship; showing kindness to all of creation, including animals; establishing equity and fairness among people; prohibition of everything that is evil and unjust; and being honest in all words and deeds? Can this be anything but sheer insanity?

The one who has this preference is either one of the most ignorant of people and the most lacking in reason, or he is one of the most rebellious and stubborn in rejection of the truth.

These are the facts of the matter; hence Allah (ﷻ) says concerning them: ﴿Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed﴾ that is, He has expelled them from His mercy and sent His punishment upon them.

«and whomever Allah curses, you will not find any helper for him» that is, anyone to take care of him, be in charge of his affairs and protect him from harm. This is the utmost loss.

«Or do they have a share in dominion?» Such that they could give precedence to some over others, as they wish, on the basis of mere whims and desires. In that case they would be partners with Allah in running the affairs of His dominion. If they were like that, they would be miserly and stingy in the worst manner. Hence Allah says: «Even if [that were so], they would not give people as much as the speck on a date stone» that is, they would not give them anything, not even a little. This is a description of their extreme miserliness, assuming that they had a share in the dominion of Allah. This is said by way of a question to which the answer is clear, as it is well established in everyone's mind that they have no such share.

«Or do they envy [other] people for what Allah has given them of His bounty?» Is the motive for saying what they say their belief that they are partners with Allah and thus they give preference to whomever they will? Or is their motive envy of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the believers for what Allah has given them of His bounty, although His bestowal of that bounty is nothing out of the ordinary? «But We gave the family of Ibrâheem the scripture and wisdom, and gave them a great kingdom». This refers to what Allah bestowed upon Ibrâheem and his descendants of prophethood, scripture and kingship that He bestowed upon some of His Prophets, such as Dâwood and Sulaymân, and His blessing is still bestowed upon His believing slaves. So how could they resent His bestowal of prophethood, support and power upon Muhammad (ﷺ), the best of creation, the greatest, the one who knew Allah the most and feared Him the most?

«Some of them believed in him» that is, in Muhammad (ﷺ), and thus attained happiness in this world and success in the hereafter

﴿and some of them turned away from him﴾ out of stubbornness, resentment and envy; thus they were afflicted with suffering and calamities in this world, as a result of some of their sins.

﴿[For (them)] hell will suffice as a raging fire﴾ – it will rage around the one who disbelieves in Allah and denies the prophethood of His Prophets, be they Jews, Christians or other disbelievers.

Hence Allah says: ﴿[As for] those who reject Our revelations, We will cast them into fire﴾ which burns intensely and is extremely hot. ﴿as often as their skins are burnt through, We will replace them with fresh skins, so that they may continue to taste the punishment﴾ that is in order to make their pain and suffering reach a high level; as their disbelief and stubbornness occurred repeatedly until they became second nature to them, the punishment will be repeated accordingly, as a fair recompense. Hence Allah says: ﴿Verily, Allah is Almighty, Most Wise﴾ that is, He has great power and wisdom in His creation and command, reward and punishment.

﴿But [as for] those who believe﴾ in Allah, and in what they are obliged to believe

﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ both obligatory and encouraged (*mustahabb*)

﴿We will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. There they will have pure spouses﴾ that is, they are free of bad attitudes and bad conduct and whatever may be found in the women of this world of impurity and defects

﴿and We shall admit them to cool refreshing shade﴾.



﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴾ ﴿٥٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ

وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾ (سورة النساء: ٥٨-٥٩)

- 4:58. Verily Allah commands you to render back trusts to those to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, to judge with justice. How excellent is the exhortation Allah gives you! Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.
- 4:59. O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority. If you are in dispute over any matter, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you [truly] believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better and more seemly in the end.

What is meant by «trusts» is anything with which a person is entrusted and enjoined to take care of it. Allah instructs His slaves to render back those trusts, that is, to fulfil them completely and faithfully, and not to detract from them in any way or delay their return. These trusts include positions of authority, wealth and property, secrets, and matters which no one sees except Allah.

The fuqahâ' have stated that whoever is entrusted with something is obliged to protect it by keeping it in a place where such things are usually kept. They said that this is because it is not possible to fulfil that trust and return that thing when required except by keeping it safe; hence doing so is obligatory.

The phrase «to those to whom they are due» indicates that the thing entrusted should not be given to anyone other than the one who entrusted it to him, and his appointed deputy is of the same standing as him. If he gives it to someone other than its rightful owner then he is not being honest with regard to that with which he was entrusted. «and when you judge between people, to judge with justice» – this includes judging between them in cases of blood (murder or injury), wealth or property, and honour, whether the matter is great or small,

and whether the people involved are relatives or otherwise, righteous or evil, friends or enemies. What is meant by the justice with which Allah enjoins us to judge is that which He has prescribed on the lips of His Messenger (ﷺ) of limits and rulings. This requires knowledge of the principles of justice in order to judge thereby. Because these are good and just commands, Allah says: ﴿How excellent is the exhortation Allah gives you! Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing﴾. Here Allah is praising His commands and prohibitions, because they bring benefits and ward off harm, both in this world and in the hereafter, for the One Who prescribed them is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing, from Whom nothing is hidden, and He knows what is in the best interests of His slaves better than they do.

Then Allah instructs us to obey Him and to obey His Messenger (ﷺ), by doing that which they command, doing what is obligatory and encouraged, and avoiding that which they prohibit. He also instructs us to obey those in authority, such as rulers, governors and scholars, because people's religious and worldly affairs cannot be put in order except by obeying those who are in authority, in obedience to Allah and seeking that which is with Him. But that is on condition that they do not enjoin disobedience to Allah; if they do so, then there should not be any obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience towards the Creator. Perhaps this is the reason why the verb ('obey') is not repeated with regard to those who are in authority, but it is mentioned with regard to the Messenger (ﷺ). That is because the Messenger (ﷺ) only enjoins obedience to Allah, and whoever obeys him has obeyed Allah; but when it comes to those who are in authority, the command to obey them is stipulated on condition that it does not involve any sin.

Then Allah instructs us to refer anything concerning which people dispute, of major or minor matters of religion, to Allah and to His Messenger (ﷺ); in other words, to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), for in them are final, decisive answers to all

matters of dispute, either in a clear and specific text, or on the basis of the general meaning of the text, or on the basis of a hint or indication, or of a concept or a general principle to which analogy may be made for similar cases. That is because the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) form the basis of the religion and faith cannot be sound unless it is based on both. Hence referring to both is a condition of faith, and this is why Allah says «if you [truly] believe in Allah and the Last Day». This indicates that whoever does not refer to them concerning controversial matters is not really a believer; rather he is a believer in ṭaghoot, as mentioned in the following verse.

«that», namely referring to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) «is better and more seemly in the end», because the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) is the best and most just of rulings, and is in the best interests of people in their religious and worldly affairs and in the hereafter.



﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ ۚ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُودًا ﴿٦١﴾ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَحْبَبْتَهُمْ مُعْسِبَةً ۚ بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ ثُمَّ جَاءُوكَ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا إِحْسَانًا وَتَوْفِيقًا ﴿٦٢﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا ﴿٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: 60-63)

- 4:60. Have you not seen those who claim to believe in the Revelation sent down to you [O Muhammad], and in that which was sent down before your time, yet they want to refer for judgement

to *tâghoot*,¹⁰ even though they were commanded to reject it? Shaytân wants to lead them far astray.

- 4:61. When it is said to them: Come to the Revelation that Allah has sent down, and to the Messenger, – you see the hypocrites turn away from you with aversion.
- 4:62. How will it be, if calamity befalls them because of the deeds which their own hands have sent forth? Then they will come to you, swearing by Allah: We only wanted to do good and bring about reconciliation!
- 4:63. Those are the ones of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts; so turn away from them, but admonish them, and speak to them a word to reach their very souls.

Here Allah tells His slaves how strange the situation of the hypocrites is, «those who claim» to believe in that which the Messenger (ﷺ) has brought and what came before it, yet despite that, «they want to refer for judgement to *tâghoot*». This word refers to anyone who judges by something other than that which Allah has revealed. This is at the time when «they were commanded to reject it», so how can this be reconciled with faith? For faith requires submission to the laws of Allah and acceptance of His ruling in all affairs. Hence the one who claims to be a believer, but chooses the ruling of *tâghoot* over the ruling of Allah, is lying. This is one of the ways in which the Shaytân misguides them; hence Allah says: «Shaytân wants to lead them far astray» from the truth.

«How» will the situation of these misguided ones be «if calamity befalls them because of the deeds which their own hands have sent forth», namely their sins, which include referring for judgement to *tâghoot*?

¹⁰ In this context, *tâghoot* refers to any set of laws or legislation other than Islamic Sharia.

«Then they will come to you» apologising for what they have done, saying: «We only wanted to do good and bring about reconciliation!» that is, our only intention in doing that was to be kind to both disputing parties and bring about reconciliation between them. But they are lying, because the best of good deeds is to refer to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) for judgement.

«...But who could be better in judgement than Allah, for a people who are certain in faith?» (al-Mā'idah 5: 50)

Hence Allah says: «Those are the ones of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts» of hypocrisy and bad intentions «so turn away from them» that is, do not worry about them and do not react to anything that they do or say «but admonish them» that is, explain to them the ruling of Allah (ﷻ), encourage them to submit to Him and warn them against not doing so «and speak to them a word to reach their very souls» that is, advise them in private, between you and them, for that is more likely to succeed, and be extremely emphatic in rebuking them and stopping them from what they are doing. This indicates that the one who commits sins, even if he is to be overlooked publicly, is to be admonished privately in the sternest terms, in whatever manner is thought most likely to achieve the goal.



﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَخْفَرُوا الرَّسُولَ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٤﴾ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّى يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٦٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة النساء:

- 4:64. We did not send any Messenger except to be obeyed by Allah's leave. If only they had, when they wronged themselves, come to you and asked Allah for forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked for forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Accepting of repentance, Most Merciful.
- 4:65. But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you [O Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, then find in their hearts no reservations about your verdicts, but accept them wholeheartedly.

Here Allah is making a statement which includes the command and encouragement to obey the Messenger (ﷺ), and explains that the purpose behind sending the Messengers was that they should be obeyed; those to whom they were sent should obey them in all that they enjoin and forbid, and respect them as one who obeys respects the one whom he obeys.

This is confirmation of the infallibility of the Messengers with regard to that which they convey from Allah, and in all that they enjoin and forbid, because Allah has enjoined obedience to them in general terms. Were it not for the fact that they are infallible and do not enjoin anything wrong, obedience to them would not have been prescribed in general terms.

﴿by Allah's leave﴾ that is, the obedience of the one who obeys comes about by the will and decree of Allah. This is an affirmation of the divine will and decree, and encouragement to seek the help of Allah. It also tells us that no one can obey the Messenger (ﷺ) unless Allah helps him.

Then Allah tells us of His great generosity and munificence, and His call to the one who commits evil deeds to admit it, repent and seek the forgiveness of Allah.

﴿If only they had, when they wronged themselves, come to you﴾ that is, admitting their sins with humility

﴿and asked Allah for forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked for forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Accepting of repentance, Most Merciful﴾ that is, He would have accepted their repentance and forgiven their wrongdoing; He would have shown them mercy by accepting their repentance, enabling them to repent and rewarding them for doing so. This coming to the Messenger (ﷺ) was applicable only during his lifetime, because this is what is indicated by the context; the Messenger's prayers for forgiveness could only happen as long as he was alive. After his death he is not to be asked for anything; in fact that comes under the heading of ascribing a partner to Allah (shirk).

Then Allah swears by His divine Self that they will not be believers until they refer for judgement to His Messenger (ﷺ) in all their disputes, that is in all matters concerning which there is disagreement. This is unlike matters concerning which there is consensus, because consensus can only be based on Qur'an and Sunnah. Moreover, referring matters to the judgement of Sharia cannot be sufficient until there are no reservations whatsoever in their hearts and they refer to it in a state of full submission. Furthermore, that cannot be sufficient until they accept His ruling wholeheartedly, willingly and with submission both outward and inward.

Referring to the rule of Sharia reflects the soundness of one's commitment to Islam; having no reservations about it reflects the soundness of one's faith; and acceptance of it reflects the soundness of one's ihsân. Whoever attains soundness in all these matters, his commitment to religion is sound in all aspects; whoever turns away from this ruling, not accepting it, is a disbeliever; and whoever turns away even though he accepts it in principle, comes under the same rulings as other sinners like him.



﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ اقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَوْ أَخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بَدَّ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْتِنَهُمْ مِنْ لَدُنَّا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَلَهْدَيْنَهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٦٨﴾﴾ (سورة النساء:

(٦٨-٦٦)

- 4:66. If We were to instruct them: Kill yourselves, or: Leave your homes, they would not do so, except for a few of them. But if they did what they were instructed to do, it would indeed be better for them, and would increase them in steadfastness;
- 4:67. And then We would indeed grant them an immense reward of Our own;
- 4:68. and We would indeed guide them to a straight path.

Here Allah tells us that if He were to instruct them to do something that people find very difficult, such as killing themselves or leaving their homes, none would do it except a few of them. Therefore they should be grateful to Him that what He has instructed them to do is easy for everyone, and is not difficult to do.

This indicates that one should think of the hardships and difficulties that He could have put him through, so that he will realise that the enjoined acts of worship are in fact very easy, and this will increase him in praise and gratitude to his Lord.

Then Allah states that they should do what they are exhorted to do, which is what is enjoined as a regular practice at various times, focusing on it properly and doing their best to carry it out perfectly, not letting themselves be distracted by other issues that are out of reach and are not expected of them. So each individual should focus on what he is expected to do here and now, and strive to do it perfectly; then gradually he will advance until he reaches the level of knowledge and

action that is decreed for him in both his spiritual and worldly affairs. This is in contrast to the one who aspires to a level that is beyond his reach and that is not yet enjoined upon him, for he will hardly be able to reach that level because he lacks focus, is lazy and does not have the necessary energy. Then Allah tells us that four good consequences will result from doing what they are instructed to do:

- 1- Attaining goodness or that which is better: ﴿it would indeed be better for them﴾ that is, then they would be among the people who acquire those good qualities by doing the good deeds that they are instructed to do, by means of which they will avoid the qualities of bad people, because the affirmation of a thing is the negation of its opposite.
- 2- Becoming steadfast and increasing in steadfastness. Allah makes those who believe steadfast because of the faith they have, which prompts them to do what they are instructed and exhorted to do. Thus He makes them steadfast in the life of this world, when there arise confusion and discouragement regarding the commands and prohibitions, as well as calamities. Hence they become steadfast and are helped and guided to do that which is enjoined and to refrain from that which is forbidden, which is what is required of them. And at times of calamity, which it is hard for people to go through, they will be guided and helped to be steadfast and patient, and to accept (the divine decree) or show gratitude.

Help from Allah will come down to enable them achieve that and to make them steadfast in adhering to their religion, at the time of death, and in the grave.

Moreover, the one who does that which is enjoined upon him keeps training himself to adhere to the teachings of Islam until that becomes second nature to him, and it becomes something very dear to him. That will also help him to be steadfast in doing acts of worship and obedience.

- 3- ﴿And then We would indeed grant them an immense reward of Our own﴾ that is, in this world and in the hereafter, both spiritual and physical, as well as the everlasting delights of paradise, which no eye has ever seen, no ear has heard, and it has not crossed the mind of any human.
- 4- Guidance to the straight path: this is a general statement after having mentioned something specific, because of the virtue of guidance to the straight path, which includes knowledge of the truth, love thereof, giving it precedence and acting upon it. All happiness and success depends on that, so the one who is guided to the straight path has been helped to do all that is good and has been protected from every kind of evil.



﴿وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا ﴿٦٩﴾ ذَلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٦٩-٧٠)

- 4:69. Those who obey Allah and the Messenger are the ones who will be with those whom Allah has blessed of the Prophets, the strong and true in faith, the martyrs and the righteous; what excellent companions these are!
- 4:70. That grace is from Allah; and sufficient is Allah as Knower.¹¹

That is, everyone – male or female, young or old – who obeys Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), according to his situation and what is required of him, these ﴿are the ones who will be with those whom Allah has blessed﴾. This refers to the great blessing which leads to perfection, success and happiness

¹¹ As He knows who is deserving of reward and the extent thereof.

«of the Prophets» to whom Allah gave precedence by means of His revelation and by sending them as Messengers to His creation to call them to Allah (ﷻ).

«the strong and true in faith» – they are the ones who reached the highest level of belief in that which the Messengers brought; they recognised the truth and were certain of it, and they acted in accordance with it in word and deed, in attitude, and in calling others to Allah «the martyrs» who fought in Allah's cause so that the word of Allah would be supreme, and were killed

«and the righteous» – those who were righteous both outwardly and inwardly, thus their deeds became righteous. Anyone who obeys Allah (ﷻ) will be with these people and one of their number

«what excellent companions these are!» And how excellent it will be to be with them in the gardens of bliss, and to have the joy of their company, in nearness to the Lord of the worlds.

«That grace» which they attain «is from Allah», for He is the One Who guided them to that, helped them to attain it, and granted them reward far greater than their deeds deserve

«and sufficient is Allah as Knower» – He knows the condition of His slaves and who among them is deserving of this great reward because of the righteous deeds that he did with all sincerity.



﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا خُدُوا حَذْرَكُمْ فَانْفِرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَوْ اَنْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْكُمْ لَمَنْ لَيُبَطِّئَنَّ فَإِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالَ قَدْ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ إِذْ لَمْ أَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَئِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَيَقُولَنَّ كَأَنْ لَّمْ تَكُنْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ مَوَدَّةٌ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٣﴾﴾ فَلْيَقْتَتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يُقْتَلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيُقْتَلْ
 أَوْ يُغْلَبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٦﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٤-٧٦)

- 4:71. O you who believe! Take your precautions, then either go forth [on military expeditions] in small groups or go forth all together.
- 4:72. There is certainly among you he who would lag behind [and not join the expedition], then if calamity strikes you, he will say: Allah has blessed me in that I was not present with them.
- 4:73. And if some bounty comes to you from Allah, he will certainly say – as if there had never been any friendship between you and him: Would that I had been with them; I would have made great gains!
- 4:74. Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the hereafter. For the one who fights in the cause of Allah, whether he is slain or attains victory, soon We will grant him an immense reward.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His believing slaves to take precautions against their disbelieving enemies. That includes using all means that will help them to fight them and ward off their attacks, such as: constructing fortifications and ditches; learning how to shoot and ride; learning other skills that will help to achieve that; learning all means of finding out about their comings and goings and their plans; and mobilising in Allah's cause.

Hence He says: ﴿then either go forth [on military expeditions] in small groups﴾ that is, separately, so that one company or battalion goes out and others stay behind ﴿or go forth all together﴾. All of that is to be determined according to what will best achieve the purpose, lead to the defeat of the enemy and support the Muslims and their religion. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Make ready against them all that you can of [military] power...﴾
(al-Anfāl 8: 60)

Then He speaks of those who are weak in faith and reluctant to engage in jihad: ﴿There is certainly among you﴾, O believers, ﴿he who would lag behind﴾ this refers to those who lack energy and motivation to engage in jihad in Allah's cause because of weakness, lethargy and cowardice. This is the correct interpretation.

It was also suggested that the Arabic wording of this phrase may mean that they cause others to lag behind; in other words, they discourage others from fighting. This refers to the hypocrites. However, the former view is more likely to be correct, for two reasons:

- 1- The phrase ﴿among you﴾; this is addressed to the believers.
- 2- In the following verse, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿as if there had never been any friendship between you and him﴾. Allah has severed any bond of friendship between the disbelievers, both polytheists and hypocrites, and the believers. Moreover, this reflects reality, because the believers fall into two groups: (i) those who are sincere in their faith, whose sincerity stemmed from strong belief and was proven in jihad; and (ii) those who were weak, who had entered Islam but their faith was weak and they were not strong enough to engage in jihad, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿The Bedouin say: We believe. Say: You have not [yet] believed. Rather you should say: We have submitted [in Islam], for faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not detract from the reward of any of your deeds...﴾ *(al-Hujurat 49: 14)*

Then He mentions the aims of these people who are reluctant to join in jihad and what they care about most; their main aim is worldly interests and accumulation of wealth.

﴿then if calamity﴾ namely defeat and being slain, and the enemy gaining the upper hand in some situations, for reasons known only to Allah

﴿strikes you, he﴾ that is, the one who lags behind, ﴿will say: Allah has blessed me in that I was not present with them﴾. Because of their lack of reason and weakness of faith, they think that staying behind and not taking part in the jihad in which this calamity occurred is a blessing; they do not realise that the true blessing is being guided and helped to do this great act of obedience by means of which faith is strengthened, and the individual is saved from punishment and loss, attains great reward and earns the good pleasure of Allah, the Most Generous, the Bestower. As for lagging behind, even if it does bring a little ease, it will be followed by lengthy toil and great pain, and will lead to missing out on that which is attained by those who engage in jihad.

﴿And if some bounty comes to you from Allah﴾ that is, victory and booty

﴿he will certainly say – as if there had never been any friendship between you and him: Would that I had been with them; I would have made great gains!﴾ That is, he will wish that he had been present so that he could have gotten some of the booty; he has no other desire or aim apart from that. It is as if he was not one of you, O believers, and between you and him there is no friendship based on faith, the nature of which dictates that the believers should be united in all that is in their best interests and will ward off harm from them; they rejoice when their aims are attained, even if that happens at the hands of other brothers in faith, and they feel pain when that does not happen; they strive all together in any effort that is aimed at achieving their interests, both religious and worldly. But this one who wishes only for worldly gain does not have that spirit of faith.

By His kindness towards His slaves, Allah does not cut them off completely from His mercy and He does not close that door to them;

rather in the case of one who behaves in a manner that is not befitting, He calls him to make up for his shortcomings and mend his ways. Hence He instructed these people to be sincere and to go out and strive in His cause: ﴿Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the hereafter﴾. This is one of the opinions concerning the meaning of this verse, and it is the soundest opinion.

It was also suggested that what is meant is: let the believers whose faith is complete and sincere strive in the cause of Allah, namely ﴿those ... who sell the life of this world for the hereafter﴾ that is, they sell this world and turn away from it, seeking the hereafter instead.

These are the ones to whom these words are addressed, because they are the ones who have prepared themselves and are ready to strive in jihad against the enemy, because of the perfect faith which prompts them to do that.

As for those who lag behind, no one should worry about them, whether they go out or stay behind, because this is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿Say: Believe in it, or do not believe. Verily, those who were given knowledge before it,¹² when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration.﴾ (*al-Isrā'* 17: 107)

﴿...If these people [the Makkans] disbelieve therein, then We have entrusted it to a people who do not disbelieve therein.﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 89)

﴿For the one who fights in the cause of Allah﴾, on condition that it is a type of jihad that is enjoined by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and that the individual's intention is sincerely for the sake of Allah alone, seeking His Countenance,

﴿whether he is slain or attains victory, soon We will grant him an immense reward﴾ namely increased faith and religious commitment, booty, being highly spoken of, and the reward of those who strive in

¹² Namely the People of the Book (Jews and Christians).

jihad in Allah's cause that Allah has prepared for them in paradise, which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it crossed the mind of man.



﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٥)

4:75. And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and for the oppressed men, women, and children who say: Our Lord! Bring us forth from this city, whose people are wrongdoers; give us by Your grace a protector and give us by Your grace a helper?

Here Allah encourages His believing slaves to fight in His cause and informs them that this is an individual obligation for them, and He criticises heavily those among them who refrain from doing that, as He says ﴿And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah﴾ at the time when the oppressed men, women and children, who have no means in their power and do not know where to go (*cf.* 4: 98), have suffered the greatest oppression from their enemies as a result.

So they (the oppressed believers) are calling upon Allah to bring them out of this city whose people are wronging themselves by disbelieving and ascribing partners to Allah, and they are wronging the believers by persecuting them, trying to bar them from the path of Allah, and preventing them from calling others to their religion and migrating. And they are calling upon Allah to give them a supporter and helper, to save them from this city whose people are wrongdoers. Because of this situation, their jihad is one of fighting and defending their families, children and relatives; it is not a jihad initiated by the

Muslims for the purpose of defeating the disbelievers. Even though there is great virtue in that, and the one who stays behind from that jihad is to be rebuked in the strongest terms, jihad that is aimed at saving the oppressed is greater in reward and is more beneficial, because it is warding off the enemy.



﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقاتِلُوا
أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٦)

4:76. Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of *ṭāghoot*.¹³ So fight against the allies of Shayṭān; feeble indeed is the scheming of Shayṭān.

Here Allah tells us that the believers fight in His cause, ﴿and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of *ṭāghoot*﴾ that is, the Shayṭān. We learn a number of lessons from this:

- The individual's participation in jihad is commensurate with his level of faith in Allah, sincerity and commitment. Jihad in Allah's cause is one of the signs, requirements and results of faith, just as fighting in the cause of *ṭāghoot* is one of the branches and results of disbelief.
- The one who fights in Allah's cause is expected to show patience and perseverance to a degree that others do not have. If the supporters of Shayṭān can persevere with patience and fight, even though they follow falsehood, then it is more appropriate that the people of truth should do that, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If you are suffering hardships, they are also suffering hardships;

¹³ In this context, *ṭāghoot* refers to Shayṭān.

but you hope for something from Allah that they cannot hope for» (4: 104).

- The one who fights in Allah's cause is relying on a strong foundation, for he has truth on his side and he puts his trust in Allah. The one who is in a position of power and has a strong support is expected to persevere with patience and energy in a manner that is not expected of one who fights to defend falsehood that has no basis in reality and for which no good outcome can be expected. Hence Allah says: «So fight against the allies of Shayṭān; feeble indeed is the scheming of Shayṭān».

The word translated here as «scheming» refers to using hidden ways to harm the enemy. But no matter how far the scheming of the Shayṭān may go, it is ultimately weak, as it cannot stand up to anything of the truth or to the support of Allah for His believing slaves.



﴿الرَّ تَر إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالَ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ قُلْ مَنَعَ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ ﴿٧٨﴾﴾ (سورة

(النساء: ٧٧-٧٨)

- 4:77. Have you not seen those to whom it was said: Restrain your hands [from fighting], establish regular prayer and give zakāh? But then when fighting was ordained for them, some of them feared men as much as they feared Allah or even more. They said: Our Lord! Why have You ordained fighting for us? Could You not have given us a brief respite? Say: The enjoyment of this world is short-lived; the hereafter will be better for one who

fears Allah. You will never be wronged even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone.

4:78. Wherever you are, death will overtake you, even if you are in fortified towers!...

When the Muslims were in Makkah, they were instructed to pray and give zakâh in the sense of helping the poor, not the well-known zakâh that becomes due when a minimum threshold of wealth is reached and its conditions are met; that zakâh was not enjoined until after they migrated to Madinah. Also, they were not instructed to fight in jihad against their enemies, for a number of reasons:

- By His wisdom, Allah (ﷻ) prescribed laws and acts of worship for His slaves in a way that would not be difficult for them; so He started with the most important then the next most important, and the easiest then the next easiest.
- If He had enjoined them to fight when they were few in number and lacking resources, whilst their enemies were numerous, that would have led to the destruction of Islam. Therefore the greatest interest of Islam was given precedence over lesser interests; and there were others reasons.

Some of the believers wished that fighting would be enjoined upon them at that stage, but it was not appropriate at that time. Rather what was appropriate was to do what they were instructed to do at that time, such as affirming the oneness of Allah, praying, giving charity and so on, as Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿But if they did what they were instructed to do, it would indeed be better for them, and would increase them in steadfastness﴾ (4: 66).

Then when they migrated to Madinah and Islam grew stronger, fighting was prescribed for them at the appropriate time.

Some of those who had wanted to hasten the matter of fighting before that said, out of fear of the people and weakness: ﴿Our Lord! Why have You ordained fighting for us?﴾. This was an expression

of their resentment towards the ruling of jihad and their objection to Allah. It is as if they should have done the opposite of that, namely submitting to the command of Allah and showing patience in heeding His commands. But (when it was prescribed) they did the opposite of what was required of them and said: «Could You not have given us a brief respite?». That is, why was the command to fight not delayed until some other time? This is the attitude of many people who are not mature in their way of thinking and tend to be hasty, but are most likely not to be able to show patience when the time comes and are unable to shoulder responsibility; rather they are lacking in patience.

Then Allah admonishes them not to adopt such an attitude which leads to them staying behind and not joining the fight: «Say: The enjoyment of this world is short-lived; the hereafter will be better for one who fears Allah» that is, the time for enjoying pleasure and ease in this world is short; putting up with some difficulty in doing acts of worship and obedience to Allah for a short time is something that is easy to do, because if you know that the difficulty you are facing will not last for long, that makes it easier to bear. So how about if you compare this world and the hereafter? For the hereafter is better than this world in and of itself, and with regard to its pleasures and how long it will endure.

In and of itself, it is as the Prophet (ﷺ) said in the sound hadith: «A space the size of a whip in paradise is better than this world and everything in it.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

In and of itself, it is pure and free of any annoyance. Whatever pleasure of any kind that may cross one's mind, the pleasure of paradise is superior to it, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

«No soul knows what is kept hidden in store for them of delight as a reward for what they used to do.» (*as-Sajdah* 32: 17)

And Allah said on the lips of His Prophet (ﷺ):

«I have prepared for My righteous slaves that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever crossed the mind of man.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

As for the pleasures of this world, they are mixed with all kinds of annoyances and troubles which, if you compare the pleasures of this world with what accompanies them of pain, worry and distress, you will find that the distress outweighs the pleasure.

With regard to time, this world will come to an end and man's lifespan – in comparison to this world – is very short. But the hereafter is eternal bliss in which its people will abide forever. If the wise person thinks about these two realms and envisages them properly, he will realise which should take precedence, and which he should seek and strive for. Hence Allah says: «the hereafter will be better for one who fears Allah» that is, one who avoids ascribing partners to Him and all other prohibited actions.

«You will never be wronged even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone» that is, what you did of striving for the hereafter you will find complete, with nothing missing from it.

Then Allah tells us that erring on the side of caution will not save you from what He has decreed, and that staying behind will not ward off any harm (that is decreed):

«Wherever you are, death will overtake you» that is, at any time and in any place

«even if you are in fortified towers» that is, strong fortresses and high places.

All of this is to encourage striving in jihad in Allah's cause, sometimes by highlighting its virtues and reward, sometimes by warning about the punishment for not doing it, sometimes by pointing out that those who stayed behind will not benefit from doing so, and sometimes by making it easy to do it.



﴿... وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

﴿٧٨﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٨-٧٩)

- 4:78. ... If some good befalls them, they say: This is from Allah; but if misfortune befalls them, they say: This is from you [O Muhammad]. Say: All things are from Allah. But what is the matter with these people, that they can hardly understand a word?
- 4:79. Whatever good befalls you is from Allah; but whatever misfortune befalls you is from yourself. We have sent you [O Muhammad] to humankind as a Messenger. And sufficient is Allah as a witness.

Here Allah tells us about those who do not know, those who turn away from what the Messengers brought and oppose them: if something good comes to them, such as a good harvest, abundant wealth, many offspring and good health, they say: ﴿This is from Allah﴾. But if something bad befalls them, such as drought, poverty, sickness, or the death of their children and loved ones, they say: ﴿This is from you [O Muhammad]﴾ that is, because of that which you have brought us, O Muhammad (ﷺ).

They regarded the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as 'inauspicious' or an 'evil omen', just as others of their ilk did with the previous Messengers of Allah. Allah tells us that the people of Pharaoh said to Moosâ:

﴿Whenever good fortune came their way, they said: This is our due. But when bad fortune befell them, they ascribed it to the evil auspices of Moosâ and those who were with him...﴾ (*al-A`raf* 7: 131)

The people of Şâlih said:

﴿... We regard you and those who are with you as an evil omen...﴾ (*an-Naml* 27: 47)

The people mentioned in Soorat Yâ Seen said to their Messengers:

﴿... We regard you as an evil omen. If you do not desist, we will surely stone you...﴾ (*Yâ Seen* 36: 18)

Because they shared a common disbelief, their words and deeds were similar. All those who attributed the occurrence of bad things or the disappearance of good things to that which the Messengers brought, or part of it, were included in this stern rebuke.

In response to them, Allah said: ﴿Say: All things﴾ both good and bad, ﴿are from Allah﴾ that is, they happen by His will and decree, and His power of creation.

﴿But what is the matter with these people﴾ that is those who uttered these false words

﴿that they can hardly understand a word?﴾ That is, they do not understand anything at all and they do not even come close to understanding it, or they only have a little understanding of it.

Whatever the case, this is a criticism and a rebuke addressed to them for their failure to understand what Allah and His Messenger say. That is because of their disbelief and turning away. This is implicit praise for the one who does understand what Allah and His Messenger say, and it is encouragement to do so and to look for means that will help to achieve that, such as focusing on their words and pondering them, and taking measures to understand them. If they had understood what Allah said, they would have realised that both good and bad, good deeds and bad deeds, all come about by the will and decree of Allah, and no one is excluded from that; the Messengers are not the

cause of anything bad and neither is the message they brought, because they were sent for the good of people in this world and the hereafter, and for the good of their religious commitment.

﴿Whatever good befalls you﴾ in terms of both spiritual and worldly interests
﴿is from Allah﴾ it is He Who blesses with it and makes means of attaining it easy.

﴿but whatever misfortune befalls you﴾ in terms of both spiritual and worldly interests
﴿is from yourself﴾ that is, because of your sins and what you have earned, but what Allah forgives is far greater.

Allah (ﷻ) has opened the gates of kindness to His slaves, and He has commanded them to implement the means that will lead to His bounty and grace. He informs them that sins form an impediment to His grace, so if a person commits sins, he has no one to blame but himself, because he is preventing himself from attaining the bounty and grace of Allah.

Then Allah tells us of the universal nature of the message of His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿We have sent you [O Muhammad] to humankind as a Messenger. And sufficient is Allah as a witness﴾ that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ), because of what He has given you of His support, powerful miracles and clear proof. This is the greatest testimony of all, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Say: Whose testimony carries the most weight? Say: It is Allah's; He is witness between me and you...﴾ (*al-An'âm* 6: 19)

Thus we realise that Allah (ﷻ) is perfect in knowledge, perfect in power, and great in wisdom; Allah supported His Messenger (ﷺ) and granted him great victories, by virtue of which we may be certain that he is the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ).



﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ۗ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي تَقُولُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ مَا يُبَيِّنُونَ ۗ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ ۗ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٨١﴾﴾ (سورة

النساء: ٨٠-٨١)

- 4:80. Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah. But if any turn away, We have not sent you to be their keeper.
- 4:81. They profess obedience, but as soon as they leave you, some of them plot in secret something other than what you advocate. Allah records all their plots, so ignore them, and put your trust in Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a disposer of affairs.

That is, everyone who obeys the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with regard to what he enjoins and what he prohibits «has obeyed Allah», because the Messenger (ﷺ) does not enjoin anything or forbid anything except in accordance with the commands, laws, inspiration and Revelation of Allah. This proves that the Messenger (ﷺ) is infallible, because Allah has enjoined obedience to him in all cases; were it not that he is infallible in all that he conveys from Allah, Allah would not have enjoined us to obey him in all cases and praised him for that.

This is one of the rights that are shared by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). There are three types of rights: rights of Allah (ﷻ) alone, which are not shared with any of His creation, namely worshipping Allah alone, turning to Him alone, and so on; rights which belong exclusively to the Messenger (ﷺ), such as respecting him, honouring him and helping him; and rights that are shared by both, such as believing in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), loving them both and obeying them both, as Allah mentioned in the verse:

﴿So that you [O people] may believe in Allah and His Messenger, and support and honour him, and glorify Allah morning and afternoon.﴾
(*al-Fath* 48: 9)

So whoever obeys the Messenger (ﷺ) has obeyed Allah, and he will have the reward that results from obedience to Allah.

﴿But if any turn away﴾ from obedience to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), he harms only himself and he does not harm Allah in the slightest. ﴿We have not sent you to be their keeper﴾ that is, to record their deeds and condition; rather We have sent you to convey, explain and give sincere advice. You have done what was required of you and your reward is due from Allah, whether they are guided or not, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So admonish [O Muhammad], for you are but sent to admonish; you have no power over them.﴾ (*al-Ghāshiyah* 88: 21-22)

It is essential that obedience to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) be both outward and inward, in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) and otherwise. If anyone makes an outward show of obedience and commitment in his presence, then when he is on his own or with others of his ilk, he fails to be obedient and does the opposite, then the outward obedience that he shows is of no benefit whatsoever, and he is more like those of whom Allah says: ﴿They profess obedience﴾ that is, they make an outward display of obedience when they are with you (O Prophet [ﷺ]), ﴿but as soon as they leave you﴾ that is, depart and go somewhere where no one can see them, ﴿some of them plot in secret something other than what you advocate﴾ that is, they plan in secret something contrary to obedience to you; in that case it can be nothing other than disobedience and sin.

﴿some of them plot in secret something other than what you advocate﴾ – these words indicate that what they have decided to do is something other than obedience, because they are planning in secret to do something that they have already decided upon.

Then Allah issues a warning to those who do that: ﴿Allah records all their plots﴾ that is, He is recording it against them and He will requite them for it in full. This is a warning to them.

Then He instructs His Messenger (ﷺ) to respond by ignoring them and not to rebuke them, for they will not harm him in the slightest if he puts his trust in Allah and seeks His help in supporting His religion and establishing His laws. Hence He says: ﴿so ignore them, and put your trust in Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a disposer of affairs﴾.



﴿ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴾

(سورة النساء: ٨٢)

4:82. Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an? If it had been from anyone other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many contradictions.

Here Allah enjoins pondering His Book, which means contemplating the meaning and studying its principles and lessons intensely, along with whatever helps to achieve that aim. Pondering the Book of Allah is the key to knowledge, and all that is good and all types of knowledge may be found therein. By doing that, faith will increase and become deeply rooted in the heart.

For the Qur'an teaches us about the Lord whom we worship, and His attributes of perfection, and that He is to be declared above all shortcomings. It sets out for us the route that leads to Him and describes the characteristics of the people who follow it, and what they will attain when they come to Him. It informs us of our real enemy and tells us of the path that will lead to punishment, and describes the characteristics of the people who follow it and how they will be dealt with when there is a reason for which they should be punished.

The more we ponder the Book, the more we will increase in knowledge, good deeds and insight. Hence Allah has enjoined and encouraged doing so, and He tells us that this is the purpose for which the Qur'an was revealed, as He says elsewhere:

﴿This is a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may ponder its verses, and so that people of understanding may pay heed.﴾ (Sād 38: 29)

– and:

﴿Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an, or are there locks on their hearts?﴾ (Muhammad 47: 24)

One of the benefits of pondering over the Book of Allah is that it causes the individual to become certain in faith and knowledge that it is the words of Allah, because parts of it confirm other parts, and its parts are in harmony with one another. Hence you will see rulings, stories and narratives repeated in several places in the Qur'an, all of them in harmony, confirming one another and not contradicting one another. Thus it is known that the Qur'an is perfect and that it comes from One Whose knowledge encompasses all things. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If it had been from anyone other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many contradictions﴾ that is, because it comes from Allah, there are no contradictions in it at all.



﴿وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰ أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٣)

- 4:83. When they hear any news, whether it is of a reassuring or disquieting nature, they make it known to all and sundry, whereas if they referred it to the Messenger and those in authority among

them, those who sought news could learn it from them. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, all but a few of you would have followed Shayṭān.

Here Allah chides His slaves for doing something that is not befitting, and teaches them that when news comes to them of any important matter and any matter that affects the public interest and has to do with reassurance and the joy of the believers, or some disquieting matter that may signal bad news, they must verify it and not hasten to spread that news. Rather they must refer to the Messenger (ﷺ) and to the people in authority, people of wisdom, knowledge, sincerity, reason and maturity, who know about things and what is and is not in the public interest.

Then if it is determined that there is some interest to be served by broadcasting the news, and that it will encourage the believers and make them happy, or it will alert the Muslims to some plot of their enemies, in that case they may go ahead and broadcast the news. But if they determine that there is no interest to be served, or that there is some slight interest but the harm it will cause outweighs that interest, then they should not broadcast it. Hence Allah says: «those who sought news could learn it from them» that is, because they will be learning it from those who have examined the matter on the basis of their mature thinking and knowledge.

This points to a basic principle of manners and attitude, which is that if there is to be a discussion concerning any matter, it should be referred to those who are qualified to discuss it, and no one should try to pre-empt them, because this is more likely to develop the right understanding of the issue and to lead to sound decision-making and avoidance of error. It also indicates that it is not allowed to be hasty in spreading news as soon as it is heard; rather what is enjoined is to think about it and see whether it is beneficial, in which case one may go ahead and broadcast it, otherwise one should refrain from doing so.

Then Allah says: «Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you» that is, in guiding you, and teaching you proper etiquette, and teaching you that which you did not know, «(all but a few of you would have followed Shaytân)» because man by nature is prone to wrongdoing and ignorance, and his own self only prompts him to do evil. But if he turns to his Lord, seeks His protection and strives hard in doing so, his Lord will be kind to him, guide him to all that is good and protect him from the accursed Shaytân.



﴿فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ وَحَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْفِ بِأَسْ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بِأَسَاوَأَشَدُّ تَنْكِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٤)

4:84. So fight [O Muhammad] in Allah's cause; you are accountable only for yourself. But urge the believers [to fight]. It may be that Allah will curb the might of those who disbelieve; for Allah is strongest in might and severest in punishment.

This is the best state that a person can be in, when he strives to make himself comply with the commands of Allah concerning jihad and otherwise, and to urge others to do likewise. A person may not be able to achieve one or both of these things, hence Allah says to His Messenger (ﷺ): «So fight [O Muhammad] in Allah's cause; you are accountable only for yourself» that is, you have no power over anyone else, so you will never be held accountable for the deeds of anyone else.

«But urge the believers» to fight. This includes everything that encourages the believers to be active and strengthens their resolve, by highlighting their strength and telling them that the enemy is weak and bound to fail, as well as reminding them of what Allah has prepared of reward for those who fight, and the punishment incurred by those

who lag behind. All of these matters and others are part of encouraging the believers to fight.

«It may be that Allah will curb the might of those who disbelieve» that is, by means of your fighting them in Allah's cause and urging one another to do so.

«for Allah is strongest in might» that is, in power and strength «and severest in punishment» of the sinner; He punishes the sinner himself so that he will be a lesson for others. If He had so willed, He could have defeated the disbelievers by his might and power, and not left a trace of them. But by His wisdom He tests some of His slaves by means of others, so that the principle of jihad will be established and beneficial faith will flourish thereby, that faith which is based on choice, not that which is based on coercion and force, which is of no benefit at all.



﴿مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفْعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا وَمَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفْعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٥)

4:85. Whoever mediates in a good cause will have a share in the reward thereof, but whoever mediates in a bad cause will have a share in the burden of sin thereof. And Allah has control over all things.

What is meant by mediation here is helping in some matter. Whoever joins another person and they both strive in some good cause – which includes mediating for the oppressed with the one who is oppressing them – will have a share in the reward thereof, according to his efforts, striving and results, without that detracting anything from the reward of the one who initiated the matter or took it upon himself. But whoever helps someone else in doing evil will have a

burden of sin commensurate with what he did and helped with. This offers a great deal of encouragement to cooperate in righteousness and piety, and it is a stern warning against cooperating in sin and transgression. This is affirmed by the words of Allah: ﴿And Allah has control over all things﴾ that is, He is a witness Who is always watching, taking careful account of these deeds and He will requite each person as he deserves.



﴿وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِنَحِيَةٍ فَعِوْا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾﴾

(سورة النساء: ٨٦)

4:86. When you are given a greeting, respond with a better greeting, or [at least] with the like thereof. Verily, Allah takes careful account of all things.

The greeting is that which is spoken by one of the two who meet one another, by way of honouring and praying for the other, along with what accompanies that of smiles and so on.

The best and most sublime of greetings is that which is taught by Islam of initiating and returning the greeting of *salâm*. Allah (ﷻ) instructs the believers that when they are greeted in any manner, they should give a response that is better than it in terms of wording, smiles and so on. What we may understand from this is that it is not allowed to refrain from returning the greeting altogether or to return it with something less than it.

From this verse we learn that initiating the greeting of *salâm* is encouraged on the basis of two things:

- 1- Allah instructs us to respond to the greeting with something better than it or (at least) equal to it. This implies that initiating the greeting is required according to Islamic teaching.

- 2- The fact that it refers to something better indicates that participating in giving then returning the greeting is a good thing.

However there is an exception to the general meaning of the verse, which is when someone greets another in a situation where it is not enjoined to return the greeting, such as if that person is busy reading Qur'an, listening to a *khutbah*, praying, and the like; in that case he is not required to respond to the greeting. A similar exception is made in the case of one whom the Lawgiver has instructed us to shun and not greet, namely the repentant sinner who may be deterred by shunning. He is to be shunned and not greeted, and his greeting is not to be returned, because doing so would undermine the general interest that may be achieved by shunning him.

Returning the greeting includes every greeting that is customary among the people and is not forbidden according to Islamic teachings; we are enjoined to return such greetings with a greeting that is equal to or better than it.

Then Allah (ﷻ) issues promises and warnings connected to doing good deeds or bad deeds respectively, as He says: «Verily, Allah takes careful account of all things», so He records all people's deeds, both good and bad, small and great, then He will requite them as dictated by His grace, justice and rulings.



﴿اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ

حَدِيثًا ﴿٨٧﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٧)

- 4:87. Allah: there is no god but He. He will surely gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection, of which there is no doubt. Who is truer in word than Allah?

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He is One and that there is no god or object of worship except Him, because He is perfect in His essence and attributes, and because the power of creation and control is exclusively His, and all blessings, both apparent and hidden, come from Him alone.

This requires that one should worship Him and to draw near to Him by means of all kinds of servitude to Him, because He alone is deserving of that and He is the One Who will requite His slaves for what they do or do not do of submitting themselves to Him. Hence He swore that this requital will indeed come to pass, and on the Day of Resurrection, as He says: ﴿He will surely gather you all together﴾ that is, the first of you and the last of you, in one place.

﴿on the Day of Resurrection, of which there is no doubt﴾ that is, there is no doubt concerning it whatsoever, on the basis of both rational and textual evidence. Rational evidence is found in what we witness of the revival of the earth after it was dead, and from the initial creation of the universe, and its recreation will be easier. In terms of wisdom, Allah definitely did not create anything in vain, for no reason, merely to live and then die. As for textual evidence, it is the fact that the Most Truthful One tells us of that, and indeed swears to it. Hence He says: ﴿Who is truer in word than Allah?﴾

Similarly, He instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to swear to that in more than one place in the Qur'an, as in the verse in which He says: ﴿Those who disbelieve claim that that they will never be resurrected. Say: Yes indeed, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected, then you will surely be informed of all that you have done. And that is easy for Allah.﴾ (at-Taghâbun 64: 7)

﴿Who is truer in word than Allah?﴾ – Here Allah tells us that His word is of the highest level of truth. Anything that is said concerning belief, knowledge and deeds that is contrary to what Allah has told

us is false, because it goes against the true and certain text, hence it cannot be true.



﴿ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُتَفِقِينَ فِتْنَتِينَ وَاللَّهُ أَرْكَسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَذُؤَالُو تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وِلِيَاءَ وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٨٩﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءَوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ يَقْتُلُوكُمْ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقْتُلُوكُمْ فَإِنْ أَعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يَقْتُلُوكُمْ وَأَلْفَوْا إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٠﴾ سَتَجِدُونَ ءَاخِرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلٌّ مَا رَدُّوا إِلَىٰ الْفِتْنَةِ أَرْكَسُوا فِيهَا فَإِنْ لَمْ يَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْفُوا إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ وَيَكْفُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقَعْتُمُوهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿٩١﴾ ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٨-٩١)

- 4:88. What is the matter with you, that you are divided into two parties regarding the hypocrites, when Allah has cast them back [to disbelief] on account of their misdeeds? Do you seek to guide those whom Allah has caused to go astray? For those whom Allah has caused to go astray, you will never find a way [to guide them].
- 4:89. They wish that you would disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you will be all alike. Therefore do not take any of them as allies [or friends] until they migrate for the sake of Allah. But if they turn away [from Islam], seize them and slay them wherever you find them; and take neither protectors nor helpers from among them.

- 4:90. Except those who join a people between whom and you there is a treaty [of peace], or come to you with their hearts feeling discomfort at the prospect of fighting either you or their own people. If Allah had willed, He could have given them resolve and they would have fought you. Therefore if they let you be and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then Allah has not granted you any reason [to fight] against them.
- 4:91. Others you will find who want to be safe from you and safe from their own people, but whenever they are faced anew with temptation to evil, plunge into it headlong. Therefore if they do not let you be and do not offer you peace, and do not restrain their hands [from fighting you], then seize them and slay them wherever you encounter them, for Allah has given you a clear reason [to fight] against them.

What is meant by the hypocrites mentioned in these verses is the hypocrites who appeared outwardly to be Muslims but did not migrate, in addition to being disbelievers. Some confusion about their situation had arisen among the Companions (رضي الله عنهم): some of them felt uneasy about fighting them and severing ties with them because of what they showed of apparent faith, whilst others were aware of their true nature on the basis of their deeds, thus they deemed them disbelievers.

Hence Allah (ﷻ) told them that they should not be confused about them or have any doubt; rather their situation was quite clear and there was nothing confusing about it. They were hypocrites who had repeatedly shown their disbelief and – in addition to their disbelief – they wish that you would disbelieve and become like them. Once you understand that this is how they are, ﴿Therefore do not take any of them as allies [or friends]﴾. This requires that you should not love them, because alliances and friendships can only stem from love.

It also requires that you should hate them and regard them as enemies, because the prohibition on anything is a command to do the opposite. This command was something temporary, until they

migrated; if they migrated, they were to be treated like all other Muslims, as the Prophet (ﷺ) applied the rulings of Islam to everyone who had been with him and migrated with him, whether they were truly believers or only making an outward show of faith.

But if they did not migrate and they refused to do so, ﴿seize them and slay them wherever you find them﴾ that is, at any time, in any place. This is part of the evidence which indicates that the prohibition on fighting during the sacred months had been abrogated, as is the view of the majority of scholars. Those who disagree say that these are general texts and are to be interpreted as being subject to the prohibition on fighting during the sacred months.

Then Allah made an exception from fighting the hypocrites, in the case of three groups, two of whom he was instructed to leave alone, and that instruction was confirmed.

The first group was those who joined a people with whom the Muslims had a treaty according to which they would not fight them. Those who joined that group would come under the same ruling as them and thus their lives and property would be protected.

The second group was people whose ﴿hearts [felt] discomfort at the prospect of fighting either you or their own people﴾ that is, they remain as they were and cannot let themselves fight you or fight their own people; they want to refrain from fighting both groups. Allah commanded (the Muslims) not to fight these people either, and He explained the wisdom behind that: ﴿If Allah had willed, He could have given them resolve and they would have fought you﴾. So there were three possibilities: either they would be with you and fight your enemies, which was not possible in the case of these people, so there remained only the possibility of fighting you alongside their own people or not fighting either side, which is the lesser of two evils as far as you are concerned, for Allah could have given them that resolve to fight against you. So you should accept this blessing and praise your Lord Who restrained them from fighting you when they could

have done so. Therefore if these people ﴿let you be and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then Allah has not granted you any reason [to fight] against them﴾.

The third group is people who care only for their own interests and they have no respect for you. These are the ones of whom Allah says: ﴿Others﴾ among these hypocrites ﴿you will find who want to be safe from you﴾ because they are afraid of you ﴿and safe from their own people, but whenever they are faced anew with temptation to evil, plunge into it headlong﴾ that is, they are still persisting in their disbelief and hypocrisy.

So whenever anything happens to them of turmoil and trouble, it blinds them and causes them to rush headlong into trouble, increasing their disbelief and hypocrisy. These people appear outwardly to be like the second group, but in fact they are different from them, because the second group refrains from fighting the believers out of respect towards them, not out of fear for themselves. But this group refrains from fighting them out of fear, not out of respect; rather if they had the opportunity to fight the believers, they would be ready to make the most of it. If they do not show any sign of wanting to refrain from fighting, then they should be fought. Hence Allah says: ﴿Therefore if they do not let you be and do not offer you peace, and do not restrain their hands [from fighting you], then seize them and slay them wherever you encounter them, for Allah has given you a clear reason [to fight] against them﴾ that is: He has given you clear proof that they are transgressing against you and are not seeking peace, so they have no one to blame but themselves.



﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا فَإِنْ كَانِ مِنْ

قَوْمٍ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ
 بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ
 مُؤْمِنَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ
 اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٩٢﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٢)

- 4:92. Never should a believer kill a believer, unless it be by mistake. Whoever kills a believer by mistake must free a believing slave and pay blood money to the deceased's family, unless they forgo it as an act of charity. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a believer, then the freeing of a believing slave [is enough]. If he belonged to a people between whom and you there is a treaty [of peace], then the blood money should be paid to his family and a believing slave be freed. Anyone who lacks the means to do this must fast for two consecutive months by way of repentance to Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

The wording of the original Arabic indicates that this should never happen; that is, it could not happen and it is not possible that a believer could kill another believer deliberately. This tells us that this prohibition is very serious and that this action is diametrically opposed to faith. Indeed, such a thing can only be done by a disbeliever or an evil doer whose faith is sorely lacking and for whom there is the fear of something even worse than that (namely losing his faith altogether).

True faith prevents the believer from killing his brother with whom Allah has ordained the brotherhood of faith, which involves loving him, taking him as a close friend and ally, and protecting his brother from any harm; what harm could be greater than killing? This is confirmed by the words of the Prophet (ﷺ):

«Do not go back to being disbelievers after I am gone, striking one another's necks.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Thus it is known that killing is an act of disbelief and is the gravest of major sins after ascribing partners to Allah.

Because the words «Never should a believer kill a believer» are general in meaning and include all situations, and because killing should not be committed by a believer against his brother under any circumstances, Allah (ﷻ) makes an exception in the case of killing by mistake:

«unless it be by mistake» – the one who made a mistake and did not intend to kill is not a sinner and has not transgressed the limits set by Allah. But because he has done a terrible deed which is enough to make the act abhorrent even though he did not intend to do it, Allah (ﷻ) has ordained that he must offer expiation and pay the diyah (blood money), as He says:

«Whoever kills a believer by mistake», whether the killer was male or female, free or slave, young or old, of sound mind or insane, Muslim or disbeliever – this may be understood from the word 'man' (translated here as «Whoever»), which is general in meaning. And that applies whether the person killed was male or female, young or old, as may be understood. The killer must «free a believing slave» as expiation for his act, from his own wealth. The slave may be young or old, male or female, healthy or otherwise, according to the view of some of the scholars.

However wisdom dictates that it should not be valid to free a slave who has a physical defect as expiation, because the purpose behind freeing the slave is to benefit the freed slave and put him in control of his own affairs. If he will lose out by being manumitted, and remaining a slave is more beneficial for him, then it is not valid to free him as expiation. Moreover the words «free a slave» may imply that he should be physically sound, because freeing him is for his own benefit, as he will no longer be working for the benefit of someone else. But if he is unable to do beneficial work because of

his physical problems, then there is no point in freeing him. Think about it and it will become clear.

With regard to the *diyah* (blood money), it must be paid by the '*âqilah* (male relatives on the father's side) of the killer in cases of accidental killing and quasi-intentional killing.

«to the deceased's family» as consolation to them. What is meant by his family here is his heirs, because the heirs inherit what the deceased has left behind, and the blood money is included in what he has left behind. There are many details concerning the blood money, which are discussed in the books of *fiqh*.

«unless they forgo it as an act of charity» that is, unless the heirs of the deceased give charity by letting the killer off, in which case the blood money is waived. This is encouragement to them to pardon the killer, because Allah describes that as charity, and charity is required at all times.

«If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you» that is, disbelievers who are in a state of war against you
 «and he was a believer, then the freeing of a believing slave [is enough]» and you do not have to pay blood money to his family, and there is no consideration of their lives and property (because they are at war with the Muslims).

«If he» that is, the victim «belonged to a people between whom and you there is a treaty [of peace], then the blood money should be paid to his family and a believing slave be freed». That is out of consideration for his family, because they come under the treaty.
 «Anyone who lacks the means to do this» that is, he does not own a slave or have sufficient funds to purchase one, because he is going through financial hardship and does not have any wealth surplus to his maintenance and basic needs from which to ransom a slave
 «must fast for two consecutive months» that is, he cannot break the fast during this period without an excuse; if he breaks the fast because

he does have an excuse, then that does not affect the continuity of his fasting, as in the case of sickness, menses and the like. But if he breaks the fast without an excuse, that does interrupt the continuity of his fasting, and he must start fasting all over again.

﴿by way of repentance to Allah﴾ that is, as expiation that Allah has enjoined upon the killer as a way of seeking forgiveness that He has ordained for His slaves, out of mercy towards them, and as a means of expiating for what may have happened of shortcomings and carelessness on their parts, as often happens in the case of accidental killing.

﴿Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ that is, His knowledge is complete and His wisdom is perfect; nothing the size of a speck of dust, or anything smaller or greater than that, is hidden from Him on earth or in heaven, at any time or in any place. Everything is subject to His wisdom in terms of what He has created and the laws that He has ordained. In fact everything that He has created or prescribed is based on utmost wisdom. By His knowledge and wisdom He has enjoined that the killer must offer expiation that is appropriate to his action; because he was the cause of the loss of a life that was protected according to Allah's laws, it is appropriate that he should free a slave and liberate him from the bond of servitude to people, so that he may enjoy complete freedom. If he cannot afford to free a slave, then he must fast for two consecutive months, thus freeing himself from enslavement to physical desires and pleasures that prevent a person from attaining eternal bliss, so that he can worship Allah (ﷻ) by giving up those desires and drawing closer to Allah.

Allah has made this fasting period so lengthy and difficult, and has required that it be done consecutively, and He has not prescribed feeding the poor in this case, because the latter is not appropriate here. This is in contrast to the expiation for *dhihār* (a *jāhili* form of divorce in which a man said to his wife, "You are to me as my mother's back"), which will be discussed in due course, in *shā' Allāh*.

By His wisdom, Allah enjoined blood money for any killing, even if it is by mistake, to serve as a deterrent and prevent similar cases of killing, by using appropriate means to prevent it.

By His wisdom, He enjoined the 'âqilah to pay the blood money in the case of accidental killing, according to scholarly consensus, because the killer was not at fault and it is difficult for him to bear the cost of this expensive blood money. Therefore it is appropriate that this should be done by those with whom he has ties of mutual help and support, in order to achieve the public interest and ward off harm from people. (Perhaps this is a motive that would prompt the 'âqilah to prevent the one whom they have to help with payment of blood money from killing, for fear that they will be burdened with this payment). It also serves to reduce the burden because it is shared by all of them, each according to his means. The payment is also made easier in that it may be spread over three years.

By His wisdom and knowledge, He decreed that the family of the victim should be compensated for their calamity by means of the blood money, which is enjoined upon the family of the killer.



﴿ وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَعَظِيبَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعْنَةُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٣)

4:93. But whoever kills a believer deliberately, his punishment will be hell, to abide therein forever; Allah will be angry with him, and will curse him, and will prepare for him a grievous punishment.

Before this, Allah stated that no deliberate killing of the believer can be done by another believer, and that such killing is an act of disbelief. Here He mentions the warning to the one who kills

deliberately; it is a warning that makes the heart tremble and causes great distress to people who understand.

There is no greater warning with regard to other major sins, or even anything like it. It is a warning that the recompense for the deed is hell; in other words, this major sin on its own dictates that the one who commits it should be requited in hell, with all its severe punishments, utter humiliation, divine wrath, missing out on triumph and success, and ending up with loss and doom. May Allah protect us from everything that takes us away from His mercy.

The leading scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) differed concerning the interpretation of this verse, although they were all agreed on the falseness of the Kharijite and Mutazilite view, according to which those who commit this act will abide in hell for eternity, even if they affirm the oneness of Allah. The correct interpretation is that given by the great scholar Shams ad-Deen ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) in *al-Madârij*. After mentioning the other interpretations and critically examining them, he said:

One group said: This and similar texts, which mention a punishment that fits the crime, do not necessarily mean that the punishment will automatically be carried out if the crime is committed, because for any ruling to be implemented there are conditions that must be met and impediments that must be absent. All that these texts tell us is that such a punishment fits a certain crime or sin.

Furthermore, there is proof of impediments, some of which are based on scholarly consensus and others on texts. Repentance is an impediment [to punishment] according to scholarly consensus, as is affirmation of the oneness of Allah, on the basis of mutawâtir texts that no one can ignore. Other impediments include great deeds that erase sin, major calamities that expiate sin, and carrying out of the hudood punishments in this world, according to the texts. There is no way that we can ignore these texts and proofs; therefore we have no choice but to accept all the texts together from both

angles. That is why both good and bad deeds are compared, so as to work out whether a person deserves to be punished or not, so that his destiny is based on whichever outweighs the other.

They said: Weighing up what is good or bad in this world and in the hereafter is the basis of shar'î rulings and the decrees of Allah. This is the basis on which the entire creation is ruled and on which the connection between cause and effect is established, both in the natural laws governing the universe and the laws of Sharia.

Allah has created for everything its opposite, which resists it and wards it off, and the stronger will ultimately prevail.

Strength is based on sound health and physical well-being, and an imbalance of the humours resists the natural function of the body that would lead to strength, and whichever is stronger will prevail. Similarly in the conflict between medicine and sickness, there are things in the body that are inclined to be healthy and other things that are inclined to be sick; the one tries to prevent the other from having a full effect and tries to resist it. If one prevails over the other, its effect will have the greatest impact.

Hence we know that people are of different categories. Some will enter paradise and not enter hell, and vice versa. Some will enter hell but will come out of it, and the length of his stay therein will be commensurate with the cause of his entering it, which will determine whether he will exit it quickly or after some time. Whoever has deep insight will see everything of which Allah has informed us in His Book, of the hereafter and its details; he will envisage it clearly as if he can see it.

This is certainty of faith which will burn up bad deeds as fire burns up wood. For one who has that level of certainty, it is impossible to persist in evil deeds, and if he does such a thing and does a lot of it, what he has of light of faith will force him to renew his repentance

every time, by turning back to Allah in constant repentance. Such a person is one of the dearest of creation to Allah.

May Allah reward him (Ibn al-Qayyim) with good on behalf of Islam and Muslims.



﴿يَتَّيِبُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنْ أَلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٩٤﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٤)

4:94. O you who believe, when you go forth [to fight] in the cause of Allah, use your discernment, and do not say to one who offers you the greeting of peace: You are not a believer, out of a desire for the fleeting gains of this worldly life. For with Allah are abundant gains. You yourselves were in the same position before, then Allah bestowed His grace upon you. Therefore use your discernment, for Allah is well aware of all that you do.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His believing slaves, when they go out to engage in jihad in His cause and seeking His pleasure, to use their discernment and examine all ambiguous matters, for matters are of two types: those that are clear and those that are unclear.

As for those that are clear, there is no need for further clarification, because there is no need to prove what is clear.

As for those that are ambiguous or unclear, one needs to examine them and clarify them in order to find out whether to go ahead with them or not. This examination in order to reach certainty leads to many benefits and prevents many evils, through which the extent of an individual's religious commitment, wisdom and maturity may

be determined, in contrast to the one who rushes into things without taking time to think about them and before the issue and its connected rulings become clear to him; that leads to undesirable consequences, as happened to those whom Allah rebuked in this verse, because they did not examine and verify the situation, and they killed the one who greeted them with salâms, who had with him booty that belonged to him or the property of someone else, because they thought that this would be acceptable. But that was a mistake, hence Allah rebuked them in this verse: ﴿and do not say to one who offers you the greeting of peace: You are not a believer, out of a desire for the fleeting gains of this worldly life. For with Allah are abundant gains﴾. In other words: do not let small fleeting gains lead you to commit inappropriate actions and thus miss out on what there is with Allah of immense and lasting reward, for that which is with Allah is better and more lasting.

This indicates that the individual should, if he finds himself inclined to something that is in harmony with his whims and desires – and it is harmful – remind himself of what Allah has promised to the one who restrains himself and avoids following whims and desires, and who gives precedence to pleasing Allah over pleasing himself. This will motivate him to follow the command of Allah, even if that is difficult for him.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says, reminding them of their previous situation, before they were guided to Islam: ﴿You yourselves were in the same position before, then Allah bestowed His grace upon you﴾ that is, just as He guided you after you had been astray, He may also guide others; just as guidance was a gradual process for you, it may also be like that for others.

So the one who is perfect should look at how he was before he was perfect, and think about how he should deal with those who are still like that, on the basis of what he knows about how he was before, and he should call them with wisdom and beautiful preaching. This is one of the most effective ways in which he may benefit himself and

others, hence the command to examine and verify is repeated once more: «Therefore use your discernment».

If he is one of those who have gone out to fight in jihad in Allah's cause and to fight the enemies of Allah, and he has made all sorts of preparations to harm them, then he is instructed to verify and examine the one who greets him with salâms. If there is a strong indication that that person only did that in order to protect himself from being killed, or out of fear for his life, then this indicates that the instruction to verify and check is something that is applicable in all situations where there could be some ambiguity. So things should be verified and examined until the matter becomes clear.

«for Allah is well aware of all that you do» and He will requite each one for his deeds and intentions, in accordance with what He knows of His slaves' circumstances and intentions.



﴿لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۗ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٥-٩٦)

- 4:95. Not equal are those believers who stay at home, apart from those forced by necessity, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah, offering their wealth and their lives. Allah has given a rank higher to those who strive and fight, offering their wealth and their lives, than to those who stay at home. To each Allah has promised the ultimate good, but Allah favours those who strive and fight, over those who stay at home, with an immense reward,

4:96. ranks specially bestowed by Him, and forgiveness and mercy. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

That is, the believer who engages in jihad, offering his life and his wealth, and the one who does not go out for jihad and does not fight the enemies of Allah, are not equal. This is encouragement to go out for jihad and a warning against being lazy and staying behind with no excuse.

With regard to people who have physical issues, such as the sick, the blind, the lame, and those who do not have the means to equip themselves, they are not like those who stay at home with no excuse. Whoever has a physical problem and is content to stay at home, and has no intention of going out for the sake of Allah, even if he did not have that problem that prevented him from doing so, and did not think about it, is of the same status as one who stayed behind with no excuse.

Whoever would definitely have gone out in the cause of Allah were it not for this impediment, wishes that he could do that and thinks about this matter to himself, is of the same status as one who went out for jihad, because the definite intention, if it is accompanied by doing as much as one can in word or deed, means that one has attained the same status as the one who actually does it.

Then Allah (ﷻ) states that the mujâhideen are of a higher rank or status. This is a differentiation in general terms, then He states that in more detail and promises them forgiveness from their Lord, and mercy that encompasses all that is good and wards off all that is evil. These ranks were explained by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadith narrated from him in *aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥayn* (the two authentic Hadith collections of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim), in which he told us that in paradise there are one hundred levels, and the distance between each two levels is like the distance between heaven and earth; Allah has prepared it for those who engage in jihad for His sake.

Allah has connected this reward to jihad; this is like the verse in Soorat aş-Şaff in which He says:

﴿O you who believe, shall I tell you about a deal that will save you from a painful punishment? Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and strive and fight, offering your wealth and your lives in the cause of Allah. That is better for you, if only you knew. [If you do that] He will forgive you your sins and admit you to gardens through which rivers flow and fine dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; that is the supreme triumph.﴾ (aş-Şaff 61: 10-12)

Think about the way in which the idea of superiority is expressed in these verses, as it states first of all that the mujâhid and others are not equal, then it states clearly that the mujâhid is superior by one rank to the one who stays behind, then it moves on to the idea of his being favoured with forgiveness, mercy and high status.

This gradual approach from one rank to another in the context of praise, or going from one status to one that is lower than it in the context of condemnation, is more eloquent and has a greater impact.

This is how it is when one category of people is favoured over another, and each of them has its own virtues; Allah mentions the good characteristics that they have in common lest anyone think that the one of lesser standing is being condemned. For this reason Allah says here: ﴿To each Allah has promised the ultimate good﴾.

Similarly, Allah says in the passage from Soorat aş-Şaff referred to above:

﴿...And give these glad tidings to the believers.﴾ (aş-Şaff 61: 13)

And Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿...Not equal among you are those who spent and fought before the conquest of Makkah [and those who did not]...﴾ (al-Hadeed 57: 10)

Then He says: ﴿To each Allah has promised the ultimate good﴾, as He says elsewhere:

﴿We guided Sulaymān to the right verdict, and to each of them We gave wisdom and knowledge...﴾ (al-Anbiyā' 21: 79)

The one who wants to highlight the contrast between individuals and groups and deeds may pay attention to this point.

Similarly, if he wants to speak in the context of criticising people or opinions, he may mention what they have in common when contrasting them to one another, lest anyone think that the preferred one is perfect. For example, if it is said that the Christian is better than the Magian (Zoroastrian), let him add: although both are disbelievers.

Because the promise to the mujāhideen of forgiveness and mercy is derived from two of His noble names, ﴿Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾, this verse ends with them, as He says: ﴿For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾.



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَظْفِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ إِلَّا السُّفْهَانَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوَالِدَانَ لَا يَسْطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾ فَأُولَئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَن يَعْفُو عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٩﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٧-٩٩)

(٩٩-٩٧)

- 4:97. Verily, when the angels take [in death] the souls of those who have wronged themselves, they ask them: What was the matter with you? They reply: We were weak and oppressed in the land. They say: Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate to some other place? For those, their ultimate abode is hell, an evil journey's end.

- 4:98. Except those who are [really] weak and oppressed – men, women, and children – who have no means in their power and do not know where to go.
- 4:99. For these, there is hope that Allah will forgive them, for Allah is Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving.

This is a stern warning to those who did not migrate when they were able to, until they died. The angels who seize their souls rebuke them with these harsh words and say: ﴿What was the matter with you?﴾ In other words: what was your situation? How did you make yourself distinct from the polytheists? In fact you increased their numbers and perhaps you supported them against the believers, and you missed out on a lot of righteous deeds, jihad with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and being with the Muslims, helping them against their enemies.

﴿They reply: We were weak and oppressed in the land﴾ that is, weak, downtrodden and oppressed; we had no means of migrating. But they are not speaking the truth when they say that, because Allah rebuked them and warned them, and Allah does not burden any soul with more than it can bear.

Then an exception is made for those who were genuinely weak and oppressed; hence the angels say to them: ﴿Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate to some other place?﴾ This is a question that is asked to establish a fact. In other words it is well established in the minds of everyone that the land of Allah is spacious and whenever a person is in a place where he is not able to practise his religion openly, then he has other places on earth and a way out to a land where he will be able to worship Allah, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O My slaves who believe, verily My earth is spacious, so worship Me alone.﴾ (al-'Ankaboot 29: 56)

Allah (ﷻ) says of these people who have no excuse: ﴿For those, their ultimate abode is hell, an evil journey's end﴾. This, as stated above, mentions the reasons that led to that; on the Day of Judgement this is what will happen, if all conditions are fulfilled and there are no impediments; but there may be impediments that could prevent that fate.

This verse indicates that migration is one of the greatest obligations, and failing to do it is forbidden; in fact it is one of the gravest major sins. This verse indicates that everyone who dies has taken in full all that was decreed for him of provision, lifespan and deeds. This understanding is based on the phrase translated here as ﴿take [in death]﴾, which comes from a root that has the meaning of taking in full, because if there was anything left for him to take, his soul would not be taken in death.

This verse highlights belief in the angels and praises them, because Allah mentions them by way of confirming His approval of them.

Then an exception is made for those who are truly weak and oppressed, who have no means of migrating at all, ﴿and do not know where to go﴾.

Allah says concerning these people: ﴿For these, there is hope that Allah will forgive them, for Allah is Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving﴾. The word *'asa* (translated here as ﴿there is hope that﴾), when used in reference to Allah, indicates that it will inevitably happen, because of His generosity and kindness. When the Qur'an says that there is hope of reward for the one who does some deeds, this means that the reward will not be due unless the deed is done in the proper manner. If it is not done in the proper manner, then the individual has fallen short and does not deserve that reward. And Allah knows best.

This verse indicates that the one who is unable to do what he is instructed of an obligatory duty or otherwise is excused, as Allah (ﷻ) says concerning those who are unable to engage in jihad:

«There is no blame on the blind nor any blame on the lame nor any blame on the sick [if they do not go forth to fight]...» (al-Fath 48: 17)

And Allah says of the commands in general:

«(So fear Allah as best you can...)» (at-Taghâbun 64: 16)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If I instruct you to do something, then do as much of it as you can.»
(Muslim)

But there is no excuse for a person unless he tries his best then is not able to do it, because Allah (ﷻ) says: «who have no means in their power». This verse indicates that having a guide in Hajj and 'umrah, and similar matters where travel is required, is one of the conditions of being able to do it.



﴿ وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافِعًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴾
(سورة النساء: ١٠٠)

- 4:100. He who migrates for the sake of Allah will find in the earth many places of refuge and abundant provision. Whoever leaves his home migrating for the cause of Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, his reward is then incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

This is encouraging people to migrate, and explaining the interests that will be served by it. Allah promises – and His promise is true – that whoever migrates for His sake, seeking His pleasure, will find many places of refuge on earth, and abundant provision. The many places of refuge refers to that which will help to serve the interests of one's religious commitment, and abundant provision refers to some

worldly interests. That is because many people think that if they migrate, they will be unsettled after having been settled, they will be poor after having been rich, they will be humiliated after having been proud, and they will go through hardship after having had a life of ease.

But that is not the case. So long as the believer remains among the polytheists, he will fall far short with regard to his religious duties, both in acts of worship that he may do alone, such as prayer and the like, as well as other acts of worship which must be done by joining others, such as jihad in word and deed, and matters that are connected to that, because he is not able to do that. He will always be under threat and will drift away from his religion (because of persecution and fear), especially if he is weak and oppressed.

But if he migrates for the sake of Allah, he will be able to establish the religion of Allah, and engage in jihad against the enemies of Allah and oppose them in word and deed. Moreover, he will have an opportunity to increase his provision. And indeed it came to pass as Allah (ﷻ) foretold.

The best example of that is the *Ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم), when they migrated for the sake of Allah, leaving their homes, children and property for His sake. Their faith was completed thereby and they attained perfect faith; they were able to engage in jihad and support the religion of Allah in such a way that they became an example to follow for those who came after them. They also attained that which usually results from that of great victories and a great deal of booty, as a result of which they became the richest of people. Similarly, anyone who does what they did will attain the same results as they did, and this will remain so until the Day of Resurrection.

Then Allah says: ﴿Whoever leaves his home migrating for the cause of Allah and His Messenger﴾ that is, migrating for the sake of his Lord and His pleasure, out of love for His Messenger (ﷺ) and in support of the religion of Allah, not for any other purpose

﴿and death overtakes him﴾ by being killed or otherwise
 ﴿his reward is then incumbent upon Allah﴾ that is, he will attain the reward of the *muhājir* (migrant) who achieved his goal of migration by being guaranteed (a complete reward) by Allah. That is because he intended and decided, and he took the first step and started to take action. By Allah's mercy towards him and others like him, He will give them the reward in full, even if they did not complete the action, and He will forgive them for whatever shortcomings occurred in terms of migration and otherwise.

Hence this verse ends with these two noble names of Allah, as He says: ﴿And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ – He forgives the believers what they commit of errors, especially those who repent and turn back to their Lord.

﴿Most Merciful﴾ to all of His creation; by His mercy he brought them into existence, granted them physical well-being, and bestowed upon them wealth, children, power and so on. And He is Most Merciful to the believers, as He guided them to faith and taught them knowledge by means of which they may attain certainty; He made easy for them the means of attaining happiness and success, and that by means of which they will attain the highest reward and will see, by His mercy and grace, that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and it has not entered the mind of man. We ask Allah not to deprive us of His bounty because of our evil deeds.



﴿وَإِذَا صَرَيْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا

جَدْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۗ وَذَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُوا عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن كَانَ بِكُمْ أَذًى مِّن مَّطَرٍ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرَضَىٰ أَن تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ وَخُذُوا جُدْرَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٠١-١٠٢)

- 4:101. When you are travelling in the land, there is no blame on you if you shorten your prayers, if you fear the disbelievers may harm you, for the disbelievers are unto you avowed enemies.
- 4:102. When you [O Messenger] are with the believers and lead them in prayer, let one group of them stand [in prayer] with you, taking their weapons with them. When they have finished their prostrations, let them take their position in the rear. Then let the other group, who have not yet prayed, come and pray with you, taking all precautions, and also taking their weapons with them. Those who disbelieve wish that you would neglect your weapons and your baggage, then they would swoop down on you all at once. But there is no blame on you if you put away your weapons because of the inconvenience of rain or because you are ill; but take all precautions for yourselves. Verily Allah has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.

These two verses are the basis for the concession allowing shortening of the prayers (when travelling) and the fear prayer. Allah (ﷻ) says ﴿When you are travelling in the land﴾. The apparent meaning of the verse indicates that the concession is applicable to any type of travel, even if it is for sinful purposes, as is the view of Abu Ḥaneefah (may Allah have mercy on him). However the majority of scholars, including the other three imams and others, do not allow the concession if the travel is for sinful purposes. The concession is a kind of mercy granted by Allah to make things easier for His slaves, so when they travel they may shorten their prayers and break the

fast. But when the sinner travels, the purpose of his journey makes it inappropriate for any concession to be granted to him.

«there is no blame on you if you shorten your prayers» that is, there is nothing wrong with it and there is no sin on you. This does not contradict the fact that shortening the prayers is preferable (when travelling), because stating that there is no blame or sin is aimed at removing any doubt that may arise. Moreover it does not contradict the fact that it (shortening the prayer when travelling) may be obligatory. This is similar to the verse in Soorat al-Baqarah, in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily Şafā and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever comes to the House for Hajj or 'umrah, there is no blame on him for going back and forth between them. And whoever does good of his own accord, then verily Allah is Appreciative, All-Knowing.»
(*al-Baqarah 2: 158*)¹⁴

The reason for removing doubt in this case is obvious; it is because it is well established in the Muslims' minds that prayer is obligatory and is to be offered in the complete form, and nothing could remove any doubt about the permissibility of shortening the prayer except a clear statement that there is no sin or blame on the one who does that.

The fact that it is preferable to shorten the prayers rather than offer them in full (when travelling) is indicated by the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) shortened his prayers on all his journeys and this comes under the heading of flexibility, concession and mercy towards people. Allah (ﷻ) loves people to avail themselves of His concessions just as He hates them to disobey Him.

«if you shorten your prayers» – a literal translation would be “shorten from the prayers”. The use of the preposition *min* (from) indicates two things:

¹⁴ In this verse, the statement that there is no blame on the one who goes back and forth between Şafā and Marwah (*sa'iy*) does not contradict the fact that doing so is obligatory in Hajj and 'umrah.

- 1- If the preposition was not present, then there would not be any guideline on how much to shorten the prayer by, as a result of which some people may think that most of the prayer may be omitted and that making it only one *rak'ah* would be sufficient. Therefore the phrase used is *min aṣ-ṣalāh* (literally, from the prayer), to indicate that this shortening should be in accordance with specific guidelines, as established by the teachings and practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions.
- 2- The word *min* (from) implies some, not all. Thus it is known that shortening refers to some of the obligatory prayers, not all of them, because *fajr* and *maghrib* are not shortened; rather what are shortened are the four-*raka'āt* prayers, which are shortened from four to two *raka'ât*.

Once it is established that shortening of the prayers when travelling is a concession, we should note that the commentators differed concerning this condition, namely: «if you fear the disbelievers may harm you». The apparent meaning suggests that shortening prayers is only permissible when those two factors are present: travel and fear. The difference of opinion boils down to whether what is meant by the words «if you shorten» is shortening the number (of *raka'ât*) only, or shortening the number and the way in which it is done. The ambiguity has to do with the former, that is, concerning the number only.

Ameer al-Mu'mineen 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) was not sure about this matter until he asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about it. «He said: O Messenger of Allah, why are we still shortening the prayers now, after we have become safe, when Allah says: «if you fear the disbelievers may harm you»?»

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: It is a charity that Allah has bestowed upon you, so accept His charity.» (Muslim, Ibn Mājah, and an-Nasā'i)

Based on that, this condition (of fear) is mentioned because this was the usual case faced by the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions, as most of their journeys were for the purpose of jihad.

We also learn something else which is the wisdom behind the granting of this concession of shortening the prayers, and the interest served thereby. In this verse, Allah explains the reason behind it, namely what is expected of hardship which makes granting a concession appropriate, namely the combination of travel and fear. That does not necessarily mean that shortening of the prayers should not be done in the case of travel alone (without the element of fear), which is usually accompanied by hardship.

The second opinion with regard to what is meant by shortening the prayer has to do with the number and the way in which it is done. In that case, the condition is to be understood as follows: If there is both travel and fear, then it is permissible to reduce the number and shorten the way it is done. If there is travel only, it is permissible to reduce the number of raka'ât only. If there is fear only, it is permissible to shorten the way in which it is done.

Therefore Allah describes the fear prayer after that, as He says: ﴿When you [O Messenger] are with the believers and lead them in prayer﴾. That is: when you lead them in the prayer that you establish, and do it in the proper manner as required, then teach them what is appropriate for them to do in these circumstances.

Then He explains that by saying: ﴿let one group of them stand [in prayer] with you﴾ that is, and let another group stand facing the enemy, as is indicated by the following: ﴿When they have finished their prostrations﴾ that is, when those who are with you have completed their prayer. Prayer is referred to as prostration in order to highlight the virtue of prostration and the fact that it is one of the pillars or essential parts of the prayer; in fact it is the greatest of its essential parts.

﴿let them take their position in the rear. Then let the other group, who have not yet prayed﴾, this is the group that had stood facing the enemy

﴿come and pray with you﴾. This indicates that the imam should remain after the first group leaves, waiting for the other group to come. When they come, the imam should lead them in the remainder of his prayer, then he sits and waits for them to complete their prayer, then he should lead them in saying the salām. This is one of the ways in which the fear prayer may be done. Other ways of doing the fear prayer have been narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) in ṣaḥeeḥ reports with many *isnād*, all of which are permissible.

This verse indicates that prayer in congregation is an individual obligation for two reasons:

- 1- Allah (ﷻ) enjoined it in these difficult circumstances, at a time of intense fear when the possibility of an enemy attack was very high. If it is enjoined in these difficult circumstances, then it is more appropriate that it should be made obligatory at times of peace and safety.
- 2- The fact that in the fear prayer, the worshippers omit a lot of the conditions and essentials of the prayer, and many actions that would ordinarily render the prayer invalid are overlooked, only serves to emphasise the obligatory nature of praying in congregation. If it were not obligatory, it would not be permissible to omit these essentials for the sake of praying in congregation.

This verse indicates that it is preferable to pray behind one imam, even if that means not doing properly things that could have been done properly if they were to pray behind several imams. That is for the sake of uniting the Muslims and creating harmony among them, and preventing division, because that is more effective in instilling fear in the hearts of the enemy. Allah (ﷻ) also instructed them to take their weapons with them and to be cautious when offering the fear prayer.

Even though this involves movements and distractions whilst praying, it serves a clear interest, which is combining the prayer and jihad, and taking precautions against the enemy who are extremely keen to cause harm to the Muslims and swoop down on them and their baggage all at once. Hence Allah says: ﴿Those who disbelieve wish that you would neglect your weapons and your baggage, then they would swoop down on you all at once﴾.

Then Allah accepts the excuses of those who have an excuse, such as sickness or rain, allowing them to put away their weapons, but they should still take precautions, as He says: ﴿But there is no blame on you if you put away your weapons because of the inconvenience of rain or because you are ill; but take all precautions for yourselves. Verily Allah has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment﴾.

One of the humiliating punishments is that which Allah instructed His believing party and the monotheistic supporters of His religion to carry out, namely killing them and fighting them wherever they found them, capturing them, besieging them, lying in wait for them on every route, taking precautions against them at all times, and not letting down their guard lest the disbelievers achieve some of their goals concerning them. To Allah be much praise for having blessed the believers and supported them with His help, and for His teachings by which, if they had followed them properly, they would never have been defeated in any battle and the enemy would never have prevailed over them at any time.

﴿When they have finished their prostrations, let them take their position in the rear﴾ – This phrase indicates that this group should complete all of their prayer before going to the place where the guards are, and that the Messenger (ﷺ) remained where he was, waiting for the other group to come before saying the salâm, because first He said that the group should stand with him, which indicates that they should follow him in the prayer. Then after that the action is attributed to them, not to the Messenger (ﷺ), which supports what we say.

«Then let the other group, who have not yet prayed, come and pray with you» – This indicates that the first group have finished praying, and that the entire prayer of the second group is to be with the imam in a true sense in the first rak'ah, and virtually in the second rak'ah (that is, not actually following the imam). This requires the imam to wait for them until they have completed their prayer, then he is to say the salām with them. This is clear to one who ponders and reflects.



﴿إِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي مَا وَقَعْتُمْ وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا

(سورة النساء: ١٠٣)

4:103. When you have finished the prayer, remember Allah, standing, sitting, or lying down on your sides. Then when you are safe again, establish prayer [in the regular prescribed manner]. Prayer is prescribed for the believers at specific times.

That is, when you have finished your prayer, whether it is the fear prayer or otherwise, then remember Allah in all situations and circumstances. But the fear prayer is singled out for mention for several reasons, including the following:

- Soundness of the heart, and its prosperity and joy is to be attained by turning to Allah (ﷻ) with love, filling the heart with remembrance of Him and praising Him. This goal may be achieved mainly through prayer, which is essentially a connection between the slave and his Lord.
- Prayer increases one's understanding and certainty of faith, which is the reason why Allah has enjoined it upon His slaves every day and night. It is well known that the fear prayer does not achieve these aims because of mental and physical distraction

and fear, so Allah instructs the believers to make up for that by remembering Him (*dhikr*) after the prayer.

- Fear leads to anxiety, which could lead to weakness of the heart, and if the heart is weakened the body will be weakened and unable to resist the enemy. Remembering Allah, and remembering Him a great deal, is one of the greatest means of strengthening the heart.
- Remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) – along with patience and steadfastness – means success and prevailing against the enemy, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe, when you meet an [enemy] troop, stand firm and remember Allah much, so that you may triumph.﴾

(*al-Anfāl* 8: 45)

Allah instructed them to remember Him a great deal in this situation; and there are other rulings.

﴿Then when you are safe again, establish prayer [in the regular prescribed manner]﴾ that is, when you are safe from fear and your minds and bodies are at ease, then complete the prayer in the proper manner, outwardly and inwardly, doing all essential parts, fulfilling its conditions, focusing with proper humility (*khushoo`*), and other things that perfect it.

﴿Prayer is prescribed for the believers at specific times﴾ that is, it is enjoined at its proper time; this indicates that it is obligatory and that it has a certain time, and it is not valid unless it is offered at that time. These times are well known and well established among the Muslims, young and old, knowledgeable and ignorant; they learned that from their Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who said:

«Pray as you have seen me praying.» (Bukhari)

The words «prescribed for the believers» indicate that the prayer is a measure of faith; as a person's faith is, so will his prayer be, with regard to perfection and completion. This indicates that the disbelievers – even if they comply with the Muslim rulings, as in

the case of *ahl adh-dhimmah* – are not expected to follow the minor issues of religion such as prayer, because that is not addressed to them and they are not to be enjoined to do it. Rather if they do it, it is not valid, so long as they are still disbelievers, even though they will be punished in the hereafter for not doing it and for not adhering to all other rulings.



﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِن تَكُونُوا تَأْمُونُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْمُونُونَ كَمَا تَأْمُونُونَ ۗ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٠٤)

4:104. Do not weaken in pursuit of the enemy. If you are suffering hardships, they are also suffering hardships; but you hope for something from Allah that they cannot hope for. And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

That is, do not falter or lose heart in pursuit of the disbelievers, and in waging jihad against them and persisting in that, for if the heart grows weary, it will lead to physical weakness and that in turn will weaken the resolve to resist the enemy; rather that you should be strong and active in fighting them. Then Allah mentions two things that will strengthen the hearts of the believers:

- 1- What befalls you of hardship, exhaustion, injuries and so on, for it also befalls your enemies. So it is not appropriate, on the basis of human dignity and Islamic chivalry, to be weaker than them when you have equal portions of pain and suffering, because what usually happens is that no one would feel too weak except one whose pain and suffering persists and his enemy constantly overwhelms him, not the one who has the upper hand sometimes and is overwhelmed at other times.

- 2- You hope for something from Allah that they cannot hope for, for you hope to attain His reward and be safe from His punishment. Moreover, the elite among the believers have other sublime aims and noble aspirations, namely supporting the religion of Allah, establishing His law (Sharia), expanding the reach of Islam, guiding the lost and suppressing the enemies of the faith.

These matters give extra strength to the sincere believer, increase his energy and make him more courageous, because when a person fights and is patient in attaining worldly glory, even if he attains it, he will not be like the one who strives to attain happiness in both this world and the hereafter, and to attain the pleasure of Allah and paradise. Glory be to the One Who created people to be so far apart in aspirations, and differentiated between them on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom. For this reason He says here: ﴿And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾; He is perfect in His knowledge and wisdom.



﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَبَكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنَ لِلْخَائِبِينَ خَصِيمًا ۝١٥ ﴾ وَأَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ ۗ إِنْ كَانَ عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝١٦ وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَفُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ خَوَافًا أَثِيمًا ۝١٧ يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّنُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ۝١٨ هَتَأْتُهُمْ هَتُولَاءُ جَدَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ يُجَادِلُ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ۝١٩ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ، ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝٢٠ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهِ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ، وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝٢١ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرَوْهَا بَرِيًّا، فَقَدْ آحْتَمَلَ بِئْسَ التَّمَانِيًا ۝٢٢﴾

مُيِّنًا ﴿١١٣﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ
 وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ
 وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ ۚ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٠٥-١١٣)

- 4:105. Verily We have sent down to you [O Muhammad] the Book in truth, so that you may judge between people, in accordance with what Allah has taught you. So do not be an advocate for the deceitful.
- 4:106. But seek the forgiveness of Allah; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 4:107. Do not plead on behalf of those who betray their own souls, for Allah does not love one who is treacherous and sinful.
- 4:108. They seek to hide from people but they do not seek to hide from Allah, for He is with them [by His knowledge] when they make plans to say things that are not pleasing to Him. Verily Allah encompasses [with His knowledge] all that they do.
- 4:109. There you are, arguing on their behalf in the life of this world, but who will argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? Or who will be their defender?
- 4:110. Yet whoever does evil or wrongs his own soul but thereafter asks Allah for forgiveness will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 4:111. And whoever earns sin, earns it only against his own soul. And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.
- 4:112. But whoever commits an offence or a sin, then blames it on an innocent person, will bear the guilt of slander and manifest sin.
- 4:113. Were it not for Allah's grace towards you [O Muhammad], and His mercy, a party of them would have tried to lead you astray. But they only lead themselves astray, and they cannot harm you in the least. For Allah has sent down to you the Book and

wisdom, and has taught you what you did not know. And the grace of Allah toward you is great indeed.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He sent to His slave and Messenger (ﷺ) the Book in truth; that is, protected from the devils as it was sent down, lest they insert any falsehood into it. Indeed, it has been sent down in truth, containing truth; what it tells us is true and its commands and prohibitions are just.

﴿The word of your Lord is perfect in truth and justice...﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 115)

And He tells us that He sent it down in order to judge between people.

Elsewhere He says:

﴿...and We have sent down to you the Reminder [the Qur'an], so that you may explain to the people what has been sent down to them...﴾ (*an-Nahl* 16: 44)

Therefore it may be that this verse (4: 105) is referring to judging between people concerning disputes and differences, whereas the verse in Soorat an-Nahl refers to explaining the entire religion, both fundamentals and minor issues, or it may be that both verses have the same meaning, and thus judging between people in this case includes judging between them in cases of physical harm (murder and injury), slander against their honour, financial matters and all other rights, as well as explaining beliefs and all other rulings.

﴿in accordance with what Allah has taught you﴾ that is, not on the basis of your whims and desires; rather on the basis of what Allah has taught you and inspired in you. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Nor does he speak of his own accord.﴾ (*an-Najm* 53: 3)

This indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) is infallible in what he conveys from Allah, rulings and otherwise. It also indicates that it is essential

that a judge be qualified in terms of knowledge and justice, because Allah says ﴿in accordance with what Allah has taught you﴾; He did not say “in accordance with your own opinion”.

Judging between people must also be based on knowledge of the Book. Just as Allah ordained that judging between people must be done on the basis of justice and fairness, He also forbade judging on the basis of injustice and inequity, which is the opposite of justice.

Therefore He said: ﴿So do not be an advocate for the deceitful﴾ that is, do not plead on behalf of one who you know to be deceitful, one who claims something that is not his or denies something that he owes, whether the judge is certain of that or he thinks it is likely to be the case.

This indicates that it is prohibited to dispute or speak on behalf of someone who is in the wrong when disputing religious matters or worldly rights and dues. The meaning of the verse indicates that it is permissible to get involved in disputes on behalf of a person who is not known to have done any wrong.

﴿But seek the forgiveness of Allah; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ that is, He forgives major sins for the one who seeks His forgiveness, repents to Him and turns to Him, and He will help him to do righteous deeds after that, which will earn His reward and ward off His punishment.

﴿Do not plead on behalf of those who betray their own souls﴾ in the sense of committing offences against their own souls. That includes the prohibition on speaking on behalf of one who has committed sin for which the punishment is now due, whether it is a ḥadd punishment (specified in Sharia) or a ta‘zeer punishment (a disciplinary punishment meted out at the judge’s discretion). So he should not plead on his behalf by trying to prove that he did not do it, or try to ward off the resulting punishment as dictated by Sharia.

﴿for Allah does not love one who is treacherous and sinful﴾ that is, one who is habitually treacherous and sinful. Stating that Allah does not love someone implies the opposite, which is that He hates such a person. This is like the reason why what is mentioned above should not be done.

Then Allah tells us about these treacherous people: ﴿They seek to hide from people but they do not seek to hide from Allah, for He is with them [by His knowledge] when they make plans to say things that are not pleasing to Him﴾. This is indicative of their lack of faith and certainty, as a result of which their fear of people is greater than their fear of Allah, for they are very keen to use all means, whether permissible or prohibited, to avoid exposure and scandal in front of people, whilst at the same time they show their audacity towards Allah by committing grievous sins, not caring that He is watching them.

He is with them by His knowledge in all situations, especially when they are making plans to say things that are not pleasing to Him, such as claiming that an offender is innocent, accusing an innocent person of an offence, and striving to convey that to the Messenger (ﷺ) so that he will do what they intend he should do.

Thus they combined a number of offences, and they did not remember that the Lord of heaven and earth, the One Who sees what is in their hearts, was watching them. Hence Allah (ﷻ) warns them by saying: ﴿Allah encompasses [with His knowledge] all that they do﴾ that is, He encompasses that with His knowledge, yet He did not hasten to punish them; rather He gave them respite, allowed them the opportunity to repent, and warned them that persisting in their sin would incur a severe punishment.

﴿There you are, arguing on their behalf in the life of this world, but who will argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? Or who will be their defender?﴾ That is, even if you try to defend them in the life of this world and if your argument wards off some of that which you were concerned about of shame and disgrace before

the people, how can that help and benefit them? Who will argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection, when proof is established against them and their own tongues, hands and feet testify against them concerning what they used to do?

﴿On that day, Allah will give them in full their due recompense and they will know that Allah is indeed the Truth Who makes manifest [the true nature of all things].﴾ (*an-Noor* 24: 25)

Who could argue in their defence before the One Who knows what is secret and what is yet more hidden, the One Who will bring witnesses against them whose testimony cannot be refuted?

This verse points out the importance of highlighting the contrast between what one may imagine of attaining worldly interests by forsaking the commands of Allah or doing what He forbids, and what one would miss out on of reward in the hereafter or be subjected to of punishment. Hence the one whose nafs prompts him not to obey Allah should say to himself: There you are, failing to obey His command out of laziness and carelessness; what benefits have you attained thereby? What have you missed out on of the reward of the hereafter? What results from this failure of misery, deprivation, loss and perdition? Similarly, if his nafs feels inclined to do that which is prohibited, he should say to himself: There you are, you did what you wanted, but this pleasure will come to an end and will be followed by stress, distress, loss, missing out on reward and exposure to punishment, some of which on its own is enough to make a wise man refrain from (following his whims and desires).

This is one of the most beneficial things that a person may reflect upon. This is the character of the truly wise man, unlike the one who claims to have reason when that is not the case, for he – because of his ignorance and wrongdoing – gives precedence to immediate pleasure and comfort, regardless of the consequences. And Allah is the One Whose help we seek.

Then Allah says: ﴿Yet whoever does evil or wrongs his own soul but thereafter asks Allah for forgiveness will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ that is, whoever has the audacity to commit sin and transgression, then seeks forgiveness from Allah sincerely and in the proper manner, which requires admitting the sin, regretting it, giving it up and resolving not to go back to it, has a promise from the One Who does not break His promise of forgiveness and mercy. He will forgive the sin that he has committed and will erase its consequences of shortcomings and faults; He will restore to him what he had done of righteous deeds and will guide him in what remains of his lifespan; He will not make his sin a barrier to divine help, for He has already forgiven him, and if He has forgiven him, He will cancel the consequences that result from it.

It should be understood that evil deeds in general include all acts of disobedience, small and great. Similarly, wronging oneself in general includes wronging oneself by ascribing partners to Allah as well as lesser sins. But when the two are mentioned together, each is to be explained in the light of the other. So in this case evil deeds are understood as being wrongdoing that offends people, which means wronging them with regard to their physical well-being, wealth and honour.

Wronging oneself is to be understood as wrongdoing and sin that is between Allah and His slave. It is called wronging oneself because the person's nafs (self) is not his property, such that he may dispose of it as he wishes; rather it is the property of Allah (ﷻ) Who has made it a trust with which He has entrusted His slave and enjoined him to keep it (his nafs) on the straight path in word and deed. So he should strive to teach himself as he has been enjoined and strive to do what is required. Striving to follow any other path is wronging himself, betraying himself, and diverging himself from justice and fairness, the opposite of which is injustice and wrongdoing.

﴿And whoever earns sin, earns it only against his own soul﴾ – this includes everything that is a sin, small or great. Whoever does evil, the punishment for that in this world and the hereafter will fall upon him, and it will not go beyond him to anyone else, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another...﴾ (Fâṭir 35: 18)

But if evil deeds become prevalent and no one objects to them, then the punishment will become widespread and the burden of sin will encompass everyone. That does not contradict the rulings of this verse, because the one who fails to object to and denounce sin as he is required to do has earned sin.

This highlights the justice and wisdom of Allah, for He does not punish anyone for the sin of another, nor does He mete out a punishment any greater than that which is befitting to the sin. Hence He says: ﴿And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ that is, His is perfect knowledge and perfect wisdom.

By His knowledge and wisdom He knows about the sin and what results from it, what prompted it and the punishment that is due for it. He knows the situation of the sinner and that if he commits the sin because of the evil inclination of his nafs, even though most of the time he is obedient to Allah, He will forgive him and enable him to repent.

But if he commits the sin out of recklessness, not caring that his Lord is watching and not worrying about the punishment, then forgiveness is unlikely and it is unlikely that he will be helped to repent.

﴿But whoever commits an offence﴾ that is, commits a major sin
 ﴿or a sin﴾ that is, a lesser sin
 ﴿then blames it on an innocent person﴾ that is, he accuses someone else of this sin that he committed who is innocent of that, even though he may have committed other sins
 ﴿will bear the guilt of slander and manifest sin﴾ that is, he has taken upon himself the burden of accusing an innocent person and of

manifest sin. This indicates that this (false accusation) is a major sin that incurs punishment.

That is because he has combined a number of evils: he has incurred a burden of sin; then he accused one who did not do it of doing it; then he uttered a foul lie by declaring himself innocent and accusing an innocent person; then that led to punishment in this world which was warded off from the one who deserved it and was carried out on the one who did not deserve it; it also led to people talking about one who was innocent. And there are other evil consequences; we ask Allah to keep us safe from them and from all evils.

Then Allah mentions His blessing that He bestowed upon His Messenger (ﷺ) by protecting him from those who wanted to lead him astray:

﴿Were it not for Allah's grace towards you [O Muhammad], and His mercy, a party of them would have tried to lead you astray﴾. The commentators stated that the reason for revelation of these verses was that a family stole in Madinah, then when their theft was discovered, they feared scandal, so they took the stolen items and threw them into the house of someone who was innocent of that crime, and the thief asked his people to help him by going to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and asking him to declare their companion innocent before the people. They said: He did not steal; rather the one who did that is the one in whose house the item is found, and he (our companion) is innocent. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) thought about declaring their companion innocent, then Allah revealed these verses as a reminder, explaining what really happened and warning the Messenger (ﷺ) against defending the treacherous, because defending the one who is in the wrong is misguidance. Misguidance is of two types: misguidance that results from lack of knowledge, which is ignorance of the truth; and misguidance in actions, which is doing something other than what one is obliged to do. Thus Allah protected His Messenger (ﷺ) from the type of misguidance that results from lack of knowledge (just as

He protected him from misguidance in the sense of doing something other than what he ought to do).

Here Allah tells us that their schemes and tricks backfired on them, as is the case with every treacherous person.

﴿But they only lead themselves astray﴾ because that trickery and treachery did not lead them to attain their goal, and they did not gain anything from it but loss, deprivation and sin.

This was a great blessing to His Messenger (ﷺ), namely the blessing of doing the right thing, being guided to do what must be done and being protected from every evil action.

Then Allah mentions the blessing of knowledge that He bestowed upon him: ﴿For Allah has sent down to you the Book and wisdom﴾ that is, He has sent down to you this Holy Qur'an and the wise reminder, in which there is an explanation of all things and knowledge of the first and the last.

﴿wisdom﴾ either refers to the Sunnah, of which some of the early generations said: The Sunnah was revealed to him just as the Qur'an was revealed to him; or it refers to knowledge of the subtle realities and issues of Sharia, over and above knowledge of its rulings, seeing things properly and acting appropriately, and giving each thing priority according to its level of importance.

﴿and has taught you what you did not know﴾. This includes everything that Allah (ﷻ) taught him, because he, before prophethood came to him, was as Allah (ﷻ) described him:

﴿... You knew nothing of the scripture or matters of faith...﴾ (*ash-Shoorâ* 42: 52)

﴿Did He not find you unaware [of the path of truth]¹⁵ and guide you?﴾ (*ad-Duhâ* 93: 7)

¹⁵ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) always believed in the oneness of Allah (*tawhîd*), even before his prophethood began, but he was unaware of the path of Islam, and its rulings and teachings, until Allah guided him to it through revelation. (ash-Shawkâni; az-Zamakhshari; Ibn 'Âshoor).

Then Allah kept sending the revelation to him, teaching him and leading him in the way of perfection, until he reached a level of knowledge that could not be attained by anyone else among the earlier and later generations.

Thus he became the most knowledgeable of all people, acquired the most perfect qualities, good manners and character. Hence Allah said: ﴿And the grace of Allah toward you is great indeed﴾ (4: 113). His grace towards the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) is greater than His grace towards all other creatures.

The kinds of grace and blessings that Allah bestowed upon him cannot all be known or listed.



﴿لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا
(سورة النساء: ١١٤)﴾

4:114. There is no good in much of their private conversations, except for one who enjoins charity and good deeds, or seeks to bring about reconciliation between people. For the one who does that, seeking the pleasure of Allah, We will give him an immense reward.

That is, there is nothing good in much of what people talk about. If there is nothing good in it, then it is either talking in which there is no benefit, such as empty talk that is permissible, or it is purely evil and harmful, such as all kinds of prohibited talk.

Then Allah (ﷻ) makes an exception, and says: ﴿except for one who enjoins charity﴾, whether that is in terms of wealth or knowledge,

or any beneficial thing. In fact it may also include acts of worship, such as *tasbeeh* or *tahmeed*, and so on.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Every *tasbeeh* is a charity, every *takbeer* is a charity, every *tahleel* is a charity, enjoining what is good is a charity, forbidding what is evil is a charity, and the intimacy of one of you (with his wife) is a charity...» (Muslim)

«and good deeds» – this refers to kindness and acts of worship, and everything that is known to be good according to both Sharia and common sense. When enjoining what is good is mentioned on its own, without mentioning forbidding what is wrong, then it includes forbidding what is wrong. That is because giving up evil is part of doing good, and doing what is good cannot be complete without giving up evil.

But when the two are mentioned together, then what is good refers to what is enjoined, and what is evil refers to what is forbidden.

«or seeks to bring about reconciliation between people» reconciliation can only be between two disputing parties. Conflict, disputes and mutual resentment lead to unlimited evil and division. Hence the Lawgiver enjoined bringing about reconciliation between people with regard to matters of blood, wealth and honour, and even when there are differences of religion, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere: «And hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah, and do not be divided among yourselves...» (*Âl 'Imrân* 3: 103)

«If two groups among the believers fight one another, then make peace between them. If one of them transgresses against the other [and rejects all efforts to make peace], then fight [all of you] against the one that transgresses, until it complies with the command of Allah...» (*al-Hujurât* 49: 9)

«reconciliation is better» (4: 128). The one who strives to bring about reconciliation between people is better than one who stands in

prayer, fasts and gives in charity. Allah will inevitably support him in his efforts and striving.

By the same token, Allah will not support the efforts of the one who strives to cause trouble among people, and he will not achieve his goal, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...verily Allah does not allow the work of the mischief-makers to thrive.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 81)

So when these things are done, it is good, as is indicated by this exception (to their private conversations).

But the completion and perfection of the reward will be in accordance with the level of one's intentions and sincerity. Hence Allah says: ﴿For the one who does that, seeking the pleasure of Allah, We will give him an immense reward﴾.

For this reason one should be sincere to Allah (ﷻ) in one's actions at all times and in everything good, so as to attain that great reward and get used to being sincere. Thus he will attain the reward in full, whether he fulfils his goal or not, because he has succeeded in forming the right intention and accompanied that with whatever effort he was able to make.



﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
تُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۖ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١١٦﴾﴾

(سورة النساء: ١١٥-١١٦)

- 4:115. But whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him, and follows a path other than that of the believers, We will leave him to that which he himself has chosen and cast him into hell – an evil journey's end.

4:116. Allah does not forgive the ascription of partners to Him, but He forgives anything other than that to whomever He wills; whoever ascribes partners to Allah has indeed gone far astray.

That is, whoever opposes the Messenger (ﷺ) and stubbornly rejects the message he has brought, (after guidance has become clear to him) through Qur'anic evidence and prophetic proof, (and follows a path other than that of the believers) – their path is their way of beliefs and actions

(We will leave him to that which he himself has chosen) that is, what he has chosen for himself, and We will forsake him and not lead him to goodness, because he saw the truth and recognised it, but he rejected it. His recompense from Allah is just and fair: He will leave him confused in his misguidance and will increase his misguidance further, as He says elsewhere:

﴿...So when they chose to deviate [from the truth], Allah caused their hearts to deviate [from right guidance]...﴾ (aṣ-Ṣaff 61: 5)

– and:

﴿We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time...﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 110)

The meaning of these two verses indicates that whoever does not oppose the Messenger and follows the path of the believers, in the sense that his goal is to seek the Countenance of Allah, follow His Messenger (ﷺ) and adhere to the main body of the Muslims, then he commits sin or thinks of it, motivated by whims and desires and overwhelmed by his human nature, Allah will not abandon him to his own self and his shayṭân; rather He will rescue him by means of His kindness, bless him with His divine protection and protect him from evil, as Allah (ﷻ) said concerning Yoosuf:

﴿...Thus We averted from him evil and shameful deeds. Verily, he was one of Our chosen slaves.﴾ (Yoosuf 12: 24)

– that is, because of his sincerity, We averted evil from him. The same applies to everyone who is sincere, as is indicated by the fact that the reason for protection is explained in general terms.

﴿and cast him into hell﴾ that is, We will punish him greatly therein ﴿an evil journey's end﴾ that is, final destination and eternal abode.

This threat for opposing the Prophet (ﷺ) and following a path other than that of the believers refers to various levels of punishment, according to the degree of opposition to the Prophet (ﷺ) and following a path other than that of the believers, and according to the degree of sin, minor or major – and no one knows the extent of that except Allah. Some of them will deserve to spend eternity in hell and will deserve all kinds of humiliation; others will deserve something less than that. Perhaps the second verse gives more details of this general statement.

The second verse tells us that Allah (ﷻ) will not forgive the sin of ascribing partners to Him, because this is a grave insult to the Lord of the worlds and a denial of His oneness; it implies regarding the created being who possesses no power to ward off harm from, or benefit, himself as equal to the One Who is in control and possesses the power to bring benefit or cause harm, the only One from Whom blessings come, and no one can ward off harm but He; He is utterly perfect in all aspects and completely independent of all needs.

One of the gravest kinds of wrongdoing and misguidance is not devoting worship to the One Who is like that and is so great, and directing any kind of devotion to a created being, who possesses none of the attributes of perfection or independence, and in fact without Allah is nothing, for he would not exist; he is imperfect, lacks independence and is in need in all respects.

Sins that are less than ascribing partners to Allah are subject to the divine will. If Allah wills, He will forgive them by His mercy and wisdom, and if He wills, He will punish for them by His justice and wisdom. This verse is quoted as proof for that on which this

Ummah is unanimously agreed, and it is protected from agreeing on something wrong.

The explanation for that is that Allah warned the one who forsakes the path of the believers of humiliation and hell. The path of the believers refers to everything that the believers adhere to of beliefs and actions.

If they agree on something being obligatory or encouraged or prohibited or disliked or permissible, then this is their path, and whoever goes against them in any of that, after consensus has been established among them concerning it, has followed a path other than theirs. This is indicated in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿You are the best community ever brought forth for [the benefit of] humankind; you enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong...﴾
(*Al 'Imrân* 3: 110)

The point is that Allah (ﷻ) stated that the believers of this Ummah do not enjoin anything but that which is right, so if they all agree that something is obligatory or recommended, then it is part of that which they enjoin. Therefore, based on this text, what they enjoin must be right and there is nothing beyond what is right except that which is wrong. Similarly, if they agree that something is forbidden, then it is something that they forbid, so it cannot be anything but wrong.

An example of that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Thus We have made of you an Ummah [nation, community] justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over humankind...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 143)

In this verse Allah tells us that He has made this Ummah justly balanced – that is, just and good – so that they might be witnesses over humankind in all things. So if they testify that some matter has been enjoined by Allah or forbidden by Him, or permitted, then their testimony is infallible and cannot be wrong, because they have knowledge of what they testify to and are fair in their testimony. If

it were otherwise, they would not be fair in their testimony and they would not have knowledge of it.

Another example is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If you are in dispute over any matter, refer it to Allah and His Messenger﴾ (4: 59).

From this we may understand that with regard to matters concerning which they did not dispute, rather they were agreed upon them, they are not instructed to refer them to the Qur'an and Sunnah, because what they agree upon cannot be but in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, so they cannot be contrary to them.

This verse and similar verses definitively prove that the consensus of this Ummah counts as binding evidence. Hence Allah describes the misguidance of the polytheists as reprehensible, as He says:

❁ ❁

﴿إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنْتَنَا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَرِيدًا ﴿١١٧﴾ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٨﴾ وَلَا ضَلَّتْهُمْ وَلَا امْتَنَيْنَهُمْ وَلَا مَرْنَهُمْ فَلْيُبْتِئِكُنَّ إِذَا نَكَرَ الْأَنْعَامَ وَلَا مَرْتَبَهُمْ فَلْيَغْيِرْ بَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿١١٩﴾ يَعْذِبُهُمْ وَيُخَيِّبُهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿١٢٠﴾ أُولَئِكَ مَأْوَنُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ عَنْهَا مَحِيصًا ﴿١٢١﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١١٧-١٢١)

- 4:117. Instead of Him, they call upon none but female [deities]; they call upon none but a rebellious devil
- 4:118. whom Allah cursed, and he said: I will certainly take a designated portion of Your slaves,
- 4:119. And I will certainly lead them astray and fill them with false hopes. I will certainly order them to slit the ears of livestock and I will certainly order them to change the creation of Allah.

Whoever takes the Shayṭân as a protector [and helper] instead of Allah has indeed suffered a manifest loss.

4:120. [Shayṭân] makes promises to them and fills them with false hopes; but Shayṭân makes promises to them only in order to deceive them.

4:121. For these, their abode shall be hell, and they will find no escape from it.

That is, what these polytheists call upon instead of Allah is only female, namely the idols which were given female names such as al-'Uzzâ and Manât, and so on. It is well known that the name is indicative of the nature of the thing named, so if these idols were given imperfect, female names, that must indicate that the things that were called by those names must be imperfect and lacking in attributes of perfection. Allah tells us in more than one place in His Book that they neither create nor grant provision, and they do not protect their worshippers; in fact they cannot bring benefit to or ward off harm from themselves, and they cannot help themselves against anyone who intends ill towards them. They cannot hear or see, and they have no intellect. So how can one that is like this be worshipped, and devotion not be focused on the One to Whom belong the most beautiful names, sublime attributes, praise, perfection, glory, majesty, might, beauty, mercy, kindness and generosity, Who is unique in His power to create and control, and is supremely wise in all that He commands and decrees?

Can this be anything but the worst of the worst, indicative of the shortcomings of the one who does that and of his having reached the vilest of lows, more ignoble than can be imagined or described? Moreover, they are only worshipping the images of these imperfect idols; in reality they are worshipping nothing but the Shayṭân, who is their enemy and is seeking to destroy them, doing all that he can to achieve that. He is furthest removed from Allah; Allah has cursed

him and cast him far away from His mercy. Because Allah has cast him far away from His mercy, he is striving to cause people to be cast out from the mercy of Allah too.

﴿Verily, the Shayṭān is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. He only calls his followers so that they may become inhabitants of the raging fire.﴾ (Fāfir 35: 6)

Hence Allah tells us of the Shayṭān's efforts to deceive people and how he makes evil and mischief fair-seeming to them, for he said to his Lord, swearing an oath: ﴿I will certainly take a designated portion of Your slaves﴾. The accursed one knew that he would not be able to deceive all the slaves of Allah, and that he would have no power over the sincere slaves of Allah; rather his power would be over those who take him as a friend and prefer to obey him rather than to obey their Lord.

Elsewhere he swore to deceive them and said:

﴿...I will certainly mislead them all, except Your chosen [and sincere] slaves among them.﴾ (Sād 38: 82-83)

This is what the evil one wanted and was certain of. Allah (ﷻ) told us that it would take place when He said:

﴿Iblees found his expectations¹⁶ concerning them to be correct, for they all followed him, except for a group of believers.﴾ (Saba' 34: 20)

Concerning this designated portion that he swore to Allah he would take, he stated what he wanted to do with them and what his plan was for them when he said: ﴿And I will certainly lead them astray﴾ that is, from the straight path – misguidance in terms of knowledge and misguidance in terms of deeds.

¹⁶ That is, he had expected that he would be able to mislead them, as he said:

﴿...I will certainly mislead them all, except Your chosen [and sincere] slaves among them.﴾ (Sād 38: 82-83)

﴿and fill them with false hopes﴾ that is, in addition to leading them astray, I shall make them wish to attain that which those who are rightly guided will attain. This is the essence of deception: he was not content merely to lead them astray; rather he went further and made the misguidance they followed appear fair-seeming to them. He made them go further in the way of evil until they did the deeds of the people of hell which are deserving of punishment, but they thought that they were deserving of paradise. This is applicable to the Jews, Christians and others, for they are as Allah tells us about them:

﴿And they say: No one will enter paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian. That is their own wishful thinking...﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 111*)

﴿...Thus We have made fair-seeming to every nation its actions...﴾ (*al-An'ām 6: 108*)

﴿Say: Shall we tell you who will be the greatest losers in terms of deeds those whose efforts in the life of this world are wasted, while they think that what they do is right?﴾ (*al-Kahf 18: 103-4*)

Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the hypocrites, that on the Day of Resurrection they will say to the believers:

﴿...Were we not with you? They will say: Yes, but you gave in to confusion and temptation, you kept waiting [for some misfortune to befall us], you doubted, and you were deceived by false hopes, until the decree of Allah came to pass. Thus [Shayṭān] the deceiver deceived you concerning Allah.﴾ (*al-Hadeed 57: 14*)

﴿I will certainly order them to slit the ears of livestock﴾ that is, to cut the ears, as in the case of the *baḥeerah*, *sâ'ibah*, *waṣeelah* and *ḥām*.¹⁷ Here some of the animals concerned are mentioned, to refer to

¹⁷ These words refer to certain categories of camels to which certain taboos were applied during the jāhiliyah.

Baḥeerah: a she-camel whose milk was dedicated to the idols.

Sâ'ibah: a she-camel that was let loose for the sake of their false gods and no load was to be carried on it. =

all of them. This is a kind of misguidance which implies prohibiting that which Allah has permitted, or permitting that which Allah has prohibited. That includes false beliefs and unjust rulings, which are among the worst types of misguidance.

﴿and I will certainly order them to change the creation of Allah﴾. That includes changing the outward appearance by means of tattooing, plucking eyebrows, filing the teeth for the purpose of beautification, and other things by means of which Shayṭān deceived them, so they changed and altered the creation of Allah (ﷻ).

This implies that the one who does such actions is discontent with Allah's creation, doubts His wisdom, and believes that what they do with their hands is better than the creation of the Most Merciful, and that they are not content with His decree and creation. That also includes changing the inner creation (that is, what one naturally believes). Allah (ﷻ) has created His slaves as inherently monotheist, with a natural inclination to accept and prefer the truth, but then the devils come to them and lead them away from that beautiful inclination, and make evil, ascription of partners to Allah, disbelief, immorality and disobedience appear fair-seeming to them.

Every infant is born in a state of *fiṭrah* (sound human nature) but his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian and so on, changing thereby the natural inclination that Allah has created in people to affirm His oneness, love Him and know Him. The devils attack them in this regard as scavengers and wolves attack the lost sheep.

Were it not for Allah's kindness and generosity towards His sincere believing slaves, the same thing would happen to them as happened

= Waṣeelah: a she-camel that produced female offspring the first and second times she gave birth, with no male offspring in between; she was also let loose for the sake of the idols.

Ḥām: a stallion camel that was let loose for the sake of the idols after siring a particular number of offspring, and was not required to carry any load.

to these who were led astray. This is what happened to them because of their turning away from their Lord and Creator, and taking as a friend the enemy who intends ill towards them in all ways. Thus they became losers in this world and in the hereafter, and they ended up with regret and sorrow, having lost out. For this reason Allah says: ﴿Whoever takes the Shayṭân as a protector [and helper] instead of Allah has indeed suffered a manifest loss﴾. What loss can be clearer and greater than that of the one who loses in terms of his religious and worldly well-being, and whose sins cause his doom? Therefore he incurs eternal misery and misses out on eternal bliss.

On the other hand, the one who takes his Lord as his friend and gives precedence to pleasing Him gains the most and succeeds immensely; he earns happiness in this world and the hereafter, and he will become content with that which Allah blesses him with. O Allah, no one can withhold what You give, and no one can give what You withhold. O Allah, take care of us among those of whom You take care, and pardon us among those whom You pardon.

Then Allah says: ﴿[Shayṭân] makes promises to them and fills them with false hopes﴾ that is, Shayṭân makes promises to those whom he strives to lead astray, but these promises also imply warnings, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The Shayṭân threatens you with poverty...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 268)

He threatens them that if they spend in Allah's cause, they will become poor, and he scares them by telling them that if they strive in jihad they will be killed, and so on, as Allah (ﷻ) tells us:

﴿That was only the Shayṭân, who tries to instil [in you] fear of his followers...﴾ (*Āl 'Imrân* 3: 175)

He tries to instil fear in them when they give precedence to pleasing Allah, by telling them of everything that may happen and everything that is not possible; he brainwashes them until they feel reluctant to do good. In like manner, he fills their minds with false hopes which,

in reality, are like mirages which contain nothing real. Hence He says: ﴿but Shayṭān makes promises to them only in order to deceive them. For these, their abode shall be hell﴾ that is, whoever follows the Shayṭān and turns away from his Lord, and becomes one of the followers and party of Iblees, his final abode will be hell ﴿and they will find no escape from it﴾ that is, no one to save them and no refuge; rather they will abide therein for ever and ever.

After mentioning the final destination of the friends of the Shayṭān, who are doomed, Allah then mentions the final destination of His close friends, who are the blessed:



﴿وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٢٢)

4:122. But those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. [This is] a true promise from Allah, and who is truer in word than Allah?

﴿those who believe﴾ in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and the divine decree, both good and bad, in the manner in which they are instructed to believe in them, by understanding them, believing in them and affirming them ﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ that stem from faith.

That includes all enjoined deeds, both obligatory and encouraged, including beliefs, words and physical actions. Each deed brings a set reward, according to one's situation, attitude and intention, and the extent to which it complements faith and righteous deeds.

The individual will miss out on that set reward according to the degree to which he is lacking in faith and righteous deeds. This is in accordance with what is known of the wisdom and mercy of Allah and it is in accordance with His true promise, which is known to anyone who studies the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ).

Hence He mentions the set reward for that: ﴿We will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow﴾, in which there is that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever entered the mind of man, of all kinds of delicious food and drink, wondrous scenes, beautiful spouses, palaces, adorned chambers, amazing trees with low-hanging fruit, beautiful voices, and abundant blessings, where people will visit one another and remember the past, all of that in the gardens of paradise. And over and above all that will be Allah's being pleased with them, and their souls having the joy of being near to Him, seeing Him and listening to Him, which will make them forget all delights and pleasures, and were it not that Allah keeps them steadfast, they would soar and die with joy and happiness.

How sweet this blessing is, and how great is that which the Most Generous Lord has bestowed upon them. What happened to them of all goodness and joy is indescribable, and what makes it perfect and complete is the fact that they will abide for all eternity in those lofty abodes. Hence Allah says: ﴿to abide therein forever. [This is] a true promise from Allah, and who is truer in word than Allah?﴾ Almighty Allah speaks the truth, and His words and statements are of the utmost truthfulness, because His word is true and what it indicates is exactly what will happen; all that is indicated by His words will inevitably come to pass. The same is true of the words of His Messenger (ﷺ), because he does not say anything except by His command and does not utter anything except by His inspiration.



﴿لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ۗ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ، وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٢٣-١٢٤)

- 4:123. It will not be in accordance with your wishes or the wishes of the People of the Book; whoever does evil will be requited for it, and he will not find, besides Allah, any protector or helper.
- 4:124. Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer – those will enter paradise, and they will not be wronged by even as much as the speck on a date stone.

﴿It﴾ that is, the matter of your salvation and purification ﴿will not be in accordance with your wishes or the wishes of the People of the Book﴾. “Wishes” refers to self-talk that is not based on actions, and which is accompanied by mere claims; if one wished the opposite, it would be all the same. This is general in meaning and applies to all matters, so how about if it applies to the issues of faith and eternal happiness?

Allah has told us of the wishes of the People of the Book, and that they said:

﴿...No one will enter paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian. That is their own wishful thinking...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 111)

And this is even more applicable in the case of those who have no Book or Messenger.

That also includes all those who claim to be Muslims, as is dictated by perfect justice and fairness. Merely claiming to belong to a religion, regardless of what it is, is of no use at all if the individual does not produce any evidence to support his claim. His deeds either confirm

that claim or demonstrate that it is false. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿whoever does evil will be requited for it﴾. This includes all those who do evil, because evil includes all kinds of sin, both minor and major sins. This also includes all kinds of requital, small or great, in this world or in the hereafter.

In this regard people are of differing levels, which no one knows except Allah. Some do few bad deeds and some do many. One whose deeds are all evil cannot be anything but a disbeliever, and if he dies without having repented, he will be requited with eternal, painful punishment. If a person's deeds are righteous and he is steadfast in following the straight path most of the time, but he sometimes commits some minor sins, then whatever befalls him of worry, distress, harm and some pains – whether they are physical or emotional, or caused by the loss of a loved one or wealth and so on – will be an expiation for (some of) his sins. This is also part of the requital for his (bad) deeds. Allah has ordained this out of kindness to His slaves, and there are many different degrees between these two cases (the one whose deeds are all good and the one whose deeds are all evil).

This requital for evil deeds in general is limited to those who do not repent, for the one who repents is like the one who did not commit sin, as is indicated by the texts.

﴿and he will not find, besides Allah, any protector or helper﴾ these words dispel any idea that may arise that the one who deserves punishment for his deeds could have a protector, helper or intercessor to avert from him that which he deserves (of punishment). Allah (ﷻ) tells us that this is not the case; he has no friend who can get him what he wants, and no protector who could ward off from him that which he fears, except his Lord and Sovereign.

﴿Whoever does righteous deeds﴾ – that includes all actions, including thoughts, ideas and beliefs, as well as physical actions. It also includes every doer of deeds, human or jinn, young or old, male or female. Hence Allah says: ﴿whether male or female, and is a

believer». Faith is the required condition for all deeds. No deed can be righteous or acceptable, or lead to reward, or ward off punishment, unless it is based on faith.

Deeds without faith are like the branches of a tree that was cut off from the root, or like a structure built on waves. Faith is the root and foundation, and the basis on which everything is built. This condition must be borne in mind whenever any good deed is mentioned in general terms: it should be understood that the reward for that deed is subject to the condition that it be based on faith.

«(those) that is, the ones who combine faith and righteous deeds «will enter paradise» which includes everything that one's heart may desire and that will delight one's eyes «and they will not be wronged by even as much as the speck on a date stone» that is, they will not be wronged to any degree, small or great, for what they did of good deeds; rather they will find it complete and multiplied greatly.



﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٥)

- 4:125. Who can be better in religion than one who submits himself [completely] to Allah, is a doer of good, and follows the religion of Ibrâheem, the monotheist? For Allah did take Ibrâheem as a close friend.

That is, nothing is better than the way of one who combines sincerity to Allah with submitting himself to Him, which is indicative of full submission to Allah both inwardly and outwardly, turning to Him and being devoted to Him, body and soul.

﴿is a doer of good﴾ that is, in addition to this devotion and submission, he follows the teachings of Sharia and the rulings with which Allah sent His Messenger (ﷺ) and that He revealed in His Books, and made them a way to be followed by the elite of His creation and their followers.

﴿and follows the religion of Ibrâheem﴾ that is, his teachings and path

﴿the monotheist [*haneef*﴾ that is, inclining¹⁸ away from polytheism towards monotheism, and away from created beings in order to focus and devote himself to the Creator.

﴿For Allah did take Ibrâheem as a close friend﴾. Close friendship is the highest level of love; this is the status that was obtained by the two close friends (*khaleels*) of Allah: Muhammad and Ibrâheem (blessings and peace of Allah be upon them both). Allah's love is for all the believers; Allah only took Ibrâheem as a close friend because he fulfilled the command that was enjoined upon him and he passed the test. Therefore Allah made him a leader of humankind, took him as His close friend and made him renowned among all people.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٢٦)

4:126. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth; verily Allah encompasses all things.

This verse highlights the fact that Allah (ﷻ) encompasses all things, hence He tells us that to Him belongs ﴿all that is in the heavens and

¹⁸ The word *haneef* (translated here as ﴿monotheist﴾) means one who inclines away from one thing towards something else.

on earth) that is, all creatures are His property and His slaves, and He is the only Master Who controls them. His knowledge encompasses all that may be known, His vision encompasses all that can be seen, His hearing encompasses all that may be heard, His will and decree control all that exists and His mercy encompasses the inhabitants of heaven and earth. Every creature is subject to His might and power, and all things submit to Him.



﴿وَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ ۗ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَىٰ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا تُوْتُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَرَرَّعُونَ أَن تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضَعِّفِينَ مِنَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَأَن تَقُومُوا لِلْيَتَامَىٰ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٧﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٧)

- 4:127. They ask you [O Muhammad] for a ruling concerning women. Say: Allah gives you a ruling concerning them, [as does] that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans to whom you do not give what is prescribed for them [of mahr and inheritance], yet you desire to marry them, and concerning helpless children, that you should treat orphans equitably. Whatever you do of good deeds, Allah has full knowledge of it.

Asking for a ruling is a request for an explanation of the Islamic verdict concerning the matter asked about. Allah tells us that the believers asked the Messenger (ﷺ) about the ruling on women that has to do with them, and Allah (ﷻ) answered this question Himself. He said: ﴿Say: Allah gives you a ruling concerning them﴾, so act in accordance with the ruling He gives you in all affairs pertaining to women, namely giving them their rights, not mistreating them in general terms and in specific cases.

This command is general in meaning and includes all that Allah has ordained, both commands and prohibitions, with regard to women, wives and others, young and old.

Then after making a general statement, Allah refers specifically to the instruction to be kind to the weak, namely orphans and children, out of concern for them and warning against neglecting their rights, as He says:

«[as does] that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans» that is, He also explains to you through that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans

«to whom you do not give what is prescribed for them». This highlights the situation that really existed at that time. If a female orphan was under the care of a man, he would undermine her rights and mistreat her, either by devouring her wealth, all or some of it, or by preventing her from getting married so that he could benefit from her wealth, for fear of losing her wealth to her husband; or he would take some of her mahr that was given to her when she got married, by stipulating a condition or otherwise. This was the case if he was not interested in marrying her, but if he did want to marry her and she was beautiful and had wealth, he would not be fair with regard to her mahr; rather he would give her less than she deserved. All of these things come under the heading of injustice and wrongdoing mentioned in this text. Hence Allah said:

«yet you desire to marry them» – the original Arabic may mean either you desire to marry them or you do not desire to marry them. Both cases are discussed above.

«and concerning helpless children» – Allah also gives you a ruling concerning helpless small children: you should give them their rights, of inheritance and otherwise, and you should not seize their wealth unlawfully and wrongfully.

«that you should treat orphans equitably» that is, with complete justice. That includes paying attention to the way in which you raise

them, by making them adhere to the commands of Allah and what He has enjoined upon His slaves. Guardians are responsible for that, for making them adhere to that which Allah has made obligatory.

The Arabic term translated above as treating (equitably) may also mean taking care of their worldly interests by tending their wealth and looking for the best way to invest it for them, and handling it only in the best manner. At the same time they should not do favours to their friends or anyone else at the expense of the orphans, such as giving a girl in their care in marriage to a friend, and so on, in such a way that undermines their rights. This highlights Allah's mercy towards His slaves, as He instructs them to look after the interests of those who cannot take care of themselves because they are in a weak position and have lost their father.

Then Allah encourages kindness in general terms, as He says: ﴿Whatever you do of good deeds﴾ to orphans and others, ﴿Allah has full knowledge of it﴾ that is, His knowledge encompasses the deeds of those who do good, whether they are few or many, good or the opposite, and He will requite each person in accordance with his deeds.



﴿وَإِنْ أَمْرَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُورًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٨)

4:128. If a woman fears ill treatment or indifference on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they settle the matter amicably between themselves [by compromising on their rights], for reconciliation is better, even though avarice is ever-present in human souls. If you do good and practise self-restraint, Allah is well aware of all that you do.

That is, if a woman fears ill treatment from her husband, meaning that he will look down at her, have no desire for her and be indifferent to her, then in this case it is better to bring about reconciliation between them, by means of the woman giving up some of her Islamically-affirmed rights to her husband, so that she could remain with him. This may be done by her agreeing to less than she is entitled to in terms of either maintenance, clothing, accommodation or a share of his time, by waiving some of her rights, or she may give her day and night to her husband or her co-wife.

If they both agree to that, there is nothing wrong with it and there is no blame on them in that regard, either on her or her husband. In that case it is permissible for her husband to stay with her according to these terms, and this is better than separation. Hence Allah says: ﴿for reconciliation is better﴾. From the general meaning of this phrase it may be understood that reconciliation between two parties who have rights over one another or between whom there is a dispute on any matter is better than each party insisting on his or her full rights, because doing so brings about reconciliation, preserves harmony and creates an atmosphere of tolerance.

Reconciliation is permissible in all matters, unless it permits something that is prohibited or prohibits something that is permissible, in which case it is not reconciliation; rather it is injustice.

It should be noted that no ruling can be implemented or carried out unless there is a reason for doing so and there are no impediments to doing so. That includes this important ruling, namely reconciliation. Allah (ﷻ) mentioned the reason for that, by pointing out that it is better, and what is better is something sought by every rational person. Moreover, Allah has enjoined it and encouraged it, therefore the believer should be more eager to seek it and attain it.

The impediment is mentioned in the words: ﴿even though avarice is ever-present in human souls﴾ that is, human souls are created with an inclination towards avarice, which makes the individual reluctant

to give what is due to others and makes him keen to demand his own rights. Souls are naturally inclined towards that, so you should strive to rid yourself of this bad characteristic and replace it with its opposite, which is tolerance and an easy-going nature. That means giving what is due to others and being content with some of that to which you are entitled.

When a person is helped and guided to acquire this good characteristic, it then becomes easy for him to reconcile with his opponent, and that paves the way to reaching the goal more easily. This is in contrast to the one who does not strive to remove avarice from his heart, so it becomes difficult for him to reach an agreement and reconcile with others, because he will not be content unless he gets all of his dues, and he will not be content to give all that he is required to give to others. And if the other party is also like him, the problem will become worse.

Then Allah says: ﴿If you do good and practise self-restraint﴾ that is, do good in worshipping the Creator, which means worshipping your Lord as if you can see Him, for even though you cannot see Him, He sees you; and do good to other people in all ways, benefiting them with one's wealth, knowledge or status, or in other ways ﴿and practise self-restraint﴾ and fear Allah by doing all that is enjoined and refraining from all that is prohibited, or do good by doing what is enjoined and fear Allah by refraining from that which is prohibited. ﴿Allah is well aware of all that you do﴾ – He encompasses it with His knowledge, both as it outwardly appears to be and what is hidden of intentions; He records it and will requite you for it in full.



﴿وَلَنْ نَسْطِيعُوا أَنْ نَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ الْنِسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا

رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٩)

4:129. You will never be able to treat your wives with absolute equity, however much you may desire to do so. But do not incline too much to one of them so as to leave the other hanging. If you do what is right and refrain from injustice, verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Here Allah (ﷻ) states that husbands will not be able to be fully equitable between their wives, because equity requires equal love and being inclined equally to all of them, and then acting accordingly, and this is simply not possible. Therefore Allah forgives that which cannot be done, and forbids that which is possible (of inequity), as He says: ﴿But do not incline too much to one of them so as to leave the other hanging﴾ that is, do not incline in such a way that you do not fulfil their obligatory rights; rather do what you can to treat them equitably.

Therefore with regard to maintenance, clothing, sharing one's time between them and so on, you must be fair and treat them equitably. This is in contrast to love, intercourse and so on. If the husband fails to give his wife her rights, then she will be left hanging, unlike the one who has no husband, so she is certain of her situation and can prepare to find a husband and get married, and also unlike the one who has a husband who gives her her rights.

﴿If you do what is right﴾ with regard to the relationship between you and your wives, by forcing yourself to do that which you may not be inclined to do, seeking reward thereby and doing your duty towards your wife, and also reconcile with other people concerning disputes that you may have with them. This indicates that it is encouraged to follow every path that may lead to reconciliation, as mentioned above.

﴿and refrain from injustice﴾ that is, by doing what is enjoined, refraining from what is forbidden, and accepting with patience what is decreed

﴿verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ – He will forgive whatever you have done of sins and falling short in your obligatory

duties, and He will have mercy on you as you have been kind to your wives and shown them compassion.



﴿ وَإِنْ يَنْفَرَا يُعِنَ اللَّهُ كِلَيْهِمَا سَعْتِهِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًا ﴾ (سورة

النساء: ١٣٠)

4:130. But if they separate, Allah will compensate both out of His abundance, for Allah is All-Encompassing, Most Wise.

This is a third option for spouses: if it is not possible to bring about reconciliation, then there is nothing wrong with separating.

﴿But if they separate﴾ by means of *talâq*, annulment of the marriage, *khul'*, or otherwise

﴿Allah will compensate both﴾ spouses ﴿out of His abundance﴾ that is, out of His bounty and His vast and all-encompassing kindness. He will compensate the husband with a wife who is better for him than her, and He will make her independent of means by His grace and bounty. If her share of provision stops coming from her husband, then her provision will come from the One Who guarantees the provision of all and takes care of their interests, and perhaps Allah will bless her with a husband who is better than him.

﴿for Allah is All-Encompassing﴾ that is, His grace is immense and His mercy is vast. His mercy and kindness reach as far as His knowledge reaches.

But in addition to that, He is also ﴿Most Wise﴾ that is, He bestows His grace and mercy, or withholds them, on the basis of wisdom. If His wisdom dictates that He should withhold His kindness from some of His slaves, because of some deeds on their part due to which they do not deserve His kindness, He will withhold it from them on the basis of justice and mercy.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴿١٣١﴾﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

(سورة النساء: ١٣١-١٣٢)

- 4:131. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. We have instructed those who were given the scripture before you, as well as you [O Muslims], to fear Allah. But if you disbelieve, then surely to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and Allah is Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise.
- 4:132. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and sufficient is Allah as a disposer of affairs.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us how vast and great is His sovereignty, which means that He is in control of all things and ordains all things, through His Sharia and by His will and decree.

Through His Sharia, Allah instructed the earlier and later generations, the people of the previous and later Books, to fear Him by following His commands and heeding His prohibitions. He also issued laws and regulations, rewarding those who follow His instructions, and punishing those who neglect them and overlook them with the most painful punishment. Hence He says: ﴿But if you disbelieve﴾ by failing to fear Allah and by associating with Allah that for which He has not sent any authority down to you, then you are only harming yourselves; you are not harming Allah in the slightest or diminishing His sovereignty. He has slaves who are better, greater and more numerous than you, who obey Him and submit to His command. Therefore He refers to that when He says: ﴿But if you disbelieve, then

surely to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and Allah is Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise». He is Most Generous and Most Kind. He bestows His bounty from the vast reserves of His mercy, which are never diminished by His spending, which continues all day and all night. If the people of the heavens and the people of the earth, the first and last of them, were all to come together and each one of them was to ask for all that he wishes for, that would not detract in the slightest from His sovereignty. He is generous and possessed of abundant wealth, and His giving and His punishing take just one word; His command, when He wills something, is merely to say, 'Be!' and it is.

By virtue of His being completely self-sufficient He is perfect in all attributes, because if there were to be any shortcomings or imperfections in Him, that would be a kind of need for that quality (in order to perfect it). But He possesses all the attributes of perfection, and in each attribute He has the highest level of perfection. One of the aspects of His self-sufficiency is that He has no wife or child, and no partner in His sovereignty, and no supporter or helper in His running the affairs of His dominion. Another aspect of His self-sufficiency is that the inhabitants of the upper and lower realms are in need of Him in all their situations and affairs, and they ask of Him for all their needs, small and great. Allah (ﷻ) is in charge of all their needs and requests; He meets their needs, honours them, bestows His favour upon them out of kindness, and guides them.

«Worthy of all praise» – (al-Hameed) is one of the majestic names of Allah (ﷻ), which indicates that He alone is the One Who deserves all praise, love and honour, because of what He possesses of the attributes of praise, namely the attributes of beauty and majesty, and because of what He bestows upon His creation of immense blessings. Therefore He is praiseworthy in all ways.

How beautiful is this pairing of these two noble names: «Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise», for He is independent of means and

praiseworthy. He is perfect in His self-sufficiency and He is perfect in His praiseworthiness, and He is perfect for having both of these attributes together.

Then He repeats that His sovereignty encompasses all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and that He is in charge of all things. In other words, He knows all things and is running the affairs of all things on the basis of His wisdom, and that is part of being in charge of things in the most perfect sense. Being in charge of things requires knowledge of what one is in charge of, as well as strength and the ability to do the job and run affairs. That running of affairs should be based on wisdom and what serves the best interests, for any shortcoming is indicative of shortcomings in the one who is in charge of things, and Allah (ﷻ) is far above having any shortcomings.



﴿إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿١٣٣﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا ﴿١٣٤﴾﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٣٣-١٣٤)

- 4:133. If He so willed, He could destroy you, O people, and bring others [in your stead], for He has power to do that.
- 4:134. Whoever seeks the reward of this world, then with Allah is the reward of this world and of the hereafter. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

That is, He is Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise, the One Who is possessed of complete power and you are subject to His will.

﴿If He so willed, He could destroy you, O people, and bring others [in your stead]﴾ that is, other people who would be more obedient to Allah than you and better than you. This is a warning to the people

against persisting in disbelief and turning away from their Lord. Allah does not care about them if they do not obey Him; He may give them respite and allow them to get carried away, but He will not leave them alone for ever (and He is always aware of them).

Then Allah tells us that in the case of one whose main focus and ambition is low, and does not go beyond the reward of this world, and he does not care about the hereafter, his efforts are falling short and he is short-sighted, yet despite that he will not get anything of the reward of this world except what Allah has decreed for him. For He is the Sovereign of all things, in His command is the reward of this world and the hereafter. Therefore they are to be sought from Him and His help is to be sought to acquire both, for that which is with Him cannot be attained except by means of obedience to Him, and both religious and worldly aims can only be achieved by seeking His help and always demonstrating one's need of Him.

He is supremely wise in guiding and helping those whom He guides and helps, and in forsaking those Whom he forsakes, and in His giving and withholding. Hence He says: ﴿Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing﴾.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:



﴿يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا قَوٰمِيْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ شٰهَدَآءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلٰى اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ
الْوٰلِدِيْنَ وَالْاَقْرَبِيْنَ ؕ اِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا اَوْ فَقِيْرًا فَاَللّٰهُ اَوْلٰى بِهِمَّا فَلَآ تَتَّبِعُوْا الْهَوٰى اَنْ
تَعْدِلُوْا وَاِنْ تَلَوْا اَوْ تَعْرَضُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا﴾ (سورة النساء:

(۱۳۵)

- 4:135. O you who believe, be steadfast in justice and bear true witness for the sake of Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your kinsfolk. Whether he is rich or poor, Allah can

best take care of both. So do not follow your emotions, lest you swerve from justice. If you distort your testimony or decline to give it, then verily Allah is well aware of all that you do.

Here Allah instructs His believing slaves to ﴿be steadfast in justice and bear true witness for the sake of Allah﴾. The word *qawwām* (translated here as ﴿steadfast﴾) is an intensive form of the word. What is meant is: in all your affairs, be steadfast in standing up for justice, which means being just with regard to the dues of Allah and the dues of His slaves. Justice with regard to the dues of Allah means not using His blessings as a means to disobey Him; rather they should be used as a means to do righteous deeds.

Justice with regard to the dues of other people means paying all dues that you owe to others, just as you demand your own dues. So you must spend on obligatory maintenance, pay debts, and treat others with a good attitude as you would like to be treated.

One of the greatest types of justice is justice with regard to views and opinions, and those who hold those views. So you should not judge in favour of one of two views, or one of two disputants, because of his affiliation or because of your inclination towards one of the two. Rather you should make it your aim to judge between them on the basis of justice and fairness. Another aspect of justice is giving testimony of what you know, regardless of the way in which you know it, even if that is against loved ones or against oneself. Hence Allah says: ﴿and bear true witness for the sake of Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your kinsfolk. Whether he is rich or poor, Allah can best take care of both﴾. That is: do not favour the rich man because of his wealth, or the poor man out of mercy towards him – or so you claim; rather you should give testimony on the basis of truth, regardless of who may be affected.

Being steadfast in justice is one of the most important matters, and is one of the most indicative of the religious commitment, piety

and status in Islam of the one who is just. The one who is sincere to himself or wants to save himself must pay the utmost attention to justice, make it his focus, resolve to attain it, and strive to rid himself of all obstacles and barriers that prevent him from adhering to justice and acting accordingly.

The greatest barrier to that is following whims and desires. Hence Allah (ﷻ) points out the importance of ridding oneself of this barrier, as He says: «So do not follow your emotions» that is, do not follow your own emotions, whims and desires that are contrary to the truth, lest – by doing so – you swerve from the right path and are not guided to justice, for whims and desires will either make a person blind, so that he sees the truth as false and falsehood as true, or he may recognise the truth but fail to follow it because of his whims and desires. The one who is saved from his whims and desires has been guided to the truth and to the straight path.

When Allah stated that it is essential to be steadfast in justice, He also forbade the opposite of that, which is distorting one's testimony and the like, twisting one's words in order to avoid stating the truth in all aspects or in some aspects. That includes distorting one's testimony and not giving it in full, or applying one's testimony to a different issue. All of that comes under the heading of distorting testimony, because it is a deviation from the truth.

«or decline to give it» that is, fail to be just as you are enjoined to be, such as the witness withholding his testimony, or the judge not giving his verdict that he should give.

«then verily Allah is well aware of all that you do» that is, He encompasses with His knowledge all that you do, both in secret and openly. This is a stern warning to the one who distorts his testimony or declines to give it. It is more appropriate that this be addressed to the one who judges on the basis of falsehood or gives false testimony, because his offence is greater; the former only failed to do what is

right, but the latter fails to do what is right and also does what is wrong.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَابِ الّذِى نَزَّلَ عَلٰى رَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَابِ الّذِى اُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ءَ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ءَ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣٦)

4:136. O you who believe, believe in Allah and His Messenger, and the Book which He has sent down to His Messenger and the Books which He sent down before. Whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, has indeed gone far astray.

It should be noted that commands and instructions are either addressed to the person who is not doing something, so this is an instruction to start doing it, such as the command addressed to those who do not believe, telling them to believe, as in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who have been given the scripture, believe in what We have revealed [to Muhammad], confirming what is with you...﴾ (an-Nisā' 4: 47)

– or they are addressed to the one who has started to do something; in this case it is an instruction to correct what he is doing and to go further and do what he is not already doing. An example of that is what Allah says in this verse, instructing the believers to believe. That is an implicit instruction to do that which will correct their faith on the basis of sincerity, to avoid that which may spoil it, and to repent from anything that may undermine faith.

This is also an implicit instruction to do that which the believer is lacking of attaining Islamic knowledge and doing righteous deeds.

Every time any text reaches him and he understands its meaning and believes it, that is part of the belief which is enjoined. The same applies to all inward and outward actions: they are all part of faith, as is indicated by many texts and as the early generations of the Ummah were unanimously agreed.

Then one should continue in that way and remain steadfast until death, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe, fear Allah as He should be feared, and do not die except as Muslims.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 102)

Here Allah instructs us to believe in Him and in His Messenger (ﷺ), the Qur'an, and the previous Books. All of this is part of the obligatory faith, without which a person cannot be a believer; he should believe in general terms with regard to that which he does not know the details of, and in detail with regard to that of which he comes to know in detail. The one who believes as enjoined in this manner has indeed been guided and will succeed.

﴿Whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, has indeed gone far astray﴾ – and what misguidance can be greater than the misguidance of one who forsakes the straight path of guidance and follows the path that leads to the painful punishment?

It should be understood that disbelieving in any of these things is like disbelieving in all of them, because they are interconnected and it is not possible to believe in some of them without believing in others.

Then Allah says:



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أزدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَّيْسَ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرَ

لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيُهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٣٧﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣٧)

4:137. Those who believe, then disbelieve, then believe [again], then disbelieve [again], and thereafter grow hardened in their disbelief – Allah will not forgive them nor guide them to any path [that leads to truth].

That is, the one who repeatedly disbelieves after having believed, so he is guided and then misguided, and he sees then he becomes blind, and he believes then he disbelieves and persists and increases in his disbelief, is far removed from divine help and guidance to the straight path, and he is far removed from forgiveness, because he has produced the greatest impediment to attaining it. His disbelief is a punishment and becomes part of his nature that will not disappear, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...So when they chose to deviate [from the truth], Allah caused their hearts to deviate [from right guidance]...﴾ (as-Saff 61: 5)

﴿We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time...﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 110)

This verse indicates that if they do not increase in disbelief, rather they come back to faith and give up what they were following of misguidance, then Allah will forgive them, even if they apostatised repeatedly. If this is the case with regard to disbelief, then it is more appropriate that in the case of other sins that are less grave than disbelief, if a person commits them repeatedly then turns back to Allah and repents, Allah will forgive him again.



﴿بَشِّرِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَيْبِنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابَهُمْ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٣٩﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣٨-١٣٩)

- 4:138. Give tidings to the hypocrites, that theirs will be a painful punishment.
- 4:139. [As for] those who take the disbelievers as allies¹⁹ rather than the believers, are they seeking power with them? Verily all power belongs to Allah.

The word translated here as «tidings» is usually used to refer to good, but may sometimes refer to evil, as in this verse. Allah says: «Give tidings to the hypocrites» that is, those who make an outward display of being Muslims, whilst concealing disbelief; give them the worst tidings, namely tidings of the painful punishment, because of their love for the disbelievers, and their taking them as allies and supporting them, and their failing to take the believers as allies. What made them do that? Are they seeking power with them?

This is how the hypocrites really are. They think negatively of Allah and they lack certain faith that Allah will help His believing slaves. They focus on some means of power that the disbelievers have and they fail to look beyond that, so they take the disbelievers as allies, seeking power with them and seeking their help.

But in fact all power belongs to Allah; the forelocks of all people are in His Hand and His will concerning them is always done. He has guaranteed to support His religion and His believing slaves, even if that is after some tests for His believing slaves and after causing the enemy to prevail over them temporarily. The ultimate outcome is always in favour of the believers.

In this verse there is a stern warning against taking the disbelievers as allies and failing to take the believers as allies, because that is one of the characteristics of the hypocrites. Faith dictates that we should love the believers and take them as allies, and hate the disbelievers and regard them as enemies.

¹⁹ The word *awliyā'*, translated here as «allies», may also mean protectors, supporters, close friends, and so on.



﴿وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَعْدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِثَلْتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٤٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرْتَبِصُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِتْحٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤١﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٠-١٤١)

- 4:140. He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the revelations of Allah being rejected and ridiculed, do not sit with them until they begin to talk of other things; otherwise, you would be like them. Verily Allah will gather all the hypocrites and disbelievers together in hell.
- 4:141. [The hypocrites are] those who are waiting and watching to see what happens to you. If Allah grants you a victory, they say: Were we not with you? But if the disbelievers meet with a success, they say [to them]: Did we not help you win, and protect you from the believers? But Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection. Allah will not grant the disbelievers means to prevail over the believers.

Allah has explained to you – in what He has revealed to you – that His shar‘i rulings are to be followed when attending gatherings in which disbelief and sin are present:

﴿He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the revelations of Allah being rejected and ridiculed﴾ that is, being belittled. That is because what is required of every accountable person with regard to the revelations of Allah is to believe in them, then venerate them and respect them. That is the purpose for which they were revealed, and it is the purpose for which Allah created His

creation. The opposite of belief is rejection of them, and the opposite of respecting them is mocking them and scorning them. That includes the arguments that the disbelievers and hypocrites may come up with to invalidate the revelations of Allah and support their disbelief.

The same also applies to innovators of various types. Their argument in support of their falsehood implies disrespect towards the revelations of Allah, because the revelation only supports the truth, and does not contain anything but truth. And in fact this also applies to attending gatherings of sin and immorality, in which the commands and prohibitions of Allah are flouted and the limits that He has set for His slaves are transgressed. This ruling also includes the prohibition on sitting with them, ﴿until they begin to talk of other things﴾ that is, things other than disbelief in the revelations of Allah and ridiculing them.

﴿otherwise﴾ that is, if you sit with them in the situation mentioned, ﴿you would be like them﴾ because then you would be approving of their disbelief and ridicule, and the one who approves of sin is like the one who does it. The point is that whoever attends a gathering in which Allah is disobeyed is obliged to object to them if he is able to, or to get up and leave if he is not able to do so.

﴿Verily Allah will gather all the hypocrites and disbelievers together in hell﴾ just as they came together as allies in their disbelief. The fact that they outwardly appeared to be with the believers will not benefit the disbelievers (or hypocrites), as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿On that day, the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to the believers: Wait for us, so that we may have some of your light...﴾
(*al-Hadeed* 57: 13)

Then Allah highlights how the hypocrites take the disbelievers as allies and show enmity towards the believers:

﴿[The hypocrites are] those who are waiting and watching to see what happens to you﴾ that is, they are waiting to see how you will

end up, and whether the outcome will be good or bad for you; they have prepared a response in either case, according to their hypocrisy.

﴿If Allah grants you a victory, they say: Were we not with you?﴾ They pretend that they were with the believers both outwardly and inwardly, so that they will be safe from criticism and aspersions, and so that they will have a share of the booty and *fay'*, and so that they will be able to ask for help.

﴿But if the disbelievers meet with a success﴾. He did not say victory, because they do not attain victory in the sense of permanently prevailing; rather it is just a success that does not mean the end of the matter, by the wisdom of Allah.

If that happens, ﴿they say [to them]: Did we not help you win, and protect you from the believers?﴾, trying to show them how much they care about them by not having fought them when they were able to, and how they tried to prevent the believers by all possible means from fighting the disbelievers, such as weakening them, discouraging them from fighting, supporting the enemy against them, and other means for which they are well known.

﴿But Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection﴾ that is, He will reward the believers both inwardly and outwardly in paradise, and He will punish the hypocrites and polytheists, both men and women.

﴿Allah will not grant the disbelievers means to prevail over the believers﴾ that is, He will not grant them authority or power over them; rather a group of the believers will continue to adhere to the truth, receiving divine support, and they will not be harmed by those who forsake them or oppose them.

Allah still grants the believers the means of victory and protection against the disbelievers, as is well known. Even though some Muslims are ruled by disbelieving groups, they are still treated with respect and are not persecuted for their religion, and they are not regarded

as insignificant by them. Rather they have full support from Allah, to Him be praise first and last, outwardly and inwardly.



﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَىٰ
رِءَاءُونَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾ مُدْبِدِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا
إِلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٢-١٤٣)

- 4:142. The hypocrites seek to outwit Allah but it is He Who outwits them. When they stand up to pray, they stand up reluctantly, only to be seen by people, and they remember Allah only a little,
- 4:143. Wavering in between, belonging neither to these nor those. For those whom Allah has caused to go astray, you will never find a way [to guide them].

Here Allah tells us about how the hypocrites were with regard to their abhorrent characteristics and conduct, and how they tried to outwit Allah (ﷻ) by making an outward display of faith whilst concealing their disbelief, thinking that this would deceive Allah and that He would not know of it or expose their tricks to His slaves. But in fact Allah outwitted them, because merely by being like that and behaving in this manner they were fooling themselves. What deceit can be greater than that of one who strives to do something which then backfires on him and brings him disgrace, humiliation and deprivation? That on its own is indicative of a lack of maturity, because in addition to it being a sin, they thought that it was something good, and they thought that it was a sign of smartness and cunning. This is what ignorance and misguidance do to a person!

With regard to His outwitting them on the Day of Resurrection, Allah says:

﴿On that day, the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to the believers: Wait for us, so that we may have some of your light. It will be said: Go back and seek light elsewhere. Then a wall will be set up between them, which will have a gate, on the inside of which there will be mercy and on the outside there will be punishment. The hypocrites will call out to the believers: Were we not with you?...﴾
(al-Hadeed 57: 13-14)

One of their characteristics is that ﴿When they stand up to pray﴾ – if they do so at all – which is the most important physical act of worship

﴿they stand up reluctantly﴾, finding it burdensome and resenting having to do it. Reluctance only stems from a lack of interest in their hearts. Were it not that their hearts are devoid of longing for Allah and for that which is with Him, and are lacking in faith, they would not be so reluctant.

﴿only to be seen by people﴾ – this is what is hidden in their hearts and this is the motive for their deeds: to be seen by people. They want people to see them and respect and honour them, and they are not acting out of sincerity towards Allah. Hence ﴿they remember Allah only a little﴾, because their hearts are filled with the desire to show off. Remembrance of Allah and persistence therein can only come from a believer whose heart is filled with love and reverence for Allah.

﴿Wavering in between, belonging neither to these nor those﴾ that is, they wander between the believers and the disbelievers; they are not believers both outwardly and inwardly, and they are not disbelievers both outwardly and inwardly. Deep in their hearts they are with the disbelievers, but outwardly they are with the believers, and this is the worst possible misguidance. Hence Allah says: ﴿For those whom Allah has caused to go astray, you will never find a way [to guide them]﴾ and you will never make him give up his way of misguidance, because the door of mercy has been closed to him and has been replaced with wrath.

These blameworthy characteristics indicate that the believers are possessed of the opposite, namely sincerity and truthfulness, both outward and inward. There is no mystery as to what they are; they are enthusiastic in prayer and worship, and they remember Allah (ﷻ) a great deal, because Allah has guided them to the straight path. So let the wise person think about these two groups and choose whichever of them he wants. And Allah is the source of strength.



﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا نَتَّخِذُوا الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ؕ اُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ
يَجْعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿١٤٤﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٤)

4:144. O you who believe, do not take the disbelievers as allies rather than the believers. Do you want to give Allah a clear case against you?

Having stated that one of the characteristics of the hypocrites is that they take the disbelievers as allies instead of the believers, Allah then forbids His believing slaves to have this abhorrent characteristic, and to resemble the hypocrites, because that would inevitably ﴿give Allah a clear case against you﴾. In other words, it would constitute clear proof that you should be punished, because We have warned against it and We have stated that taking the disbelievers as allies leads to negative consequences, so doing that after receiving this warning deserves punishment.

This verse is indicative of the perfect justice of Allah and highlights the fact that Allah does not punish anyone before establishing proof against him. This is also a warning against sin, because Allah has a clear case against the one who commits sin.



﴿ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ يَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴾ (١٤٥) إِلَّا
 الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ
 بِعَدَائِبِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾ (سورة النساء)

(١٤٧-١٤٥)

- 4:145. The hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the fire; you will not find any helper for them,
- 4:146. Except those who repent and mend their ways, hold fast to Allah and become sincere in their devotion to Allah [alone]; then they will be with the believers. And Allah will give the believers an immense reward.
- 4:147. Why would Allah punish you, if you are grateful and believe? Allah is Appreciative, All-Knowing.

Here Allah tells us of the ultimate destination of the hypocrites: they will be in the lowest depths of hell and theirs will be the worst punishment. They will be below other disbelievers, because they shared their disbelief in Allah and opposition to His Messengers, but in addition to that they engaged in trickery and deceit. They planned to oppose the believers in many subtle and unnoticed ways, arranging all of that in such a way that they would still be regarded as Muslims and thus acquire that which they were not entitled to. For this and other reasons they are deserving of the worst punishment; no one can save them from Allah's punishment and no helper can ward off any part of His punishment. This is general in meaning and applies to every hypocrite, except those among them whom Allah blessed by enabling them to repent from evil deeds and ﴿mend their ways﴾ for the sake of Allah, both outwardly and inwardly

﴿hold fast to Allah﴾ and seek His help to bring them benefits and ward off harm from them
 ﴿and become sincere in their devotion to Allah [alone]﴾ – this refers to sincerity in submission to Allah (Islam), faith and ihsân.²⁰

Thus they sought the Countenance of Allah in their deeds, both outward and inward, and were saved from showing off and hypocrisy. Those who have these characteristics ﴿will be with the believers﴾ that is, in this world, in al-barzakh, and on the Day of Resurrection ﴿And Allah will give the believers an immense reward﴾, the nature of which no one knows except Allah; it is something that no eye has seen, no ear has heard and it has not crossed the mind of man.

Contemplate how Allah singled out for mention holding fast and sincerity, even though these are implied in the words ﴿mend their ways﴾, because holding fast and being sincere are part of mending one's ways and there is a great need for both, especially in this critical situation where hypocrisy is deeply entrenched in people's hearts, and nothing can remove it except holding fast to Allah and constantly turning to Him and expressing one's need of His help in order to ward off hypocrisy. Sincerity is diametrically opposed to hypocrisy, hence Allah mentions both it and holding fast to Him because of the virtue of these two deeds and because of the fact that all deeds, both outward and inward, are based on them and there is a profound need for them in this context.

Contemplate how, when Allah refers to the hypocrites alongside the believers, He did not say "and He will give them a great reward", even though the context is talking about the hypocrites. Rather He said ﴿And Allah will give the believers an immense reward﴾. That is because this is a general principle which Allah repeats frequently

²⁰ Ihsân, as described in the well-known hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, means:

«...to worship Allah as if you can see Him, for although you cannot see Him, He can see you.»

in the Qur'an. If the context is discussing some minor issues, and Allah wants to refer to some reward or punishment connected to the minor issues, and that minor issue comes under the same general heading, He connects the reward to that general heading under which that minor issue and others come, so that no one would think that the ruling is limited only to this minor issue. This is one of the brilliant subtleties of the Qur'an. Thus the former hypocrite who repents is included with the believers and will have the same reward as them.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the perfect nature of His self-sufficiency and the vastness of His forbearing, mercy and kindness: ﴿Why would Allah punish you, if you are grateful and believe?﴾. Because Allah is Appreciative and All-Knowing, He will give those who carry the heavy burden of commitment for His sake and persist in doing righteous deeds an immense reward and abundant kindness. Whoever gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will give him something better than it.

Furthermore, He knows how you appear outwardly and what is in your hearts, and He knows what you do and what it is based on, be it sincerity or the opposite. He wants you to repent and turn back to Him, then if you turn to Him, why should He punish you? He does not find any joy in punishing you and He does not benefit from punishing you; rather the sinner only harms himself, just as the deed of one who is obedient is to his own benefit.

Gratitude is humility in the heart and acknowledgement of Allah's blessings, utterance of thanks to the Bestower of those blessings, and physical acts of obedience to Him; it also means not making use of His blessings to disobey Him.