

follow in order to earn His pleasure and paradise, thereby destroying the greatest mercy upon them; you should have taken on the task of supporting it, calling people to it and defending it, not barring people from it and turning people away from it. This is ingratitude for the blessing of Allah and a challenge to Allah, for you are making the straightest and fairest path twisted and crooked, and you denounce anyone who follows it.

«Remember» the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you and «how you were few and He made you many» that is, He caused you to grow in number by blessing you with wives, offspring and good health, and He did not test you with epidemics or fatal diseases that would reduce your numbers, or cause your enemies to gain power over you and eradicate you, or cause you to be scattered in the land; rather He blessed you by causing you to be together, bestowing abundant provision on you and granting you numerous offspring.

«and see what was the fate of those who spread mischief», for you will not find any among them but they are scattered, and in their land you will find nothing but desolation and sparse population. No one speaks well of them, rather they are overtaken by curses in this world and on the Day of Resurrection they will be exposed to disgrace and shame.

«And if there are some among you who believe in the message with which I have been sent, and others who do not believe» who are the majority of them, «then be patient until Allah judges between us, for He is the best of judges»; He will support the one who is in the right and will send punishment upon the one who is in the wrong.



﴿ قَالَ أَلَمْ لَا الَّذِينَ آسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ يَشُعِيبُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَكَ مِنْ قَوْمِنَا أَوْ لَنَعُودَنَّ فِي مَلَّتِنَا قَالَ أُولَئِكَ كَانُوا فِي سَعْيٍ فَتَنًا ﴾ ﴿٨٨﴾ قَدْ أَفْرَأْتِنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ بَعَثْنَا اللَّهُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ

رَبَّنَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ عَلِمْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا أَفْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ  
 الْفَاضِلِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِيْنِ اتَّبَعْتُمْ شُعَيْبًا إِتَّكُرُوا إِذَا لَخِيسِرُونَ  
 ﴿٩٠﴾ فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الرِّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جِثْمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا  
 كَأَن لَّمْ يَتُونُوا فِيهَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَنَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ  
 وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ آسَأُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ  
 كَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾ ﴿سورة الأعراف: ٨٨-٩٣﴾

- 7:88. The chieftains of his people who were arrogant said: O Shu'ayb, we will certainly drive you and those who believe with you out of our city, unless you all return to our religion. He said: What, even if we detest it?
- 7:89. We would be guilty of fabricating lies against Allah if we were to return to your religion after Allah has saved us from it. There is no way we could return to it unless Allah our Lord so willed. Our Lord encompasses all things in His knowledge. In Allah we put our trust. Our Lord, judge between us and our people in truth, for You are the best of judges.
- 7:90. The chieftains of his people who disbelieved said: If you follow Shu'ayb, then indeed you will be losers.
- 7:91. So an earthquake overtook them, and morning found them lying lifeless in their homes.
- 7:92. Those who rejected Shu'ayb became as if they had never lived there; those who rejected Shu'ayb became themselves the losers.
- 7:93. So Shu'ayb left them, saying: O my people, I did indeed convey to you the messages of my Lord. I gave you sincere advice, but why should I grieve over a disbelieving people?

«The chieftains of his people who were arrogant» that is, the nobles and prominent figures among them, who followed their whims and desires and were preoccupied with their pleasures. When the

truth came to them and they saw that it was not in accordance with their evil whims and desires, they rejected it and were too arrogant to follow it. They said to their Prophet Shu'ayb and the oppressed believers who were with him:

«O Shu'ayb, we will certainly drive you and those who believe with you out of our city, unless you all return to our religion». They used their physical strength to oppose the truth and they did not pay attention to any religion, covenant or human rights; all they cared about was following their whims and desires and their foolish way of thinking that led to this corrupt idea, as they said: Either you and those who are with you should come back to our religion or we will surely expel you from our city.

Shu'ayb (ﷺ) was calling them in the hope that they would believe, but now he was not safe from their evil, to such an extent that they threatened him, saying that if he did not follow them, they would banish him from his homeland, to which he had more right than they did.

Shu'ayb (ﷺ) said to them in amazement at what they said: «What, even if we detest it?» That is, should we follow you in your false religion, even if we detest it because we know that it is false? Rather you should call someone to it who shows an interest in it, but in the case of someone who openly forbids it and denounces anyone who follows it, how could he be called to it?

«We would be guilty of fabricating lies against Allah if we were to return to your religion after Allah has saved us from it» that is, bear witness against us that if we were to return to it after Allah has saved us from it and from its evil, then we would be liars fabricating lies against Allah, because we know that there is no fabrication worse than that of one who ascribes partners to Allah when He is the One and Only God, Who has no son or spouse, and no partner in His sovereignty.

«There is no way we could return to it» that is, it is not possible for people like us to go back to it, for this is impossible. Shu'ayb (ﷺ)

made them despair of him ever going along with them in many ways, by pointing out a number of things, such as the following:

- The believers hated and detested their religion because of what it involved of ascribing partners to Allah.
- He described what they were following as fabrications and called them to bear witness that if he and the people with him were to follow it, they would be liars and fabricators.
- They acknowledged that Allah had blessed them because He had saved them from it.
- It was impossible for them to return to it after Allah had guided them, because of their current state and what they had in their hearts of veneration for Allah and acknowledgement of their servitude to Him, and their belief that He alone is God and none should be worshipped but Him alone, with no partner or associate, and that the gods of the polytheists were the falsest of falsehoods and the most impossible to be true.

As Allah had blessed them with reason, they were able by means of it to recognise what was true and what was false, what constituted guidance what constituted misguidance.

However, within the context of the divine will and Allah's decree that inevitably comes to pass for His creation, and no one can escape it, even if means were made available and all forces got together to achieve that, they cannot decide concerning themselves that they will be able to do something or give up something for certain. Therefore, Shu'ayb made an exception here, as he said: «There is no way we could return to it unless Allah our Lord so willed» that is, neither we nor anyone else can act independently or rebel against His will that is connected to His knowledge and wisdom.

«Our Lord encompasses all things in His knowledge» that is, He knows what is good for His slaves and in what direction He will steer them

«In Allah we put our trust» that is, we trust that He will keep us steadfast on the straight path and protect us from all paths that lead to hell. Whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him and make things easy for him in both his spiritual and worldly affairs.

«Our Lord, judge between us and our people in truth» that is, support and help the one who is wronged and the one who is in the right against the stubborn wrongdoer who rejects the truth  
«for You are the best of judges».

So they asked Allah to judge between them and their people on the basis of truth and justice, and to show them His signs that would decide the matter between the two parties.

«The chieftains of his people who disbelieved said», warning against following Shu'ayb

«If you follow Shu'ayb, then indeed you will be losers». This is what their evil souls told them, that loss and doom would result from following true guidance. They did not realise that real loss would result from persisting in what they were following of misguidance and misguiding others, but they realised that when the punishment befell them.

«So an earthquake overtook them»; it was a severe tremor  
«and morning found them lying lifeless in their homes» that is, lying dead on the ground.

Allah says, describing them after their death: «Those who rejected Shu'ayb became as if they had never lived there» that is, it was as if they had never resided in their homeland, and as if they had never enjoyed wandering about in its streets or resting in its shade or enjoyed the flow of its rivers, or never eaten the fruits of its trees. When the punishment overtook them, they moved from a state of amusement, pleasure and fun to a realm of grief, misery, punishment and hell. Hence Allah says: «those who rejected Shu'ayb became themselves the losers» that is, the only ones who were losers, because on the

Day of Resurrection they will lose their religion, their own selves and their families; indeed that is the true loss, not what others said to them: ﴿If you follow Shu'ayb, then indeed you will be losers﴾ (7: 90).

When they were destroyed, their Prophet Shu'ayb turned away from them, ﴿saying﴾ by way of rebuke, addressing them after they had died: ﴿O my people, I did indeed convey to you the messages of my Lord﴾ that is, I brought them to you and explained them so that you got the message in the best way and it could not have been any clearer.

﴿I gave you sincere advice﴾ but you did not accept my advice and you did not follow my instructions; rather you disbelieved and transgressed ﴿but why should I grieve over a disbelieving people?﴾ That is, how can I grieve for people in whom there is nothing good? Goodness came to them and they rejected it and failed to accept it, so they deserve nothing but evil. These people do not deserve to be grieved over; rather one should rejoice at their destruction and eradication. We seek refuge in You, O Allah, from disgrace and shame. What doom and punishment could be worse than reaching the point where the most sincere of people towards them disavow them?



﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَضُرَّعُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّى عَفَوْا وَقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ آبَاءَنَا  
الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٩٤-٩٥)

7:94. Whenever We sent a Prophet to a city, We afflicted its people with adversity and distress, so that they might humble themselves.

7:95. Then We changed their suffering into prosperity, until they thrived and began to say: Our fathers also underwent both hardship and ease. Then We seized them suddenly, unawares.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says: «Whenever We sent a Prophet to a city», to call its people to worship Allah and forbid them to continue with whatever they were following of evil, and they did not submit to him, Allah tested them «with adversity and distress» that is, poverty, sickness and different types of calamity «so that», if that befell them, it might humble them, so they would beseech Allah and submit to the truth.

«Then» if that did not succeed, and they continued in their arrogance and increased in their transgression «We changed their suffering into prosperity», so provision was granted abundantly to them, their bodies were healed and they were relieved of distress

«until they thrived» that is, they increased in number, their provision increased, and they enjoyed a life of ease because of the blessings and favours of Allah, and they forgot what they had gone through of hardship.

«and began to say: Our fathers also underwent both hardship and ease» that is, this is something normal that has been happening since the earliest generations and is still happening among the later generations: sometimes they are in a state of ease and sometimes they are faced with hardships; sometimes there is joy and sometimes there is sorrow, according to the vicissitudes of time. They think that there is no lesson or reminder to pay heed to, and that this is not happening in order to let them get carried away in sin until, when they are rejoicing in what they have been given and this world is the most important thing in their minds, the punishment overtakes them «suddenly» and catches them «unawares». In other words, it never occurs to them that they may be faced with destruction, and they think that they have full control over what Allah has granted to them and that they will never die or move on and leave it behind.



﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
 وَلَٰكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ  
 بَأْسُنَا بَيِّنًا وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ أَوَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى وَهُمْ  
 يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ ۗ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾﴾

- 7:96. If only the people of the cities had believed and feared Allah, We would indeed have opened up for them blessings from heaven and earth. But they rejected the truth, so We punished them because of what they earned.
- 7:97. Do the people of the cities feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them at night whilst they are sleeping?
- 7:98. Or do the people of the cities feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them during the day whilst they are engaged in frivolous pursuits?
- 7:99. Or do they feel secure from the plan of Allah? No one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the people who are losers.

Having stated that those who rejected the Messengers will be tested with hardship by way of admonition and warning, and they will be tested with ease by way of letting them get carried away, Allah (ﷻ) then tells us that if the people of the cities had believed sincerely in their hearts, had faith that was confirmed by righteous deeds, and they had actually feared Allah both outwardly and inwardly, by giving up that which Allah had prohibited, He would have bestowed upon them the blessings of heaven and earth, and He would have sent rain from the heaven in abundance, and caused to grow for them from the earth that which would sustain them and their livestock and cause them to



live a life of prosperity and plenty, without any exhaustion or tiredness on their part. But they did not believe and they did not fear Him ﴿so We punished them because of what they earned﴾ by sending upon them the penalty and calamity, and by removing blessings, and sending troubles and problems. This was partial recompense for their deeds; otherwise if He were to punish them for all that they had earned, He would not have left a single living being on the face of the earth. ﴿Corruption and disorder have appeared on land and sea<sup>18</sup> because of what people's hands have earned. Thus Allah causes them to taste the consequences of some of what they have done, so that they may turn in repentance.﴾ (*ar-Room 30: 41*)

﴿Do the people of the cities feel secure﴾ that is, do the people of the disbelieving cities feel secure, as is indicated by the context ﴿that Our punishment﴾ that is, Our severe punishment ﴿will not come upon them at night whilst they are sleeping?﴾ that is, when they are unaware and resting.

﴿Or do the people of the cities feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them during the day whilst they are engaged in frivolous pursuits?﴾ that is, what makes them feel secure from that, when they have done that which may lead to punishment, and they have committed grave sins, some of which are enough to cause their doom?

﴿Or do they feel secure from the plan of Allah?﴾ As He may let them get carried away in order to seize them; He will give them respite, for His stratagem is sure (*cf. 7: 183*).

﴿No one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the people who are losers﴾. For if anyone feels secure from the punishment of

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<sup>18</sup> This refers to the widespread occurrence of troubles such as drought, fires and floods, poor yield of crops, decline of fish stocks, market stagnation and difficulty in earning a living. That is because of people's sins, including neglect and abuse of the natural environment.

Allah, then in reality he does not believe in requital for deeds and he does not believe in the Messengers in any true sense.

This verse is intended to instil a great deal of fear, so that the individual should never feel safe (from divine punishment) in spite of what he has of faith in his heart. Rather he should always be worried and anxious lest he go through trials that deprive him of what he has of faith, and he should always call upon Allah, saying: "O Controller of the hearts, make my heart adhere firmly to Your religion", and he should strive hard to take all measures that could protect him from evil and at times of turmoil. No matter what his level of faith is, the individual should never feel secure and certain of spiritual well-being.



﴿أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَهْلِهَا أَنْ لَوْ نَشَاءُ أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ  
وَنَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ تِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِهَا  
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ  
كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِنْ  
وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٠٠-١٠٢)

7:100. Is it not clear to those who inherit the earth in succession to its former inhabitants that, if We so willed, We could punish them too for their sins? But We seal up their hearts so that they cannot hear.

7:101. These are the cities, some of the stories of which We have told to you. Their Messengers indeed came to them with clear signs, but they would not believe what they had rejected before. Thus does Allah seal the hearts of the disbelievers.

7:102. And most of them We found not true to their covenant; rather We found most of them are indeed rebellious.

Here Allah draws our attention to current nations after the destruction of those nations that have passed away.

«Is it not clear to those who inherit the earth in succession to its former inhabitants that, if We so willed, We could punish them too for their sins?» That is, is it not clear to those nations who have inherited the earth after the destruction of those who came before them for their sins, then they did the same deeds as those who were doomed?

Or do they not realise that if Allah so willed, He could punish them for their sins? For this is His way with the earlier and later generations.

«But We seal up their hearts so that they cannot hear» that is, if Allah alerts them and they do not respond, and if He reminds them and they pay no heed, and if He shows them signs and they are not guided, then Allah will punish them and place a seal on their hearts, so that they will be covered with dirt and impurities until they are sealed. Then no truth or goodness can reach them and they cannot hear that which benefits them; rather they hear that which establishes proof against them.

«These are the cities» that are mentioned above «some of the stories of which We have told to you», about what happened to them, as a lesson for those who reflect, a warning for those who do wrong and an exhortation for those who fear Allah.

«Their Messengers indeed came to them with clear signs» that is, their Messengers came to these disbelievers and called them to that which could lead to their happiness, and Allah supported them with miracles and clear signs to explain the truth completely, but they did not benefit from that, and it did not avail them anything.

«but they would not believe what they had rejected before» that is, because of their disbelief and their initial rejection of the truth, Allah would not guide them to faith, as a recompense for their rejection of the truth, as He says elsewhere:

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

﴿Thus does Allah seal the hearts of the disbelievers﴾, as a punishment. And Allah does not wrong them; rather they wrong their own selves.

﴿And most of them We found not true to their covenant﴾ that is, We did not find most of the nations to whom Allah sent the Messengers to be true to the covenant; in other words, they did not adhere to it and they were not bound by the instructions that Allah enjoined upon all people, and they did not comply with the commands that He sent to them on the lips of His Messengers.

﴿rather We found most of them are indeed rebellious﴾ that is, disobedient towards Allah and following their whims and desires without any guidance from Allah. Allah (ﷻ) tested His slaves by sending the Messengers and sending down the Books, and He commanded them to follow His covenant and guidance, but no one obeyed His command except a few, those who He had already decreed would be blessed.

Most people, however, turned away from guidance and were too arrogant to follow that which the Messengers brought. Hence Allah sent upon them various punishments.



﴿ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِم مُّوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا فَأَنْظَرْنَاهُ كَيْفَ كَانَتْ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَنْفِرُونَ إِلَيَّ رَسُولٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ حَقِيقٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ﴾

﴿سورة الأعراف: ١٠٣﴾ ﴿١٠٧﴾ فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾

(١٠٧)

- 7:103. Then after them We sent Moosâ with Our signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they wrongfully rejected them. So see what was the fate of those who spread mischief.
- 7:104. Moosâ said: O Pharaoh, verily I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds,
- 7:105. duty-bound to say nothing about Allah except the truth. I have come to you with a clear sign from your Lord, so let the Children of Israel go with me.
- 7:106. Pharaoh said: If you have indeed come with a clear sign, then show it to us, if you are telling the truth.
- 7:107. So Moosâ threw down his staff, and suddenly it was a serpent, plain for all to see.

Then, after those Messengers, We sent Moosâ al-Kaleem (the one to whom Allah spoke directly), the great leader and noble Messenger, to a people who were harsh and arrogant tyrants, namely Pharaoh and his chiefs from among their nobles and prominent figures. He showed them mighty signs of Allah, the like of which had never been seen, ﴿but they wrongfully rejected them﴾ and disbelieved; the one who disbelieves in such a sign is a wrongdoer, and in fact they arrogantly rejected those signs.

﴿So see what was the fate of those who spread mischief﴾, how Allah destroyed them.

﴿They were overtaken by a curse in this world, and [they will be cursed] on the Day of Resurrection; how wretched is the gift to be given!﴾ (Hood 11: 99)

This is a brief outline; then Allah explains further:

﴿Moosâ said﴾ when he came to Pharaoh to call him to faith

﴿O Pharaoh, verily I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds﴾ that is, I am a Messenger sent by One Who is great; He is the Lord of the worlds, which includes both the upper and lower realms. He is in charge of His creation of all types, and He is taking care of them, which means that He does not leave them without guidance; rather He sends to them Messengers as bringers of glad tidings and as warners. He is the One Whom no one may challenge or claim to be sent by Him when that is not the case.

If this is how He is, and He has chosen me and selected me to convey His message, then it is incumbent upon me not to lie about Him or to say anything about Him except the truth, for if I were to say anything other than that, then He would hasten the punishment for me and seize me with all His might and power.

This should have made them follow Moosâ and submit to him, especially as he brought to them a clear sign from Allah to prove the soundness of the message of truth that he brought, that they should have complied with the goals of his message, the two main goals of which were that they should believe in him and follow him, and release the Children of Israel, the people whom Allah had favoured above all others (at that time), the children of the Prophets and the descendants of Ya'qoob (ﷺ), of whom Moosâ was one.

But Pharaoh said to him: ﴿If you have indeed come with a clear sign, then show it to us, if you are telling the truth. So Moosâ threw down his staff﴾ onto the ground ﴿and suddenly it was a serpent, plain for all to see﴾ that is, a moving snake, as they were looking on.



﴿وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّظِيرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٩﴾ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ قَالَُوا أَرَجِهَ وَأَخَاهُ

وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾ يَأْتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سِحْرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿١١١﴾ (سورة الأعراف:

(112-108)

- 7:108. And he drew forth his hand, and it appeared shining white to all beholders.
- 7:109. The chiefs among Pharaoh's people said: Verily this is a learned magician!
- 7:110. He wants to drive you out of your land. [Pharaoh said:] What do you advise then?
- 7:111. They said: Let him and his brother wait a while, and send heralds to the cities to gather
- 7:112. and bring to you all the learned magicians.

«And he drew forth his hand» from his collar «and it appeared shining white to all beholders», although unharmed. These were two great signs that highlighted the truth of the message that Moosâ brought, and proved that he was the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds. But those who do not believe, even if all signs come to them, they will not believe until they see the painful punishment.

Hence «The chiefs among Pharaoh's people», when they were astounded by what they saw of signs, but they did not believe and they tried to find some wrong interpretation for them, «said: Verily this is a learned magician!» That is, one who is skilled in magic.

Then they tried to scare the weak in mind and foolish by saying: «He» namely Moosâ, by doing this, «wants to drive you out of your land» that is, he wants to banish you from your homeland «[Pharaoh said:] What do you advise then?» The magicians consulted one another as to what they should do with Moosâ and how they should ward off his harm, as they saw it, because if what he brought was not confronted with something to refute and defeat it, most people would be convinced by it. So they decided to say to Pharaoh:

﴿Let him and his brother wait a while﴾ that is, detain them and gave them respite, and send people to the cities to gather your subjects; let them bring every learned magician. In other words, let them bring the skilled magicians to confront what Moosâ has brought. They said: Fix a time between us and you which neither we nor you will fail to keep, at a mutually agreeable place.

﴿Moosâ said: Your appointment will be on the day of the festival; let the people assemble in the forenoon. So Pharaoh withdrew and gathered his resources, then he came [for the appointment].﴾ (Tâ Hâ 20: 59-60)



﴿وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْفَىٰ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالَ أَلْقُوا فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَغَلِبُوا هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا صَافِرِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١١٣-١١٩)

- 7:113. The magicians came to Pharaoh and said: Will we have a reward if we are the victors?
- 7:114. He said: Yes, and you will surely be among those who are close to me.
- 7:115. They said: O Moosâ, either you throw first or we will be the first to throw!
- 7:116. Moosâ said: You throw first. So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people and stuck fear into them, producing powerful magic.



7:117. We inspired Moosâ: Throw your staff, and thereupon it swallowed up all their deceptions.

7:118. Thus the truth was established, and all they did was proven to be false.

7:119. Thus they were defeated there and then, and were utterly humiliated.

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«The magicians came to Pharaoh» seeking from him a reward if they were victorious. They said: «Will we have a reward if we are the victors?»

«He» namely Pharaoh, «said: Yes» you will have a reward «and you will surely be among those who are close to me». He promised them the reward and that they would be close to him and held in high esteem by him, so that they would try hard and do their utmost to defeat Moosâ. When they met with Moosâ, in the presence of a great crowd, «They said» by way of showing confidence and giving the impression that they were not worried about what Moosâ had brought: «O Moosâ, either you throw first» whatever you have with you, «or we will be the first to throw».

«Moosâ said: You throw first» so that the people would see what they had with them, and what Moosâ had with him.

«So when they threw» their ropes and sticks, which by their magic became like moving snakes, «they bewitched the eyes of the people and stuck fear into them, producing powerful magic» such as had never been produced before.

«We inspired Moosâ: Throw your staff» and he threw it, «and thereupon it» turned into a moving snake, which «swallowed up all their deceptions» that is, their fabrications and illusions.

«Thus the truth was established» and became clear and visible before that gathering

﴿and all they did was proven to be false. Thus they were defeated there and then﴾ in that place

﴿and were utterly humiliated﴾ that is, defeated; their falsehood had vanished and their magic was diminished, and they did not attain the goal they thought they could reach.

The people for whom truth becomes clearest are the people of magic who know all types of magic and the details thereof, which other people do not know. Hence they realised that this was a great sign, one of the signs of Allah that no human could produce.



﴿وَأَلْقَى السَّحْرَةَ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾ رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٢٠-١٢٢)

7:120. The magicians fell down in prostration

7:121. and said: We believe in the Lord of the worlds,

7:122. The Lord of Moosâ and Hâroon.

That is, we believe in the clear signs with which Moosâ was sent.



﴿قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَامَنْتُ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ مَآذَنَ لَكَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَكْرُومَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِيُخْرِجُوا مِنهَا أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ لَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِن خَلْفٍ ثُمَّ لَأُسَلِّبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٢٣-١٢٤)

7:123. Pharaoh said: How dare you believe in Him before I give you permission! Surely this is a plot that you hatched in this city in order to drive out its people. But you will soon know the consequences.

7:124. I will certainly cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, then I will certainly crucify you all.

﴿Pharaoh said﴾ to them, threatening them for believing ﴿How dare you believe in Him before I give you permission!﴾ The evil one was a tyrannical ruler who wanted to control people's actions and words; it was well established in his view and theirs that he was to be obeyed and his instructions were to be carried out; no one could go against his word or his rule.

When people reach that degree of obedience, nations begin to decline; they lose their reason and they lose power, and become unable to defend their rights. Hence Allah says elsewhere concerning Pharaoh:

﴿Thus he made fools of his people and they obeyed him...﴾ (*az-Zukhruf* 43: 54)

And Allah tells us here that he said: ﴿How dare you believe in Him before I give you permission!﴾ That is, this is bad manners on your part and is a challenge to me. Then he tried to deceive his people and said: ﴿Surely this is a plot that you hatched in this city in order to drive out its people﴾ that is, Moosâ, who is your leader, is the one who taught you magic, so you hatched a plot together, you and him, that you would be defeated by him and he would prevail, so you would follow him, then the people, or the majority of them, would follow you and thus you would drive the people out of the city.

But this was a lie. He and anyone who understood the situation was well aware that Moosâ had never met any one of them; they were summoned and selected by Pharaoh and his envoys; what Moosâ brought was a sign from Allah; and the magicians did their utmost to defeat Moosâ, but they failed. Thus the truth became clear to them, and they followed it.

Then Pharaoh threatened them by saying: «But you will soon know the consequences» and what will happen to you by way of punishment.

«I will certainly cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides». The evil one claimed that they were spreading mischief in the land, so he was going to do to them what is usually done to those who spread mischief, which is cutting off hands and feet on opposite sides, that is, the right hand and the left foot.

«then I will certainly crucify you» on the trunks of palm trees so as to disgrace you – according to his claim «all» that is, I will not do this to some of you and not others; rather all of you will taste this punishment.



﴿قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا نُنْقِمُ مِنْهَا إِلَّا آتَاءَ مَا نَحْنُ بِرَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاءَنَا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٢٥-١٢٦)

7:125. They said: It is to our Lord that we will surely return.

7:126. The only grievance you have against us is that we believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. Our Lord, grant us abundance of patience and cause us to die as Muslims, submitting to You.

The magicians who believed said to Pharaoh, when he threatened them: «It is to our Lord that we will surely return» that is, we do not care about your punishment, for Allah is better and more lasting, so do whatever you want.

«The only grievance you have against us» that is, what fault do you find in us, for which you are denouncing and warning us? We have done no wrong, except «that we believed in the signs of our

Lord when they came to us)). If this is a fault for which we are to be rebuked and deserve punishment, then so be it.

Then they called upon Allah, asking Him to make them steadfast and patient, as they said: «Our Lord, grant us» that is, bestow upon us «abundance of patience» that is, great patience, as is indicated by use of the indefinite form in the original Arabic. This was a great trial that would lead to loss of life, for which a great deal of patience is required to remain steadfast and confident in faith, and to dispel panic. «and cause us to die as Muslims, submitting to You» that is, complying with Your command and following Your Messenger. It seems that he carried out his threat to them, and Allah made them steadfast in faith.



﴿ وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَنْزِرْ مُوسَىٰ وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَبَدَّرَكَ  
 وَءَالِهَتَكَ ۗ قَالَ سَنْقِيلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ  
 ﴿١٢٧﴾ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَصْبِرُوا إِنَّا الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ  
 يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ قَالُوا أَوْزِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمِنْ  
 بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عُدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي  
 الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٢٧-١٢٩)

- 7:127. The chiefs among Pharaoh's people said: Are you going to let Moosâ and his people spread mischief in the land, and abandon you and your gods? He said: We will slaughter their sons and spare their women, for we have absolute power over them!
- 7:128. Moosâ said to his people: Seek help from Allah and be patient and steadfast, for verily the land belongs to Allah and He grants it as an inheritance to whomever He will among His slaves; and the best outcome is for those who fear Allah.

7:129. They said: We were oppressed both before you came to us and since you came to us. He said: It may well be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the land, so that He may see how you will do.

Moreover, Pharaoh and his chiefs, and the common folk who followed the chiefs, were too arrogant to accept the signs of Allah and rejected them by way of transgression and arrogance. They said to Pharaoh, inciting him to punish Moosâ, and claiming that what he brought was false and corrupt:

«Are you going to let Moosâ and his people spread mischief in the land» by calling people to Allah and to noble characteristics and good deeds, which was spreading righteousness in the land, at the time when what they were following was mischief and corruption, but the wrongdoers do not care what they say.

«and abandon you and your gods» that is, he is forsaking you and your gods, forbidding people to follow you and barring people from doing so.

«He» namely Pharaoh «said» in response to them that he would leave the Children of Israel with Moosâ in such a state that they could not grow in numbers, thus Pharaoh and his people would be safer – or so he claimed – from their harm:

«We will slaughter their sons and spare their women» that is, we will let the women live and not kill them, and if we do that we will be safe from their increasing in numbers, and we will be able to use those who are still alive and force them to do whatever we want.

«for we have absolute power over them» and they have no way and no means to escape our rule over them. This was the utmost tyranny, arrogance and hardheartedness on the part of Pharaoh.

«Moosâ said to his people», advising them in this situation – in which they were unable to do anything or offer any resistance – to seek divine help and aid:

﴿Seek help from Allah﴾ that is, rely on Him to bring that which will benefit you and ward off that which will harm you; put your trust in Allah and have faith that He will help you to reach your goals  
 ﴿and be patient and steadfast﴾ that is, adhere to patience in bearing that which has befallen you, and wait for relief.

﴿for verily the land belongs to Allah﴾ and not to Pharaoh or his people, such that they can control it as they want  
 ﴿and He grants it as an inheritance to whomever He will among His slaves﴾ that is, He alternates it among people according to His will and wisdom, but the best outcome is for the pious, for even if they are tested for a while, by Allah's wisdom, victory will ultimately be theirs  
 ﴿and the best outcome is for those who fear Allah﴾.

This is what the individual should do: when he is able to take measures towards warding off the harm of others, he should do as much as he can; but if he is not able to do so, then he must be patient, seek the help of Allah and wait for relief.

﴿They said﴾ to Moosâ, complaining about the persecution and harm they had endured at the hands of Pharaoh  
 ﴿We were oppressed both before you came to us﴾, for they subjected us to grievous torment, slaughtering our sons and letting our womenfolk live, ﴿and since you came to us﴾ it has continued in like manner.

Moosâ said to them, giving them hope of relief and deliverance from their calamity: ﴿It may well be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the land﴾ that is, give you power therein and put you in control of it  
 ﴿so that He may see how you will do﴾ – will you be grateful or ungrateful? This is a promise that Allah fulfilled when the time came as He willed.



﴿وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصِ مِنَ الشَّمْرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ﴾

(سورة الأعراف: ١٣٠)

7:130. Verily We afflicted the people of Pharaoh with years of drought and scarcity of crops, so that they might pay heed.

Here Allah (ﷻ) explains how He dealt with the people of Pharaoh during this final period; it was in accordance with His usual way of dealing with the nations: by afflicting its people with adversity and distress, so that they might humble themselves, and so on (see 7: 94 and onwards).

﴿Verily We afflicted the people of Pharaoh with years of drought﴾ that is, drought and famine  
 ﴿and scarcity of crops, so that they might pay heed﴾ that is, so that they might understand that what has befallen them is a rebuke from Allah, so that they might give up their disbelief. But that was to no avail; rather they persisted in wrongdoing and mischief.



﴿فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبِهِمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّمَا طَّيَّرَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتَانَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ لِتَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالْدَّمَ ۗ آيَاتٍ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ ۖ بِمَا عَاهَدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِنْ كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ فَلَمَّا



﴿سورة﴾ ﴿١٣٥﴾ كَفَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْزَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ هُمْ بَلَّغُوهُ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾  
 الأعراف: (١٣٥-١٣٥)

- 7:131. 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. Surely, whatever befalls them has been decreed only by Allah, but most of them do not understand.
- 7:132. They said: Whatever signs you bring us, to bewitch us therewith, we will never believe in you.
- 7:133. So We sent against them floods, locusts, lice, frogs and blood, distinct signs, but they showed arrogance and were wicked people.
- 7:134. When the punishment befell them, they said: O Moosâ, call upon your Lord for us, on the strength of the covenant He has made with you; if you remove the punishment from us, we will surely believe in you and we will let the Children of Israel go with you.
- 7:135. But when We removed the punishment from them until an appointed term which they were bound to reach, they immediately broke their promise.

﴿Whenever good fortune﴾ that is, fertility and abundance of provision  
 ﴿came their way, they said: This is our due﴾ that is, we deserve it, but they did not give thanks to Allah for it  
 ﴿But when bad fortune﴾ that is, famine and drought  
 ﴿befell them, they ascribed it to the evil auspices of Moosâ and those who were with him﴾ that is, they said: This has only happened to us because of Moosâ's coming and because of the Children of Israel following him.

But Allah (ﷻ) said: «Surely, whatever befalls them has been decreed only by Allah» that is, by His will and decree. It is not as they said; rather it is their sins and disbelief that are the cause of that. «but most of them do not understand», hence they said what they said.

«They said», explaining to Moosâ that they would persist in their falsehood and never give it up

«Whatever signs you bring us, to bewitch us therewith, we will never believe in you» that is, it is established in our minds that you are a magician, so whatever sign you bring, we are certain that it is magic, therefore we do not believe in you and we do not believe what you say. This was the utmost stubbornness, when the disbelievers reached such a point that whatever happened was all the same to them, regardless of whether signs came down to them or not.

«So We sent against them floods» that is, huge volumes of water that swamped their trees and crops, and caused them a great deal of harm

«locusts» that ate their fruits, crops and plants

«lice» it was suggested that these were small locusts, but the apparent meaning is that they were ordinary lice

«frogs» that filled their vessels and caused them annoyance and a great deal of harm

«and blood» this was either nosebleeds or, as many of the commentators said, the water that they drank turned into blood, so they had nothing to drink except blood and nothing to cook with except blood.

«distinct signs» that is, evidence and proof that they were lying and doing wrong, and that what Moosâ had brought was the truth.

«but they showed arrogance» when they saw the signs

«and were» and had been, before they saw the signs, «wicked people». Hence Allah (ﷻ) punished them by causing them to remain misguided and astray.

«When the punishment befell them» – it may be that what is meant by the punishment is the plague, as many of the commentators

suggested, or it may be that what is meant is the signs mentioned above, namely the flood, locusts, lice, frogs and blood, which came as punishments. Every time one of them befell the people, ﴿they said: O Moosâ, call upon your Lord for us, on the strength of the covenant He has made with you﴾ that is, they sought the intercession of Moosâ on the strength of the covenant that Allah had made with him ﴿if you remove the punishment from us, we will surely believe in you and we will let the Children of Israel go with you﴾ but they were lying when they said that, because their only intention was to get relief from the punishment that had befallen them; they thought that if it was lifted, no other punishment would befall them.

﴿But when We removed the punishment from them until an appointed term which they were bound to reach﴾ that is, until a time until which Allah had decreed that they should remain. It was not permanent relief; rather it was only temporary ﴿they immediately broke their promise﴾ that they had made to Moosâ, when they pledged to believe in him and let the Children of Israel go. So they did not believe in him and they did not let the Children of Israel go with him; rather they persisted in their disbelief, wandering blindly, and they persisted in persecuting the Children of Israel.



﴿فَأَنْقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ بِآيَاتِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضَعُونَ مَشْرِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمغربَهَا الَّتِي بَدَرَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمَهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف:

(١٣٧-١٣٦)

7:136. So We exacted retribution upon them: We drowned them in the sea, because they rejected Our signs and paid them no heed.

7:137. And We caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the eastern and western parts of the land that We had blessed. The good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their patience and steadfastness, and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people had wrought, and what they had built.

﴿So We exacted retribution upon them﴾ that is, when the time came for their destruction, Allah instructed Moosâ to take the Children of Israel and leave by night, and He informed him that Pharaoh and his troops would pursue them.

﴿So Pharaoh sent heralds to the cities [to mobilize troops].﴾ (*ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 53*)

– to rally the people to pursue the Israelites. They said to them:

﴿...These are but a small band, and they have enraged us, but we are all well-prepared. Thus did We cause them to leave their gardens and springs, and their treasures and fine dwellings. And so it was; and We caused the Children of Israel to inherit such things. Then [the Egyptians] caught up with them at sunrise. When the two groups came within sight of one another, the companions of Moosâ said: We are sure to be overtaken. Moosâ said: No indeed! Verily, my Lord is with me and He will guide me. Then We inspired Moosâ: Strike the sea with your staff. So it parted, and every part became like a huge mountain.<sup>19</sup> We brought the other group closer to that place. We saved Moosâ and all those who were with him, then We drowned the others.﴾ (*ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 54-66*)

Here (7: 136) Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿We drowned them in the sea, because they rejected Our signs and paid them no heed﴾ that is,

<sup>19</sup> The waters parted, opening up twelve dry passages by which the Israelites could cross, and where the parting waters gathered, in each part the water was drawn up and became like a huge mountain.

because of their rejection of the signs of Allah and their turning away from the truth to which they pointed.

﴿And We caused the people who had been oppressed﴾ in the land, namely the Children of Israel who had been servants to the people of Pharaoh, who had subjected them to grievous torment. Allah caused them ﴿to inherit the eastern and western parts of the land﴾. What is meant by the land here is the land of Egypt in which they had been oppressed and humiliated. Allah give them power over all of it ﴿that We had blessed. The good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their patience and steadfastness﴾ when Moosâ said to them: ﴿Seek help from Allah and be patient and steadfast, for verily the land belongs to Allah and He grants it as an inheritance to whomever He will among His slaves; and the best outcome is for those who fear Allah﴾ (7: 128).

﴿and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people had wrought﴾ of huge buildings and beautiful dwellings ﴿and what they had built﴾. ﴿Now their houses lie desolate, because of their wrongdoing. Verily, in that is a sign for people who have knowledge.﴾ (an-Naml 27: 52)



﴿وَجَوْرَنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا  
يَسْئُرُ أَجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَذِهِمْ مُتَّبِعُونَ  
مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغْيِرَ اللَّهُ أَسْمَاءَكُمْ وَإِلَهُهَا وَهُمْ  
فَضَّلَكُمُ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٣٨-١٤٠)

7:138. We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, then they came upon a people who were devoted to some idols of theirs. They said: O Moosâ, make for us a god like the gods they have. He said: Verily you are ignorant people.

7:139. The way these people follow is bound to lead to destruction, and what they do is in vain.

7:140. He said: Shall I seek for you a god other than Allah, when He has favoured you above all other nations?

﴿We brought the Children of Israel across the sea﴾ after Allah had saved them from their enemy, Pharaoh and his people, and He destroyed them whilst the Children of Israel were looking on.

﴿then they came upon﴾ that is, passed by ﴿a people who were devoted to some idols of theirs﴾ that is, they stayed near them, seeking blessing from them and worshipping them. ﴿They said﴾ in their ignorance and folly, to their Prophet Moosâ, after Allah had shown them His signs: ﴿O Moosâ, make for us a god like the gods they have﴾ that is, prescribe for us to take idols as gods, as these people have done ﴿He﴾ that is, Moosâ (ﷺ) ﴿said: Verily you are ignorant people﴾. What ignorance could be greater than the ignorance of one who is ignorant of his Lord and Creator, and wants to make others equal with Him that do not possess any power to bring benefit or cause harm, or to cause death or bring life or bring about resurrection?

Hence Moosâ said to them: ﴿The way these people follow is bound to lead to destruction, and what they do is in vain﴾ because their calling upon them (their false gods) was in vain, and they are false in and of themselves. So the deed was in vain and the aim was in vain.

﴿He said: Shall I seek for you a god other than Allah?﴾ That is, should I seek for you a god other than Allah, the only One Who is rightfully worshipped, perfect in His essence, His attributes and His actions?

﴿when He has favoured you above all other nations﴾, for this requires you to respond to His blessing and favouring of you with gratitude, which means worshipping Him alone and disbelieving in all those other than Him who are called upon.



﴿ وَإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكَ مِنَ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكَ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُقْتُلُونَ  
 أَبْنَاءَكَ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكَ وَفِي ذَلِكَ لَبَاءٌ لِمَنْ رَزَقَهُ عَظِيمٌ ﴾ (١٤١)

(سورة الأعراف: ١٤١)

7:141. And [remember] when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh, who were subjecting you to grievous torment, slaughtering your sons and letting your womenfolk live; in that was a great trial from your Lord.

Then Allah reminds them of the blessings that He bestowed upon them:

﴿And [remember] when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh﴾ that is, from Pharaoh and his people  
 ﴿who were subjecting you to grievous torment﴾ that is, they were subjecting you to the worst torment, which was that they were  
 ﴿slaughtering your sons and letting your womenfolk live; in that﴾ that is, in deliverance from their torment  
 ﴿was a great trial from your Lord﴾ – the word *balâ'*, translated here as ﴿trial﴾, may also mean blessing, hence what is meant here is a great blessing from your Lord. Or it may be that what is meant is a great trial, namely the torment to which Pharaoh and his people subjected them. When Moosâ reminded and admonished them, they stopped their outrageous request.



﴿ وَوَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا عِشْرِينَ فَتَمَّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ  
 لَيْلَةً ۗ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ أَخْلِفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ  
 الْمُفْسِدِينَ ۗ ﴾ (١٤٢) وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي إِلَيْكَ

قَالَ لَنْ تَرَنِي وَلَكِنْ أَنْظِرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنْ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ، فَسَوْفَ تَرَنِي فَلَمَّا  
 تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ  
 تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ قَالَ يَمْوَسَّىٰ إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ  
 بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلِمِي فَخُذْ مَاءَ آتَيْتُكَ وَكُن مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي  
 الْأَلْوَابِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ  
 يَأْخُذُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُرِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ  
 فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُفْلًا آيَةً لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ  
 الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ  
 كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ  
 حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ ﴿سورة الأعراف:

(١٤٦-١٤٢)

- 7:142. We appointed for Moosâ thirty nights, and completed [the period] with ten [more]; thus the term of forty nights set by His Lord was completed. Moosâ said to his brother Hâroon: Take my place amongst my people in my absence, do what is right, and do not follow the way of those who spread mischief.
- 7:143. When Moosâ came at the time appointed by Us, and his Lord spoke to him, he said: O my Lord, show Yourself to me, so that I may look upon You. Allah said: You cannot see Me. But look at the mountain; if it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me. But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He caused it to crumble, and Moosâ fell down unconscious. When he recovered, he said: Glory be to You! I repented to You and I am the first to believe.
- 7:144. Allah said: O Moosâ, I have chosen you above others, by giving you My messages and speaking to you. Hold fast to what I have given you, and be among those who are grateful.



- 7:145. And We inscribed for him in the Tablets all manner of admonition and an explanation of all things. [We said:] Hold fast to them and enjoin your people to follow the best thereof, and I will show you the fate of the evildoers.
- 7:146. I will turn away from My signs those who behave arrogantly on earth without justification. Even if they see all the signs, they will not believe in them; if they see the path of guidance, they will not follow it, but if they see the path of error, they will take it as their way, for they have rejected Our signs and paid them no heed.
- 7:147. As for those who reject Our signs and disbelieve in the meeting of the hereafter, their deeds will come to nothing. Should they be requited for anything other than what they used to do?

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When Allah completed His blessing upon them by delivering them from their enemy and establishing them in the land, He wanted to perfect His blessings upon them by sending down the Book containing religious rulings and sound beliefs. So He set an appointed time for Moosâ of thirty nights, and completed it by adding ten, so the total number was forty nights. That was so that Moosâ might prepare himself and get ready for this appointment with Allah, and so that when the Book came down, it would have a great impact on them and they would be longing for it to come down.

When Moosâ went to the place appointed by his Lord, at the time appointed, he said to Hâroon, leaving him in charge of the Israelites because of his concern and kindness towards them:

﴿Take my place amongst my people in my absence﴾ that is, be my deputy among them and deal with them as I have been dealing with them

﴿do what is right﴾ that is, follow the path that maintains order and peace

﴿and do not follow the way of those who spread mischief﴾ namely, those who commit sin.

«When Moosâ came at the time appointed by Us», which was the time appointed for the sending down of the Book «and his Lord spoke to him», with the words of His revelations, commands and prohibitions, Moosâ longed to see Allah, a longing that was born out of love for his Lord and a desire to see Him.

«he said: O my Lord, show Yourself to me, so that I may look upon You. Allah said: You cannot see Me» that is, you are not able now to see Me. For Allah (ﷻ) has created people in this realm in such a way that they cannot do that; they are not able to withstand seeing Allah. But that does not mean that they will not see Him in paradise.

The Qur'anic texts and prophetic hadiths indicate that the people of paradise will see their Lord (ﷻ) and will have the joy of gazing upon His noble Countenance, and that He will create them in a perfect form, in which they will be able to see Allah (ﷻ).

Hence Allah stipulated a condition in this verse connected to seeing Him: that would only happen if the mountain remained in place. He said, explaining to Moosâ why He would not answer his request to see Him: «But look at the mountain; if it remains firm in its place» when Allah manifested Himself to it, «then you will see Me».

«But when his Lord appeared to the mountain» which was solid rock

«He caused it to crumble» that is, it collapsed like dust, unable to bear seeing Allah and unable to stand firm

«and Moosâ fell down unconscious» when he saw what he saw.

Thus it became clear to him that if the mountain could not withstand seeing Allah, then he would be even less able to withstand it, so he asked his Lord to forgive him for his request, which had not been appropriate. Hence he said:

«Glory be to You» that is, I declare You to be above all shortcomings, and reject anything that is not befitting to Your Majesty,

«I repent to You» from all sins and from my poor etiquette towards You,

﴿and I am the first to believe﴾ that is, he renewed his faith because Allah perfected his faith for him by making him aware of that which he had not known before. When Allah did not allow him to see Him – after he had longed for that – He bestowed much good upon him, and said:

﴿O Moosâ, I have chosen you above others﴾ that is, I have chosen you, selected you and favoured you, and I have singled you out for great blessings and virtues

﴿by giving you My messages﴾ which I bestow upon, and single out for, none but the best of people.

﴿and speaking to you﴾ without any intermediary. These are the virtues for which Moosâ al-Kaleem (the one to whom Allah spoke directly) was singled out and for which he is known among his fellow Messengers.

﴿Hold fast to what I have given you﴾ of blessings, and take what I have given you of commands and prohibitions with an open heart; accept it and submit to it

﴿and be among those who are grateful﴾ to Allah for His having singled you out and blessed you.

﴿And We inscribed for him in the Tablets all manner of admonition﴾ that people need, encouraging them to do good deeds and warning them against evil deeds

﴿and an explanation of all things﴾ namely rulings, beliefs, morals and etiquette.

﴿Hold fast to them﴾ that is, strive hard to establish them ﴿and enjoin your people to follow the best thereof﴾. These instructions include matters that are both obligatory and encouraged, for they are the best of them. This indicates that the commands of Allah – in all laws – are perfect, just and good.

﴿and I will show you the fate of the evildoers﴾ after Allah destroyed them and left their houses as a lesson to those who came after them, so that the believers who are guided and humble may learn from them.

As for others, Allah says concerning them: ﴿I will turn away from My signs﴾ that is, I will turn away from learning from the signs in the universe and in their own selves, and from understanding the verses of the Book

﴿those who behave arrogantly on earth without justification﴾ that is, those who show arrogance toward the slaves of Allah, towards the truth and towards the one who brought it. Whoever is like this, Allah will deprive him of a great deal of good; He will forsake him and he will not understand from the signs of Allah that which may benefit him. Rather he will be confused about the facts and will see evil as good.

﴿Even if they see all the signs, they will not believe in them﴾ because they turn away from them and object to them, and they oppose Allah and His Messenger

﴿if they see the path of guidance﴾ that is the path of righteousness, which is the path that leads to Allah and to His paradise

﴿they will not follow it﴾ and will show no interest in it;

﴿but if they see the path of error﴾ that is, misguidance which leads to hell

﴿they will take it as their way﴾. The reason why they deviate to such an extent is because ﴿they have rejected Our signs and paid them no heed﴾. It is their rejection of the signs of Allah, paying no heed to the message, and their scorning thereof, that cause them to choose the path of error and to forsake the path of guidance.

﴿As for those who reject Our signs﴾ that is, Our great signs that point to the truth of that with which We sent Our Messengers

﴿and disbelieve in the meeting of the hereafter, their deeds will come to nothing﴾ because they have no basis and they have failed to meet the conditions of acceptance, namely belief in the signs of Allah and in the recompense.

﴿Should they be required﴾ as a result of the rejection of their deeds and their getting the opposite of what they sought

﴿for anything other than what they used to do?﴾ For the deeds of one who does not believe in the Last Day there is no hope of reward, and they have no purpose; therefore they are diminished and rendered invalid.



﴿وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَّهُ خُوَارٌ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّهُ لَا  
يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا اتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي  
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ  
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٤٨-١٤٩)

- 7:148. In his absence, the people of Moosâ took for worship a calf made from their jewellery, an effigy that made a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could not speak to them or guide them in any way? They took it for worship and thus became transgressors.
- 7:149. When they became remorseful and realised that they had gone astray, they said: If our Lord does not have mercy on us and forgive us, we will surely be among the losers.

﴿In his absence, the people of Moosâ took for worship a calf made from their jewellery, an effigy﴾ that was made by as-Sâmiri, who threw into it a handful [of dust] from the hoof print of the messenger Jibreel's horse (cf. 20: 96) and it ﴿made a lowing sound﴾. They worshipped it and took it as a god.

He (as-Sâmiri) said:

﴿...This is your god, and the god of Moosâ, but he has forgotten.﴾  
(Tâ Hâ 20: 88)

– and he has gone to look for it. This was due to their foolishness and lack of understanding; how could they have confused the Lord of the earth and the heavens with a calf, which is one of the lowest of creatures?

Hence Allah says, explaining that the calf had none of the characteristics or actions that might imply divinity: ﴿Did they not see that it could not speak to them﴾ that is, lack of speech is a major shortcoming; they are better off than this animal or inanimate object that could not speak

﴿or guide them in any way﴾ that is, it cannot show them any religious path or bring them any worldly benefit. It is well established, according to reason and common sense, that taking as a god something that cannot speak or bring any benefit or do any harm is the falsest of falsehoods and the silliest of foolishness. Hence Allah said: ﴿They took it for worship and thus became transgressors﴾, as they directed their worship inappropriately, and they ascribed partners to Allah for which He sent down no authority. This indicates that whoever denies that Allah speaks, has denied one of the divine characteristics of Allah, because Allah stated that not speaking indicates that the one who does not speak is not fit to be regarded as divine.

﴿When﴾ Moosâ returned to his people and found them in this state, and he told them that they had been misguided, they regretted it and ﴿became remorseful﴾ that is, they were filled with grief and sorrow for what they had done, and they ﴿realised that they had gone astray﴾. So they turned to Allah, humbly beseeching Him, and ﴿they said: If our Lord does not have mercy on us﴾ and guide us to Himself, enable us to worship Him and help us to do righteous deeds, ﴿and forgive us﴾ for what we did of worshipping the calf, ﴿we will surely be among the losers﴾ who lose out in this world and the hereafter.



﴿وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ بِئْسَمَا خَلَفْتُمُونِي مِن بَعْدِي ۖ أَعْبَدْتُمُ  
أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَلْقَيْتُمُ الْأَلْوَابِحَ ۚ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجُرُّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۗ قَالَ ابْنَ أُمَّ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ

اسْتَخَفُّونِي وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونَنِي فَلَا تُشِيتْ فِي الْأَعْدَاءِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ  
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ  
 الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَذَلَّةٌ فِي  
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ  
 بَعْدِهَا وَآمَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى  
 الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَابَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَفِي نُسْخَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

(سورة الأعراف: ١٥٠-١٥٤)

- 7:150. When Moosâ returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said: What an evil thing you have done in my absence! Could you not patiently wait for the promise of your Lord? He threw down the Tablets, seized his brother by his hair and pulled him towards him. Hâroon said: O son of my mother, the people overpowered me and almost killed me. Do not give my enemies cause to rejoice in my misfortune or count me among the evildoers.
- 7:151. Moosâ said: O my Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us to Your mercy, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.
- 7:152. As for those who took the calf for worship, wrath from their Lord and disgrace will indeed overtake them in this world; thus do We requite those who invent falsehood.
- 7:153. As for those who do bad deeds, then repent after that and believe, verily your Lord is thereafter Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 7:154. When Moosâ's anger had subsided, he picked up the Tablets; in their inscription there was guidance and mercy for all those who fear their Lord.

«When Moosâ returned to his people, angry and grieved» that is, he was filled with anger and rage towards them, because he cared so much for them and was sincere and compassionate towards them

«he said: What an evil thing you have done in my absence!» That is, what a terrible thing you have done after I left you, for it is something that leads to eternal doom and everlasting misery.

«Could you not patiently wait for the promise of your Lord?» For He promised you that He would send down the Book, but you hastened – on the basis of your corrupt argument – to commit this abhorrent deed.

«He threw down the Tablets» in anger, «seized his brother» Hâroon «by his hair» and beard, «and pulled him towards him». He said to him:

«...what prevented you, when you saw that they had gone astray from following me? Did you then disobey my command?» (*Tâ Hâ 20: 92-93*)

– when I had told you: «Take my place amongst my people in my absence, do what is right, and do not follow the way of those who spread mischief» (*7: 142*).

«Hâroon said: O son of my mother, do not seize me by my beard, or by my head! Verily, I was afraid that you would say: You have caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not pay heed to my words.» (*Tâ Hâ 20: 94*)

And here Allah tells us that he said: «O son of my mother» – he said this to soften his brother's heart, by mentioning their mother on her own; in fact they were full brothers, with the same mother and father

«the people overpowered me» that is, they scorned me when I said to them:

«...O my people, you are being tested with it. Verily, your Lord is the Most Gracious, so follow me and obey my command.» (*Tâ Hâ 20: 90*)

«and almost killed me» that is, so do not think that I fell short.



«Do not give my enemies cause to rejoice in my misfortune» by rebuking me or hurting me, for my enemies are very keen to find any reason to pick on me or to see me make a mistake «or count me among the evildoers» and treat me like them.

Then Moosâ (ﷺ) regretted his hasty actions towards his brother, before finding out his point of view, and thinking that he had fallen short. He said:

«O my Lord, forgive me and my brother» Hâroon «and admit us to Your mercy» that is, encompass us with it on all sides, for it is a strong fortress that protects against all evils, and it is all blessings and good «for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy» that is, You are more merciful towards us than any other; You are more merciful towards us than our fathers, our mothers, our children and our own selves.

Allah says explaining the state of the people who worshipped the calf: «As for those who took the calf for worship» that is, they took it as a god, «wrath from their Lord and disgrace will indeed overtake them in this world» as they angered their Lord and took His command lightly.

«thus do We requite those who invent falsehood». Every inventor of falsehood against Allah, who tells lies about His religion, attributing words to Him that He did not say, is subject to a share of the divine wrath and humiliation in the life of this world. They incurred the wrath of Allah, when Moosâ ordered them to kill (the guilty ones) among them (cf. 2: 54),<sup>20</sup> and told them that Allah would not accept anything other than that.

So some of them killed others (the guilty ones among them) and that resulted in a large number of slain. Then Allah accepted their repentance after that. Hence He mentions here a general ruling that is applicable to them and others, as He says:

<sup>20</sup> This was a punishment for having taken the calf for worship.

﴿As for those who do bad deeds﴾ and commit sins both major and minor,  
 ﴿then repent after that﴾ by regretting what they have done, giving it  
 up and resolving not to go back to it  
 ﴿and believe﴾ in Allah and in what Allah has enjoined them to believe  
 in, for faith is not complete without both belief in the heart and sound  
 intention, and outward actions that stem from faith  
 ﴿verily your Lord is thereafter﴾ that is, after repentance from bad  
 deeds and coming back to acts of obedience  
 ﴿Oft-Forgiving﴾ He forgives bad deeds and erases them, even if they  
 were so many as to fill the earth  
 ﴿Most Merciful﴾, as He accepts repentance, enables one to do good  
 deeds and accepts them.

﴿When Moosâ's anger had subsided﴾ that is, when he had calmed  
 down and began to think of the situation he was in and to focus on  
 what was most important  
 ﴿he picked up the Tablets﴾ that he had thrown down; these Tablets  
 were of great value and importance  
 ﴿in their inscription﴾ that is, contained in them  
 ﴿there was guidance and mercy﴾ that is, they contained guidance  
 away from error and explanation of truth as distinct from falsehood,  
 good deeds as distinct from evil deeds, guidance to the best of deeds,  
 morals and etiquette, and mercy and blessings for those who acted  
 upon them and understood their rulings and meanings. But not  
 everyone accepts the guidance and mercy of Allah; rather those who  
 accept it and comply with it are those who ﴿fear their Lord﴾.

But as for those who do not fear Allah or the standing before Him,  
 it only increases them in arrogance and aversion, and the proof of  
 Allah is thereby established against them.



﴿وَإِخْتَارَ مُوسَىٰ قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا لِّمِيقَاتِنَا فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ  
 شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُم مِّن قَبْلُ وَإِنِّي أَهْلِكُنَّهُمْ مَّا فَعَلْتُ السُّفَهَاءَ مِنَّا إِن هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِلُّ

بِهَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَنْ نَشَاءُ أَنْتَ وَلِيْنَا فَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْعَافِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾  
 ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَكَتَبْنَا لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُنَا وَإِلَيْكَ قَالِ عَادِي  
 أُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ  
 وَتُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ  
 الْأَتْمَحَ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَا مَرْهُمْ  
 بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ  
 الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

(سورة الأعراف: ١٥٥-١٥٧) ﴿١٥٧﴾

- 7:155. Moosâ chose seventy men from among his people to come at the time appointed by Us. Then when the earthquake overtook them, he said: O my Lord, if it had been Your will, You could have destroyed them before, and me too; will You destroy us because of what the foolish among us have done?<sup>21</sup> That was nothing but a trial from You, by which You caused to go astray whomever You willed and You guided whomever You willed. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of those who forgive.
- 7:156. Ordain good for us in this world and in the hereafter, for we have indeed turned to You in repentance. Allah said: I afflict with My punishment whomever I will, but My mercy encompasses all things; I shall ordain it for those who fear Me, and give zakâh, and those who believe in Our revelations,
- 7:157. those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own [scriptures], in the Torah and the Gospel. He enjoins them to do that which is right and forbids

<sup>21</sup> That action was their taking the calf for worship, or their audacious demand to see Allah with their own eyes. (*an-Nisâ' 4: 153*)

them to do that which is wrong; he makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful; he relieves them of their burden, and of the shackles that were upon them. So those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him – it is they who will prosper.

When the Children of Israel repented and came back to their senses, ﴿Moosâ chose seventy men﴾ from among the best of them, to offer their apology on behalf of their people before their Lord. Allah appointed a time and place for them to attend, but when they attended, they said: O Moosâ,

﴿...Let us see Allah with our own eyes...﴾ (*an-Nisâ' 4: 153*)

Thus they showed great audacity and poor etiquette towards Allah, therefore ﴿the earthquake overtook them﴾ and they fell down and were destroyed.

Moosâ (ﷺ) kept beseeching Allah and praying, saying: ﴿O my Lord, if it had been Your will, You could have destroyed them before﴾ that is, before they came here to offer an apology on behalf of their people, then they themselves became transgressors.

﴿will You destroy us because of what the foolish﴾ that is, the weak-minded and silly ones ﴿among us have done?﴾ So he beseeched Allah, giving an apology on the basis that those who had made this audacious request of Allah were immature in thinking and lacked the reasoning that could have prevented them from what they had said and done, for they had been subjected to a trial in which there was a risk of losing one's faith. Hence he said:

﴿That was nothing but a trial from You, by which You caused to go astray whomever You willed and You guided whomever You willed. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of those who forgive﴾ that is, You are the best to forgive and most deserving to show mercy, the most generous of those who give. It is as if Moosâ (ﷺ) was saying: The main aim of all of us,

O Lord, is to adhere to obedience and faith in You. Whoever is wise and mature, and guided by You, still adheres to the straight path; as for those who are weak-minded and foolish, and were influenced by the trial, they did what they did. Nevertheless, You are the most merciful of those who show mercy and the best to forgive, so forgive us and have mercy on us.

So Allah answered his request and brought them back to life, and He forgave them their sins. Moosâ said at the end of his supplication: «Ordain good for us in this world» namely beneficial knowledge, abundant provision and righteous deeds

«and in the hereafter» also ordain good for us, which is what Allah has prepared for His righteous close friends of reward.

«for we have indeed turned to You in repentance» that is, we acknowledge our shortcomings and we turn to You in all our affairs

«Allah said: I afflict with My punishment whomever I will» of those who are doomed and follow the path that leads to that

«but My mercy encompasses all things» of the upper and lower realms, righteous and evildoer, believer and disbeliever. There is no created being who is not touched by the mercy of Allah or encompassed by His bounty and kindness. But the special mercy that leads to blessing in this world and the hereafter is not for everyone. Hence Allah says concerning it:

«I shall ordain it for those who fear Me» and avoid sin, both minor and major.

«and give zakâh», which is obligatory, to those who are entitled to it «and those who believe in Our revelations». Part of perfect faith and belief in the revelations of Allah is to understand their meanings and act accordingly. That includes following the Prophet (ﷺ) both outwardly and inwardly, in both fundamental and minor issues of religion.

«those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet», as distinct from all the other Prophets. The one referred to here is Muhammad ibn 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib (ﷺ).

The context here has to do with the Children of Israel; believing in the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is a condition of their becoming believers, and those who believe in him and follow him are the people of mercy, which Allah has ordained for them. He is described as unlettered because he was one of the Arabs, the unlettered nation who did not read or write, and before the Qur'an they had no scripture.

«whom they find mentioned in their own [scriptures], in the Torah and the Gospel» by name, with a description of his characteristics, the most significant of which is what he promotes and forbids, for he «enjoins them to do that which is right», which is everything that is known to be good, sound and beneficial «and forbids them to do that which is wrong», which is everything that is known to be abhorrent on the basis of rational thinking and common sense. So he enjoins them to pray, give zakâh, fast, go on pilgrimage (Hajj), uphold ties of kinship, honour their parents, treat neighbours and slaves kindly, be kind to all creatures, be honest, chaste, righteous and sincere, and so on. And he forbids them to ascribe partners to Allah, kill any soul unlawfully, commit fornication or adultery, drink or consume intoxicants, mistreat any creature, tell lies, commit immoral actions, and so on.

The greatest evidence that proves that he is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is what he calls people to, what he enjoins and forbids, and what he permits and prohibits, for he «makes good things lawful to them» with regard to food, drink, and sexual matters «and [he makes] bad things unlawful» with regard to food, drink, sexual matters, words and deeds.

«he relieves them of their burden, and of the shackles that were upon them» that is, one of his characteristics is that his religion is easy and tolerant; it is not burdensome and there is no hardship in it or any heavy and strict rules and regulations.

«So those who believe in him, honour him» that is, they respect and venerate him

﴿help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him﴾, which is the Qur'an; it illuminates the darkness of doubt and ignorance and is to be followed if there are conflicting views.

﴿it is they who will prosper﴾ and will attain good in this world and the hereafter, and be saved from the evil of both realms, because they took the greatest measures that lead to prosperity.

As for those who do not believe in this unlettered Prophet (ﷺ), and do not venerate him or support him, or follow the light that was sent down with him, it is they who will be the losers.

As the preceding verse calls the people of the Torah, the Israelites, to follow the Prophet (ﷺ), and one may think that believing in him was enjoined only upon them, the subsequent verse indicates that following him is enjoined upon everyone:



﴿قُلْ يَتَّبِعْتَهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ  
الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

(سورة الأعراف: ١٥٨)

- 7:158. Say [O Muhammad]: O people, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; there is no god but He; He gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and in His words, and follow him so that you may be rightly guided.

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: O people, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all﴾ that is, to the Arabs among you and the non-Arabs, to the People of the Book among you, and others.

﴿of Him to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth﴾  
 – He controls them by means of His universal laws and His religious laws, part of which is that He has sent to you a great Messenger (ﷺ), to call you to Allah and to His paradise, and to warn you against everything that distances you from Him and from His paradise.

﴿there is no god but He﴾ that is, none is rightfully worshipped except Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and the way to worship Him is known only through His Messengers  
 ﴿He gives life and causes death﴾ that is, part of His control of the universe is the giving of life and the causing of death, in which no one has a share with Him. He has made death a bridge and a crossing point to the eternal realm; whoever believes in it has definitely believed in the message of Muhammad (ﷺ).

﴿So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet﴾, with faith in the heart that requires sound beliefs and physical actions.  
 ﴿who believes in Allah and in His words﴾ that is, they believe in this Messenger (ﷺ) who is sound in his beliefs and actions.  
 ﴿and follow him so that you may be rightly guided﴾ to the best way with regard to both religious and worldly affairs, for if you do not follow him you will go far astray.



﴿وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَىٰ أُمَّةٍ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ أَثْنَى عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطًا أُمَمًا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِذِ اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ، أَنْ أَضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَاجِرَ فَأَنْجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَشْرِبَهُمْ<sup>٤</sup> وَظَلَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْغَمَمَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّانَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُّوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾﴾ (سورة



- 7:159. Among the people of Moosâ there are some who guide others in the way of truth and establish justice therewith.
- 7:160. We divided them into twelve tribes, distinct clans, and We inspired Moosâ, when his people asked him for water: Strike the rock with your staff. There gushed forth from it twelve springs, and each group knew its own drinking place. We shaded them with clouds and sent down to them manna and quails, [saying]: Eat of the good things We have provided for you. Yet they could do Us no wrong, but they certainly wronged themselves.

﴿Among the people of Moosâ there are some who guide others in the way of truth and establish justice therewith﴾ that is, they guide people in the way of truth by teaching it to them, issuing edicts to them and establishing justice among them when judging between them with regard to their affairs. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿We made some of them leaders, guiding people by Our command, because they were patient and steadfast, and they believed with certainty in Our revelations.﴾ (*as-Sajdah* 32: 24)

This points to the virtue of the nation of Moosâ (ﷺ), and tells us that Allah created among them people who were guided and guided others by His command.

It is as if this verse is aimed at avoiding a wrong impression that may arise from the previous verses, in which Allah (ﷻ) had mentioned a number of the faults of the Israelites, that were contrary to perfection and guidance. Some may think that this referred to all of them, therefore Allah (ﷻ) stated that among them was a group of upright people who were guided and who guided others.

﴿We divided them into twelve tribes, distinct clans﴾ that is, twelve tribes who were in harmony with one another; the descendants of each of the sons of Ya'qoob formed a tribe.

﴿and We inspired Moosâ, when his people asked him for water﴾ that is, they asked him to pray to Allah (ﷻ) to give them water from

which they could drink and from which their flocks could drink, because they – and Allah knows best – were in a place where there was little water.

So Allah inspired Moosâ, in response to their request: «Strike the rock with your staff». It may be that this was a specific rock, or it may be that this is a generic word which refers to any rock. So he struck it, and «There gushed forth from it» that is, there flowed from that rock «twelve springs», flowing on the surface.

«and each group knew its own drinking place» that had been allocated to each of those twelve tribes. Each of them was given a spring, which they knew. Thus they felt reassured and were given a break from pushing, shoving and arguing. This was a perfect blessing from Allah to them.

«We shaded them with clouds» that sheltered them from the heat of the sun

«and sent down to them manna» which is sweet

«and quails» which are a kind of bird; they are one of the best types of birds, with the most delicious meat. So Allah bestowed upon them shade, drink, and good food composed of something sweet and meat, by way of comfort and reassurance.

It was said to them: «Eat of the good things We have provided for you. Yet they could do Us no wrong» when they did not give thanks to Allah or do that which Allah had made obligatory for them «but they certainly wronged themselves» when they caused themselves to miss out on much good and exposed themselves to evil and divine wrath. This was the case throughout their sojourn in the wilderness.



﴿وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتِكُمْ سَنَزِيدُكُمْ سَرَاحًا﴾

الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ  
فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِنْ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ (سورة  
الأعراف: ١٦١-١٦٢)

- 7:161. And [remember] when it was said to them: Dwell in this town and eat freely from it wherever you may wish, and say: Relieve us [from the burden of our sins], and enter the gate bowing down [with humility]. We will forgive you your sins and increase [the reward] of those who do good.
- 7:162. But the wrongdoers among them changed the word to something other than what they had been told; so We sent down upon the wrongdoers a plague from heaven, because of their wrongdoing.

﴿And [remember] when it was said to them: Dwell in this town﴾ enter it so that it may become a homeland and place of dwelling for you. That town was Aelia (Jerusalem)

﴿and eat freely from it wherever you may wish﴾. It was a city where there were many trees, abundant fruit and a life of ease and prosperity. Hence Allah instructed them to eat from it wherever they may wish ﴿and say﴾ when you enter the gate: ﴿Relieve us [from the burden of our sins]﴾ that is, forgive us our sins and pardon us.

﴿and enter the gate bowing down [with humility]﴾ that is, showing humility towards your Lord, submitting to His might and showing gratitude for His blessing. Thus He instructed them to humble themselves and ask for forgiveness, and He promised them in return for that forgiveness of their sins and reward in this world and the hereafter, so He said: ﴿We will forgive you your sins and increase [the reward] of those who do good﴾ in this world and the hereafter.

But they did not comply with this divine command; rather ﴿the wrongdoers among them changed the word﴾ that is, they disobeyed Allah and took His command lightly.

«changed the word to something other than what they had been told» so – instead of asking for forgiveness and saying *hittatun* (translated here as «Relieve us [from the burden of our sins]») – they said *habbah fee sha'eerah* (a grain of barley). If they changed the word, even though it was easy to say, then they were even more likely to change their actions. Hence they entered the gate shuffling on their rear ends.

«so We sent down upon the wrongdoers», when they went against the command of Allah and disobeyed Him «a plague from heaven» that is, a severe punishment, either the plague or some other kind of divine punishment.

Allah did not wrong them by sending His punishment upon them; rather that was «because of their wrongdoing» that is, they failed to obey Allah and chose to disobey Him, without there being anything to compel them or motivate them to do that, except for the evil that was hidden in their hearts.



﴿وَسَأَلَهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ جِثَاتُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرْعًا وَيَوْمَ لَا تَسْبِتُونَ إِلَّا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ نَبْلُوهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٦٣)

7:163. Ask them about the town which was by the sea and how they broke the Sabbath. Their fish would come to them on their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water, but when it was not their Sabbath, they did not appear. Thus We tried them, because of their defiant disobedience.

«Ask them» that is, ask the Children of Israel «about the town which was by the sea» that is, on the coast, when they transgressed and how Allah punished them.

«and how they broke the Sabbath». Allah (ﷻ) had commanded them to venerate and respect the Sabbath and not to fish on that day. Then He tried and tested them. Their fish used to come to them «on their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water» that is, appearing in great numbers on the surface of the sea

«but when it was not their Sabbath» that is, on other days «they did not appear» that is, the fish disappeared into the sea and the people did not see any of them.

«Thus We tried them, because of their defiant disobedience» so it was their defiant disobedience that made it inevitable that Allah would test them, and that they would face this trial. If they had not been defiantly disobedient, Allah would have spared them and would not have exposed them to this trial and evil. So they tried to use tricks to get around this ruling. They would dig ditches for the fish, and set up nets, and on the Sabbath the fish would come and fall into those ditches and nets, but the people would not take the nets on that day, but on Sunday they would take them. This was a common occurrence among them, and the people were divided into three groups with regard to this matter.



﴿وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا قَالُوا مَعذِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَقُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعِزِّهِمْ يَبِيسٍ ﴿١٦٥﴾ فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَنْ مَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٦٤ -

(١٦٦)

7:164. When some of them said: Why are you admonishing people whom Allah will destroy or punish severely? they said: To discharge our duty before your Lord, and in the hope that they may [pay heed and] fear Allah.

- 7:165. When they ignored the admonishment they had been given, We saved those who forbade evil, and We afflicted the wrongdoers with a dreadful punishment, because of their defiant disobedience.
- 7:166. When they insolently persisted in doing what they had been forbidden to do, We said to them: Be apes, despised and rejected.

Most of them transgressed in a blatant and audacious manner. Some of them openly tried to stop them and denounced them for that. And (a third group) thought that the objections of the other people were sufficient, and they said to them:

«Why are you admonishing people whom Allah will destroy or punish severely?». It is as if they were saying to them: There is no point in admonishing those who have transgressed the sacred limits of Allah and never listened to any sincere adviser, and rather persist in their transgression, for Allah will inevitably requite them, either by destroying them or sending a severe punishment upon them.

But the admonishing group said: We admonish them and tell them not to do that, «To discharge our duty before your Lord», so that we will not be blamed

«and in the hope that they may [pay heed and] fear Allah» that is, perhaps they will give up the sin that they are committing. So we will not despair of their being guided; perhaps our admonition may be effective and our censure may have some impact on them.

The main aim behind objecting to and denouncing evil is so as to discharge one's duty and establish proof against the one to whom it is addressed, in the hope that Allah may guide him, so that he will then comply with what is enjoined or forbidden.

«When they ignored the admonishment they had been given» that is, when they failed to do what they were reminded of, and they persisted in their misguidance and transgression,

«We saved» from the punishment «those who forbade evil». This is the way of Allah in dealing with His slaves: when the punishment comes down, He saves from it those who enjoined what is right and forbade what is wrong.

«and We afflicted the wrongdoers» namely those who broke the Sabbath

«with a dreadful» that is, severe «punishment, because of their defiant disobedience».

As for the other group, who had said to those who told them not to commit that sin: «Why are you admonishing people whom Allah will destroy or punish severely?» (7: 164), the commentators differed as to whether they were saved or not. It seems that they were among those who were saved, because Allah mentioned doom only for the wrongdoers, and He did not say that these people were wrongdoers.

This indicates that the punishment was only for the Sabbath-breakers. Moreover, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is a communal duty; if some people undertake it, then it is waived for the others. So they were content with the actions of the others (who did speak out against them), and they also (implicitly) denounced them by saying: «Why are you admonishing people whom Allah will destroy or punish severely?». Thus they expressed their disapproval of them, which implies that they hated them because of their deeds, and believed that Allah would punish them severely.

«When they insolently persisted in doing what they had been forbidden to do» that is, they grew hard-hearted and did not pay heed or learn a lesson

«We said to them» by way of decree

«Be apes, despised and rejected», so they turned into apes, by Allah's leave, and Allah cast them far away from His mercy. Then He tells us how those who were left were humiliated and brought low:



﴿وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لِيَبْعَنَ عَلَيْهِمُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَيْعَةِ مَنْ يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَقَطَعْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَصْنَافًا مِمَّنْهُمُ الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَيَلْوَنَهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا وَإِنْ يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِثْلَهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِبَيْتِ الْكِتَابِ أَنَّ لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَاللَّذَّارِ الْأَخْرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُمَسِّكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا لَا نَضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٦٧-١٧٠)

- 7:167. And [remember] when your Lord declared that He would certainly send against them, until the Day of Resurrection, people who would subject them to grievous torment. Your Lord is indeed swift in punishment, but He is also Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 7:168. So We scattered them in communities throughout the earth. Among them are some who are righteous and some who are otherwise. And We tested them with both prosperity and adversity, so that they might turn in repentance.
- 7:169. Then they were succeeded by an evil generation who inherited the scripture, but they seized the fleeting gains of this world, saying: We will be forgiven. Yet if similar fleeting gains came their way again, they would again seize them. Are they not bound by the covenant mentioned in the scripture, that they would not say of Allah anything but the truth? And they have studied its contents well. But the life of the hereafter is better for those who fear Allah. Will you not then understand?
- 7:170. As for those who hold fast to the scripture and establish prayer, We will not cause the reward of those who do righteous deeds to be lost.



﴿And [remember] when your Lord declared﴾ that is, announced and proclaimed

﴿that He would certainly send against them, until the Day of Resurrection, people who would subject them to grievous torment﴾ that is, humiliate them and bring them low.

﴿Your Lord is indeed swift in punishment﴾ for the one who disobeys Him, so that He hastens the punishment for him in this world

﴿but He is also Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ to the one who repents to Him and turns to Him; He forgives him his sins and conceals his faults, and He shows mercy to him by accepting his acts of worship and rewarding him for them in various ways. Allah did to them what He threatened them with; they are still humiliated and subjected to the rule of others, and they will never rise or be victorious.

﴿So We scattered them in communities throughout the earth﴾ that is, divided and dispersed throughout the earth, after they had been together.

﴿Among them are some who are righteous﴾, carrying out their duties towards Allah and towards His slaves

﴿and some who are otherwise﴾ that is, not righteous, either because they are half-hearted or they are wrongdoers.

﴿And We tested them﴾ as is Our way

﴿with both prosperity and adversity﴾ that is, hardship and ease

﴿so that they might turn in repentance﴾ and give up their bad ways, and adhere to the guidance for which they were created. But they continued in this manner, some of them righteous, some evil, and some in between, until there came a generation whose evil increased and they ﴿inherited the scripture﴾ after them. They became the reference point for people with regard to the scripture, but they started to interpret it according to their whims and desires. Money was given to them to issue unlawful rulings, and bribery became widespread among them.

﴿but they seized the fleeting gains of this world, saying﴾ and admitting that it was a sin and that they were wrongdoers: ﴿We will be forgiven﴾. These words meant nothing, because they were not seeking forgiveness in any true sense. If that had been the case, they would have regretted what they were doing and they would have resolved not to go back to it, but – if any other fleeting gain or bribe came their way – they would seize it.

They sold the revelations of Allah for a small price (9: 9) and exchanged that which is better for that which is inferior (2: 61).

Allah (ﷻ) said, denouncing them and highlighting their audacity: ﴿Are they not bound by the covenant mentioned in the scripture, that they would not say of Allah anything but the truth?﴾ Why do they say about Allah something that is not true, following their whims and desires?

﴿And﴾ in fact ﴿they have studied its contents well﴾, so they have no problem in understanding it. But they did what they did deliberately, aware of what they were doing, and this is a greater sin and more blameworthy, and deserves a more severe punishment. This was due to their lack of reasoning and foolishness, because they preferred the life of this world to the hereafter. Hence Allah says: ﴿But the life of the hereafter is better for those who fear Allah﴾ and avoid that which Allah has prohibited to them, of meals to which they are invited and they eat by way of a bribe for issuing a ruling contrary to that which Allah revealed, and other types of prohibited things.

﴿Will you not then understand?﴾ That is, do you not have reason with which to know what should be your first priority and what should be secondary to that, or what you should give precedence to and what should be of lesser concern, because one of the main benefits of reason is to understand consequences. As for the one who looks at what is immediate, insignificant and temporary at the expense of missing out on great and lasting blessings, how could such a one be rational and wise?

Those who are truly rational and wise are those whom Allah describes as «those who hold fast to the scripture and establish prayer». That is, they adhere to it in terms of knowledge and practice; they know what it contains of rulings and stories, knowledge of which is the noblest of knowledge.

They also know what it contains of commands which lead to joy and happiness, and well-being in this world and the hereafter.

One of the most important commands which must be adhered to is establishing prayer, both outwardly and inwardly. Hence Allah singles it out for mention, because of its virtue, and because it is the measure of faith and establishing it leads to establishing other acts of worship.

As their deeds are all righteous, Allah (ﷻ) says: «We will not cause the reward of those who do righteous deeds to be lost» that is, their words and deeds, and their efforts to adhere to righteousness themselves and call others to do likewise.

This and similar verses indicate that Allah sent His Messengers to establish righteousness and well-being, not to spread mischief, and to promote benefit and not harm. They were sent to promote well-being in this world and the hereafter, so the more righteous a person is, the closer he is to following them.



﴿ وَإِذْ نُنَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظُلَّةٌ وَظَنُوا أَنَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ  
وَأَذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٧١)

7:171. And [remember] when We raised the Mount above them, as if it were a canopy, and they thought that it was going to fall on them. [We said:] Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what is in it, so that you may fear Allah.

﴿And [remember] when We raised the Mount above them﴾ when they refused to accept what was in the Torah.

Allah obliged them to accept it and act upon it, and He raised the mountain above their heads so that it towered above them ﴿as if it were a canopy, and they thought that it was going to fall on them﴾. And it was said to them ﴿Hold fast to what We have given you﴾ that is, and adhere firmly to it.

﴿and bear in mind what is in it﴾ by studying it, discussing it and applying it

﴿so that you may fear Allah﴾ if you do that.



﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ أَوْ نَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَنهَلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصِلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٧٢-١٧٤)

- 7:172. And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam – from their loins – their offspring, and made them testify concerning themselves, [saying]: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes indeed; we testify. That was lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: Verily, we were unaware of this.
- 7:173. Or lest you should say: It was our forefathers before us who ascribed partners to Allah, and we are only the offspring who came after them. Will You then destroy us because of the deeds of those who invented falsehood?
- 7:174. Thus We explain the revelations in detail, so that they may turn in repentance.

«And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam – from their loins – their offspring» and made them reproduce, generation after generation.

When He brought them forth from the wombs of their mothers and the loins of their fathers, He «made them testify concerning themselves, [saying]: Am I not your Lord?» That is, He asked them to affirm that He was their Lord, on the basis of what He instilled in their innate nature, that He is their Lord, Creator and Sovereign. «They said: Yes indeed», we affirm that, because Allah (ﷻ) created His slaves with a natural inclination towards the right way of monotheism.

Therefore everyone has this natural inclination, but that inclination may change and be altered because of corrupt beliefs by which it may be influenced. Hence «They said: Yes indeed; we testify. That was lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: Verily, we were unaware of this».

That is, We tested you by asking you this question, in order to make you affirm that which was instilled in your innate nature, that Allah (ﷻ) is your Lord, lest you deny that on the Day of Resurrection and therefore you do not affirm any of it, and you claim that the proof of Allah was not established against you and you have no knowledge of it; rather you were heedless and distracted from it.

But today you have no excuses left, and the ultimate proof of Allah is established against you.

Or lest you offer another excuse and say: «It was our forefathers before us who ascribed partners to Allah, and we are only the offspring who came after them», so we followed in their footsteps and followed them in their falsehood. «Will You then destroy us because of the deeds of those who invented falsehood?».

Allah has instilled in your nature that which could tell you that what your forefathers followed was falsehood, and that the truth is

what was brought by the Messengers, and that truth should stand up to the ways you found your forefathers following and prevail over it.

Yes, a person may grow up learning the views and corrupt ways of his misguided forefathers, which he thinks are true, but that is only because he is turning away from the proof and evidence of Allah, and His signs in the universe and in himself, so he is turning away from the truth and focusing on what those who invented falsehood say may be the reason why he ended up on a path where he prefers falsehood to truth. This is the correct interpretation of this verse.

According to another view, this refers to the day on which Allah made a covenant with the progeny of Adam, when He brought them forth from his loins and made them testify concerning themselves, and they gave that testimony. Thus He used the testimony that they gave at that time to prove that they have no excuse for their disbelief and stubbornness in this world and the hereafter. But there is nothing in the verse to indicate this, and it is not appropriate or in accordance with the wisdom of Allah (ﷻ), and reality proves that.

This covenant that they mentioned, and said that it occurred when Allah brought forth the progeny of Adam from his loins, in the realm of our prior existence, is something that no one mentioned and it never crossed anyone's mind. How could Allah use as evidence against them something of which they have no recollection and that left no trace or impact?

Hence, because this is something that is very clear, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Thus We explain the revelations in detail﴾ and make them expressly clear ﴿so that they may turn in repentance﴾ and turn back to that which Allah has instilled in their innate nature and to that which they pledged to Allah, so that they may refrain from evil.



﴿ وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا فَٱنشَخَ مِنْهَا فٱتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَٰنُ فَكَانَ مِنَ  
 ٱلْغَٰوِبِ ﴾ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ ءَخَذَ إِلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ فٱتَّبَعَ هُوَ  
 فَشَٰهُهُ كَمَثَلِ ٱلْكَٱلْبِ إِنْ تَحَمَلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَرَكَهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُ  
 ٱلْقَوَرِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِءَايَاتِنَا فٱقْضِصِ ٱلْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ (سورة

الأعراف: ١٧٥-١٧٦)

- 7:175. Recount to them the story of the man to whom We gave knowledge of Our revelations, but he discarded it, then Shayṭān caught up with him and he became one of the misguided.
- 7:176. If it had been Our will, We would have honoured him thereby, but he clung to this earthly life and followed his desires. His likeness is that of a dog: if you chase him away, he pants with his tongue lolling, and if you leave him alone, he still pants with his tongue lolling. Such is the likeness of those who reject Our revelations. Therefore tell them the stories, so that they may reflect.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ):

﴿Recount to them the story of the man to whom We gave knowledge of Our revelations﴾ that is, We taught him knowledge of the Book of Allah, so he became a great and prominent scholar.

﴿but he discarded it, then Shayṭān caught up with him﴾ that is, he shunned the attributes that are expected of one who has knowledge of the revelations of Allah, because knowledge thereof should make a person acquire the noblest of characteristics, do the best of deeds and be elevated to the highest of levels and most sublime of statuses. But this man threw the Book of Allah behind his back and cast aside

the manners and conduct enjoined by the Book, like one would shed his clothes; when he discarded it, the Shayṭān caught up with him and gained power over him when he departed from that strong fortress, and enticed him to sin. Thus he became the lowest of the low ﴿and he became one of the misguided﴾, after he had been one of those who were guided and guided others. That is because Allah (ﷻ) forsook him and left him to his own devices.

Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If it had been Our will, We would have honoured him thereby﴾, by enabling him to act upon it and rise in status in this world and the hereafter, thus he would be protected from his enemies.

﴿but﴾ he did that which led to him being deprived of divine help, so he clung to the earth, that is, to base desires and worldly aims

﴿and followed his desires﴾, and he stopped obeying his Lord.

﴿His likeness﴾ in terms of his eagerness for worldly gain and his total devotion to it

﴿is that of a dog: if you chase him away, he pants with his tongue lolling, and if you leave him alone, he still pants with his tongue lolling﴾ that is, he remains with his tongue lolling out in all situations, and this person remains at all times eager for worldly gain, and no gains he makes can satisfy his desire.

﴿Such is the likeness of those who reject Our revelations﴾ after Allah made them available to them. They did not submit; rather they disbelieved in them and rejected them because of their insignificance before Allah, and because of their following of their whims and desires without guidance from Allah.

﴿Therefore tell them the stories, so that they may reflect﴾ on these likenesses and these lessons and signs, for if they think they will learn, and if they learn they will act.





﴿سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَنْفُسَهُمْ كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٧٧)

(الأعراف: ١٧٧)

7:177. How vile is the likeness of people who rejected Our revelations; rather it is themselves they have wronged.

That is, how vile is the likeness of those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah and wrong themselves by committing all kinds of sins, for their likeness is truly vile. This may refer to a specific individual to whom Allah made available His revelations and he rejected them, then what Allah mentions happened to him, so Allah tells his story as a warning to others; or it may be that this is a generic case and includes everyone to whom Allah makes available His revelations and he rejects them.

In these verses we find encouragement to act upon knowledge, for that raises one in status before Allah and protects him against the Shayṭān. At the same time, there is a warning against not acting upon knowledge, for that will take one to the lowest of levels and will give the Shayṭān power over him. This also shows us that following whims and desires and being preoccupied with such matters will lead to Allah forsaking him.



﴿مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدَىٰ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٧٨)

(الأعراف: ١٧٨)

7:178. Whomever Allah guides is truly guided; whomever He causes to go astray, it is they who are the losers.

Then Allah explains that He alone has control over guidance and misguidance.

«Whomever Allah guides» by enabling him to do good deeds and protecting him from error, and teaching him that which he did not know

«is truly guided», because he gives precedence to Allah's guidance.

«whomever He causes to go astray» by forsaking him and not enabling him to do good

«it is they who are the losers», for they will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection, and that is, indeed, a loss beyond compare (22: 11).



﴿وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٧٩)

7:179. We have surely created for hell many of the jinn and humankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; nay, they are even more astray, for it is they who are heedless.

Here Allah explains why so many people go astray and follow the accursed Iblees.

«We have surely created for hell many of the jinn and humankind», so the animals are better off than them.

«They have hearts with which they do not understand» that is, no understanding or knowledge reaches them, except for the purpose of establishing proof against them.

«eyes with which they do not see» that which may benefit them; rather they miss out on any benefit their eyes may bring them  
 «and ears with which they do not hear» anything in such a way that the meaning could reach their hearts.

«They» namely those who have these negative characteristics  
 «are like cattle» that is, animals that have no reason, for these people give precedence to that which is transient over that which is eternal, therefore they are devoid of reason.

«nay, they are even more astray» than animals, for cattle function in accordance with the purpose for which they were created, and they have instincts, by which they know what is harmful or good for them; hence they are better off than these people.

«for it is they who are heedless» and unaware of the most beneficial things. They are heedless of faith in Allah, and obedience to Him and remembrance of Him.

Their hearts, hearing and sight were created to help them to obey the commands of Allah and fulfil their duties towards Him, but they use them for the opposite purpose.

Therefore these people deserve to be among those whom Allah created for hell and its fire, so they do the deeds of its people.

As for those who use these faculties in order to worship Allah, and whose hearts are filled with faith in Allah and love for him, and they are not heedless of Allah, these are the people of paradise and they do the deeds of its people.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا

كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٨٠)

7:180. To Allah belong the most beautiful names, so call on Him by them, and keep away from those who profane His names. They will be requited for what they do.

This is indicative of the greatness of His glory and attributes, for to Him belong the most beautiful names. In other words, all good names are His. What this refers to is every name that is indicative of an attribute of perfection and greatness. This is why they are called beautiful, because if they did not refer to an attribute, and were merely information, they would not be beautiful. Similarly, if they referred to attributes of imperfection or attributes that may be praiseworthy or otherwise, then they would not be beautiful. Each of His names points to the meaning of that attribute in the most complete and comprehensive manner, and includes all its shades of meaning.

For example, the name *al-'Aleem* (the All-Knowing) indicates that He has all-encompassing knowledge of all things, so nothing, not even the weight of an atom on earth or in heaven, is beyond His knowledge.

The name *ar-Raheem* (the Most Merciful) indicates that He is possessed of great mercy that encompasses all things.

The name *al-Qadeer* (the Omnipotent, All-Powerful) indicates that He is possessed of all-encompassing power and nothing is beyond His power, and so on.

Another aspect of the beauty of these names is that He cannot be called except by these names. Hence He says: ﴿so call on Him by them﴾. This includes the supplication of worship and the supplication of asking. So He is to be called upon for everything that is needed, in a manner that is appropriate to the need in question. So the one who calls upon Him may say, for example: O Allah, forgive me and have mercy on me, for You are the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. Accept my repentance, O Acceptor of repentance. Grant me provision, O Provider. Show me kindness, O Most Kind – and so on.

«and keep away from those who profane His names. They will be requited for what they do» that is, as a penalty and punishment for profaning His names. What that means is misusing the name and calling by these names those who do not deserve them, as the polytheists do when naming their false gods; or denying their meanings and distorting them, giving meanings that were not intended by Allah or His Messenger (ﷺ); or likening the divine attributes to the attributes of some created being. What one must do is beware of profaning these names and beware of those who profane them. It is proven in *as-Saḥeeḥ* that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah has ninety-nine names; whoever learns them by heart will enter paradise.» (Bukhari, Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Mājah)



﴿وَمَنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٨١)

7:181. Among those whom We have created there is a group who guide others in the way of truth and establish justice therewith.

That is, among those whom We have created there is a virtuous nation, perfect in and of itself, striving to perfect others, guiding themselves and others on the basis of truth. Hence they learn the truth, act upon it, teach it, call others to it and call them to act upon it. «and establish justice therewith» among people in their rulings, if they rule concerning matters of property, killing, people's rights over one another, the views and ideas of others, and so on. These people are the leaders of guidance and lights in the darkness. They are the ones whom Allah has blessed with faith, righteous deeds, mutual enjoining of truth and mutual enjoining of steadfastness; they are the strong and true in faith, whose status is second only to that of the Messengers. Among themselves they are of varying status, each according to his situation.

Glory be to the One Who singles out for His mercy whomever He will, and Allah is the Possessor of abundant grace.



﴿ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَأُمَلِّ لَهُمْ آيَاتِ  
 كِيدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾ أَوْلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨٤﴾  
 أَوْلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى أَنْ  
 يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ إِلَيْهِمْ قِيَامُ يَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾ مَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلا هَادِيَ لَهُ ﴿١٨٦﴾  
 وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٨٢-١٨٦)

- 7:182. As for those who reject Our signs, We will lead them step by step to their ruin, without their even realising it.
- 7:183. I will give them respite, for My stratagem is sure.
- 7:184. Have they not reflected? There is no madness in their companion; he is but a clear warner.
- 7:185. Have they not considered [Allah's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, and all that Allah has created, and [realised] that their own appointed time may be near? In what message after this will they then believe?
- 7:186. Whoever Allah causes to go astray, none can guide him; He will leave them to wander blindly in their misguidance.

This refers to those who disbelieved in the signs of Allah that highlight the truth of the message of guidance brought by Muhammad (ﷺ), so they rejected it and did not accept it.

﴿We will lead them step by step to their ruin, without their even realising it﴾, by sending them abundant provision.

﴿I will give them respite﴾ that is, I will give them respite so that they will think that they will never be taken to task or be punished;

hence they will increase in disbelief and transgression, and will add evil to their evil. Thus their punishment will increase and be multiplied, and they will harm themselves without realising it. Hence Allah says: ﴿for My stratagem is sure﴾ that is, strong and effective.

﴿Have they not reflected? There is no madness in their companion﴾, namely Muhammad (ﷺ). In other words, did they not think or wonder whether their companion – who they know well, and nothing of his character is hidden from them – was in fact insane? Let them look at his character, attitude, behaviour and attributes; let them look at that to which he is calling them. They will find nothing in it but the most perfect of characteristics, and he surpassed all others in reason and wisdom. He does not call to anything but that which is good, and he does not prohibit anything but that which is evil.

Do you think, O people of reason, that such a man would have any madness in him? Is he not the great leader and sincerest adviser, honourable and noble, compassionate and kind?

Hence Allah says: ﴿he is but a clear warner﴾ that is, he calls people to that which will save them from punishment and cause them to attain reward.

﴿Have they not considered [Allah's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth﴾ for if they look at them, they will find clear evidence of the oneness of their Lord, and of His perfect attributes ﴿and﴾, likewise, let them look at ﴿all that Allah has created﴾, for all parts of the universe offer the greatest evidence of Allah's knowledge, power, wisdom, abundant mercy and kindness, and demonstrate that His will is always done, and point to other great divine attributes. It highlights that He alone is the Creator and Controller, which means that He is the only One Who is deserving of worship, praise, glorification, love and affirmation of His oneness.

﴿and [realised] that their own appointed time may be near﴾ that is, let them look at their own situation and look at their own selves

before their time comes and death takes them unawares whilst they are in a state of heedlessness, for at that time they will not be able to make up for their negligence.

﴿In what message after this will they then believe?﴾ That is, if they do not believe in this great Book, then in what message will they believe? Will they believe in books of lies and misguidance, or in the message of every fabricator and charlatan?

Nothing will succeed in bringing this misguided one to true guidance. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Whoever Allah causes to go astray, none can guide him; He will leave them to wander blindly in their misguidance﴾ that is, confused and hesitant, and never emerging from it; they will never be guided to the truth.



﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجِيبُهَا لَوْفَهَا إِلَّا هُوَ نُقِلَتْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمُ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً يَسْتَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكْتَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٨٧-١٨٨)

7:187. They ask you about the Hour: When will it come to pass? Say: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord [alone]. None but He can disclose when its time will come. It will weigh heavily on the heavens and the earth; it will not come upon you but suddenly. They ask you as if you were well-informed of it. Say: The knowledge thereof is with Allah [alone], but most people do not realise.

7:188. Say: I have no power either to benefit or harm myself, except as Allah wills. If I had knowledge of the unseen, I would have acquired much good, and no harm would have touched me. I



am but a warner and a bringer of glad tidings to people who believe.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ): «They» that is, those who stubbornly disbelieve in you  
 «ask you about the Hour: when will it come to pass?» That is, when will it come and when will it befall people?  
 «Say: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord [alone]» that is, He alone has knowledge of it  
 «None but He can disclose when its time will come» that is, no one can disclose its time when He has decreed it will begin, except He.

«It will weigh heavily on the heavens and the earth» that is, the knowledge thereof is concealed from the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, and they feel very worried concerning it; they are concerned about the Hour.

«it will not come upon you but suddenly» that is, when you do not realise, and you have not prepared for it and are not ready for it to begin.

«They ask you as if you were well-informed of it» that is, they are keen to ask you about the Hour, as if you have knowledge of it. They do not realise that you – because of your perfect knowledge of your Lord and because you know that there is no benefit in asking about it, are not concerned about this question and you are not very keen to find out about it, so why do they not follow your example and refrain from thinking too much about this matter that serves no purpose and is difficult to find out about? For no Prophet who was sent, and no angel who is close to Allah, knows about it; it is one of the matters that Allah has concealed from His creation in accordance with His perfect wisdom and abundant knowledge.

«Say: The knowledge thereof is with Allah [alone], but most people do not realise» hence they are keen to find out about something they should not be so keen to know, especially people such as these,

who fail to ask about what is more important and ignore that which they should learn, then they focus on something which no one could ever find out and that they are not required to know about.

«Say: I have no power either to benefit or harm myself» for I am helpless and under His control; nothing good comes to me except from Allah, nothing bad is warded off from me except by Him, and I have no knowledge except what Allah (ﷻ) has taught me.

«If I had knowledge of the unseen, I would have acquired much good, and no harm would have touched me» that is, I would have taken the measures that I knew would serve my interests and bring me benefits, and I would have avoided everything that could lead to negative consequences and harm, because I would have known things before they happened and what they would lead to. But – because I have no knowledge – bad things may befall me and I may miss out on worldly benefits and interests. This is the clearest evidence that I have no knowledge of the unseen.

«I am but a warner» – I warn of punishments in this world and the hereafter, and I explain the deeds that lead to that and warn against them.

«and a bringer of glad tidings» of reward in this world and the hereafter, and I explain the deeds that lead to that and encourage people to do them. But not everyone accepts these glad tidings and warnings; rather the only ones who benefit from that and accept it are the believers. These verses highlight the ignorance of those who go to the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ) and call upon him to bring benefits or ward off harm, for he has no control over anything. He cannot benefit anyone whom Allah does not want to benefit and he cannot ward off harm from anyone from whom Allah does not want to ward off harm. He has no knowledge except that which Allah has taught him. Rather he benefits those who accept the glad tidings and warning with which he was sent, and act accordingly. This is the benefit one may get from him, which supersedes the benefit one may get from

fathers and mothers, friends and brothers; what this refers to is his encouragement to do all that is good and his warning against all that is evil, as he explained to them in the clearest terms.



﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمَلًا خَفِيفًا فَمَرَّتَ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلَتْ دَعَوَا اللَّهَ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ آتَيْنَا صَالِحًا لَنُكَوِّنَنَّ مِنَ الشَّكْرِينَ ﴿١٨٩﴾ فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمَا صَالِحًا جَعَلَا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ فِيمَا آتَاهُمَا فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ أَيْشْرِكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿١٩١﴾ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ وَإِنْ نَدَعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى لَا يَتَّبِعُوكُمْ سِوَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَدْعَاؤُهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَامِتُونَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٨٩-١٩٣)

- 7:189. It is He Who created you from a single soul, and created from it its mate, so that he might find comfort in her. When he has covered her, she bears a light burden and carries it about with ease. Then when she grows heavy, they both call upon Allah, their Lord, [saying]: If You give us a healthy child, we will certainly be among those who are grateful.
- 7:190. But when He gives them a healthy child, they ascribe partners to Him in that which He has given to them. Exalted be Allah far above the partners they ascribe to Him.
- 7:191. Do they ascribe to Him as partners those who cannot create anything, but are themselves created?
- 7:192. They have no power to help them, nor can they help themselves.
- 7:193. If you call them to guidance, they will not follow you. It is the same for you whether you call them or remain silent.

﴿It is He Who created you﴾, O men and women who are scattered throughout the earth in large numbers of different groups

«from a single soul» namely Adam (ﷺ), the father of humanity. «and created from it its mate» that is, He created from Adam his wife Ḥawwâ', so that he might find comfort in her, because she came from him and therefore there was compatibility and harmony between them that led to them finding comfort in one another; thus each was attracted physically to the other

«When he has covered her» that is had intercourse with her. The Creator has decreed that offspring should result from that desire and intercourse. Thereupon «she bears a light burden and carries it about with ease». This refers to the beginning of pregnancy, when the female is unaware of it and it is not burdensome for her.

«Then» as the pregnancy continues «when she grows heavy», as the foetus in her womb grows bigger, then the parents begin to feel concern about the birth and hope that the infant will emerge alive, healthy and sound, with no defects. So they both call upon «Allah, their Lord, [saying]: If You give us a healthy child» that is, physically sound and complete, with nothing missing

«we will certainly be among those who are grateful».

«But when He gives them a healthy child», according to their request, and He completes the blessing upon them

«they ascribe partners to Him in that which He has given to them» that is, they ascribe partners to Allah with regard to that child – whom only Allah brought into being and blessed them with, thus bringing joy to his parents – by giving him a name suggesting that he is a slave ('abd) of something other than Allah, such as 'Abdul-Ḥārith, 'Abdul-'Uzzâ, 'Abdul-Ka'bah, and so on, or they join others with Allah in worship, after Allah bestowed upon them blessings such as no one could enumerate.

This verse moves from something specific to something general. The beginning of the verse speaks of Adam and Ḥawwâ', then moves on to speaking of people in general. Undoubtedly this is something that happens often among the progeny of Adam. Hence

Allah proved to them the falseness of their ascription of partners to Him, and highlighted the fact that they commit a grave wrong thereby, whether that ascription of partners to Him is in word or in deed. For Allah is the One Who created them from a single soul, from which He created its spouse, and He gave them partners from among themselves; then He created love and compassion between them, whereby they find comfort and harmony with one another, as well as physical pleasure; then He guided them to the means of fulfilling that desire and producing offspring. Then He created the offspring in the wombs of the mothers during a brief period in which they long for the child and pray to Allah to bring him forth safe and sound, and Allah completes His blessing to them and grants them their request.

Does He not deserve that they should worship Him alone and not ascribe any partner to Him in their worship, and devote their worship solely to Him? But they did the opposite and ascribed as partners to Allah those who ﴿cannot create anything, but are themselves created. They have no power to help them﴾ namely their worshippers ﴿nor can they help themselves﴾.

If they do not create anything, not even an atom's weight, but are themselves created, and they cannot ward off any harm from those who worship them, or even from themselves, then how can they be taken as gods alongside Allah? This is the worst of wrongdoing and foolishness. If you, O polytheists, call these gods whom you worship besides Allah, ﴿to guidance, they will not follow you. It is the same for you whether you call them or remain silent﴾. So human beings are better off than the idols, because the idols cannot hear or see, or guide or be guided. If the smart, rational person thinks about all this in a fair-minded manner, he will be certain of the falseness of their gods and the folly of those who worship them.



﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالِكُمْ فَأَدْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا  
 لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ أَلَمْ أَرْجُلْ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبِطِشُونَ  
 بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا قُلْ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ  
 كِيدُوا فَلَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿١٩٥﴾ إِنَّ وَلِيَّ اللَّهِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ وَهُوَ تَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾

(سورة الأعراف: ١٩٤-١٩٦)

- 7:194. Verily those on whom you call besides Allah are slaves like you; call upon them and let them answer you, if you are truthful.
- 7:195. Do they have feet with which to walk, or hands with which to strike, or eyes with which to see, or ears with which to hear? Say [O Muhammad]: Call upon those partners whom you ascribe to Allah, then scheme against me and give me no respite!
- 7:196. Verily my Protector is Allah, Who sent down the Book, for it is He Who protects the righteous.

This is in the nature of a challenge to the polytheists who worship the idols. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily those on whom you call besides Allah are slaves like you﴾ that is, there is no difference between you and them, for you are all slaves of Allah, under His control. If what you claim is true, that they are deserving of worship, then ﴿call upon them and let them answer you﴾. If they answer you and you get what you want, (then you have proved your point), otherwise it will become clear that this claim of yours is false and you are fabricating the worst of lies against Allah.

This needs no further explanation. If you look at the idols, you will see that they are mere images, which indicates that they can do nothing of benefit. They have no legs with which to walk, no hands with which to strike, no eyes with which to see, and no ears with which to hear. They are lacking all faculties and capabilities that man has.

Because they do not respond when you call upon them, and they are slaves like you – and in fact you are better and stronger than them in many ways – then why do you worship them?

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: Call upon those partners whom you ascribe to Allah, then scheme against me and give me no respite!﴾ That is, get together, you and your so-called partners, to do me harm without any delay or respite. But you will never be able to cause me any harm, because my Protector is Allah, Who protects me, brings me benefits and wards off harm from me.

﴿Who sent down the Book﴾ In which is guidance, healing and light. He is the One Whom I have taken as my ally, and I adhere to the teachings that He has ordained for His slaves.

﴿for it is He Who protects the righteous﴾, those whose intentions, deeds and words are sound, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Allah is the Protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 257)

Because the righteous believers take their Lord as their ally, believing in Him and fearing Him, and they do not take as an ally anyone other than Him who can do no benefit or harm, Allah protects them and helps them to do that which is good for them and in their best interests in both spiritual and worldly terms, and by virtue of their faith He wards off from them all harm, as Allah says:

﴿Verily, Allah will defend those who believe...﴾ (al-Hajj 22: 38)



﴿وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ نَصَرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ  
وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَسْمَعُوا وَتَرَاهُمْ يُنظَرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ﴾

﴿(سورة الأعراف: ١٩٧-١٩٨)﴾

- 7:197. Whereas those you call upon besides Him can neither help you nor even help themselves.
- 7:198. If you call them to guidance, they do not hear, and you see them looking at you but they do not see.

This also explains why these idols whom they worship besides Allah do not deserve any worship at all, because they cannot do anything to help themselves or to help their worshippers; they have no ability to think or respond. If you were to call them to guidance, they would not be guided. They are mere images with no spark of life in them.

You see them looking at you, but they do not really see, because they gave them the images of animate beings, human or otherwise, and they gave them eyes and limbs, so when you see them you might say that they are alive. But if you think about them, you will realise that they are inanimate and cannot move, and there is no life in them. So on what basis do the polytheists take them as gods besides Allah? For what purpose or benefit do they devote themselves to them and seek to draw close to them with all kinds of acts of worship?

Once this is understood, one will realise that even if the polytheists and the gods whom they worship were to come together and wanted to plot against the one whose protector is the Creator of the earth and the heavens, Who takes care of His righteous slaves, they would never be able to do him even an atom's weight of harm, because they and their gods are completely incapable, whereas the strength and power of Allah is perfect and so is the power of the one who seeks His protection and puts his trust in Him.

It was also suggested with regard to the meaning of the verse ﴿and you see them looking at you but they do not see﴾ is that the pronoun ﴿they﴾ refers to the polytheists who disbelieved in the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Thus the meaning would be: do you think that they are looking at you, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), with the understanding



to differentiate one who is truthful and one who is lying? But they do not see you as you really are, for they cannot see the beauty, perfection and sincerity in you.



﴿ خذِ الْعَمَلْ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٩٩)

7:199. Make allowances for people's nature, enjoin what is right and turn away from the ignorant.

This verse is a comprehensive summary that tells one, in a concise way, how to interact with people in the best manner; he should take people as they appear to be and adopt an easy-going approach, by accepting them as they are, with whatever they have to offer of deeds and characteristics. He should not expect more from them than they are able to do; rather he should appreciate whatever he sees of good words and deeds, and whatever is less than that, and overlook their shortcomings. He should not look down on the minor because he is young, or on one who is lacking in reason for his shortcomings, or on one who is poor because of his poverty. Rather he should treat everyone with kindness and respond kindly to each person as is appropriate to his nature and situation, with an open heart and mind.

﴿enjoin what is right﴾ that is, enjoin all good words, good deeds and good attitudes, addressed to close associates and strangers alike; ensure that whatever reaches people from you is either: teaching knowledge; encouraging good, such as upholding ties of kinship or honouring parents; reconciling people; beneficial advice; sound opinions; help in righteousness and piety; discouraging abhorrent deeds; or guiding to that which will attain some good purpose, be it spiritual or worldly.

As it is not possible to avoid the harm of the ignorant, Allah (ﷻ) instructs us to turn away from the ignorant one and not to respond to his ignorance; whoever harms you in word or deed, do not harm him in response; do not deprive the one who deprives you; whoever cuts you off, uphold ties with him; and whoever wrongs you, be fair towards him.

However, with regard to how one should interact with the devils among humankind and the jinn, Allah (ﷻ) says:



﴿وَأَمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّوهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٢٠٠-٢٠٢)

- 7:200. And if a prompting from Shayṭān stirs you up, seek refuge with Allah, for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.
- 7:201. Verily those who fear Allah, when an evil suggestion comes to them from Shayṭān, remember and immediately begin to see clearly.
- 7:202. Whereas the devils support and encourage their [human] brothers in sin, and never cease.

At any time, and in any situation, ﴿if a prompting from Shayṭān stirs you up﴾ that is, you feel his whispering and discouragement from doing good, or encouragement and prompting to do evil, ﴿seek refuge with Allah﴾ that is, turn to Allah and seek protection with Him, for He is ﴿All-Hearing﴾ and hears what you say ﴿All-Knowing﴾ – He knows your intention and your weakness, and how eager you are to turn to Him, so He will protect you from confusion and from the whispers of the Shayṭān, as He says elsewhere:

«Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of humankind.» (*an-Nâs 114: 1*)

Because it is inevitable that one will occasionally be heedless and the Shayṭân, who is always lying in wait, will find an opportunity to exploit, Allah (ﷻ) mentions the sign that distinguishes the pious from the heedless: the pious person, if he commits a sin by responding to devilish prompting to do something that is prohibited or to omit something that is obligatory, will remember how the Shayṭân got to him and will take note of that weak point. He will remember what Allah has enjoined upon him and what he must do of adhering to faith. So he will come back to his senses, ask Allah to forgive him and make up for his negligence by repenting sincerely and doing many good deeds. Thus he will repel the despised Shayṭân and spoil everything he has achieved.

As for the brothers and allies of the devils, if they fall into sin, their devils continue to encourage them in sin, time after time, without ceasing. The devils never stop tempting them, because they got their hopes up when they saw that they were easily led, and they never cease doing evil.



﴿ وَإِذَا لَمْ تَأْتِهِم بِآيَةٍ قَالُوا لَوْلَا آجَبْتِنَهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي هَذَا بَصَآئِرٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٢٠٣)

7:203. When you do not bring them a miracle, they say: Why do you not improvise one? Say: I only follow that which is revealed to me from my Lord. This [Qur'an] contains clear proofs from your Lord, and is a guidance and a mercy for people who believe.

These disbelievers persist in their stubborn rejection, even if you bring them signs that point to true guidance. If you bring them any signs that point to your truthfulness, they will not submit.

«When you do not bring them a miracle» such as they suggest and specify

«they say: Why do you not improvise one?» That is, why do you not choose a particular miracle or sign, as if you are the one who brings down the signs and controls all of creation. They do not realise that you have no control over the matter at all. Or it may be that what is meant is: why do you not make something up on your own initiative?

«Say: I only follow that which is revealed to me from my Lord» – I am a slave under orders, and it is Allah (ﷻ) Who sends down the signs in accordance with His great wisdom. If you want a sign that does not diminish with the passage of time, or proof that never becomes obsolete, then look at this great Qur'an, the wise reminder, for it «contains clear proofs from your Lord», through which you will find guidance with regard to all divine commands and whatever humans may seek of good. It is a guide and a proof, so whoever reflects upon it and contemplates it will realise that it is a revelation from One who is Most Wise, Praiseworthy, and no falsehood can approach it from before it or from behind it (cf. 41: 42). By means of it proof is established against everyone it reaches, but most people do not believe. For those who do believe, however, it is «a guidance» away from error and «a mercy» that saves them from doom. The believer is guided by the Qur'an and follows it, and he will be blessed in this world and the hereafter.

As for the one who does not believe in it, he is misguided and doomed in this world and the hereafter.



﴿وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾ (سورة

الأعراف: ٢٠٤)

7:204. When the Qur'an is recited, listen attentively and remain silent, so that you may be shown mercy.

This command is general and is applicable to everyone who hears the Book of Allah being recited. He is enjoined to listen to it and remain silent. The difference between listening and remaining silent is that remaining silent is an outward action, that requires one to stop talking or doing anything that may distract you from listening to it.

Listening, on the other hand, means lending your ears, focusing your mind and contemplating the meaning of what is heard. The one who does both of these things when the Book of Allah is recited will attain a great deal of good, abundant knowledge, renewed and ongoing faith, increasing guidance and understanding of his religion. Hence Allah has made attainment of mercy dependent on these two things. This indicates that if a person does not listen and remain silent when the Book is recited to him, he will be deprived of his share of mercy and will miss out on a great deal of good.

One of the most emphatically enjoined instructions with regard to listening to Qur'anic recitation is the requirement to listen attentively to it and remain silent during the prayers in which the recitation is done out loud. When the imam is reciting, the worshipper is instructed to remain silent. In fact the majority of scholars say that remaining silent and listening attentively to the imam is more important than reciting al-Fâtiḥah or any other soorah.



﴿وَأَذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ  
وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ  
وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٢٠٥-٢٠٦)

- 7:205. And remember your Lord to yourself with humility and reverence, without raising your voice, in the morning and in the evening, and do not be among the heedless.
- 7:206. Verily those who are near your Lord [the angels] are not too proud to worship Him; they glorify Him and prostrate before Him.

Remembering Allah (ﷻ) may be done in the heart or verbally, or it may be both, which is the most perfect kind of *dhikr*. Allah enjoined His slave and Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) first of all, and others by virtue of their following him, to remember his Lord to himself that is, sincerely when he is alone

﴿with humility﴾ that is, beseeching verbally, repeating all kinds of *dhikr* (remembrance)

﴿and reverence﴾ in your heart, with fear of Allah and apprehension that your deed may not be accepted. The sign of fear of Allah is that one strives and does one's utmost to perfect one's deeds, try to improve on them and be sincere.

﴿without raising your voice﴾ that is, be moderate, neither too loud nor too quiet in your prayer, but following a middle course.

﴿in the morning﴾ at the beginning of the day

﴿and in the evening﴾ at the end of the day. The advantage and virtue of remembering Allah at these two times is greater than at others.

﴿and do not be among the heedless﴾, those who forget Allah, so He causes them to forget themselves; thus they are deprived of good in this world and the hereafter. They turn away from all blessings and success that come from remembering Him and submitting oneself in servitude to Him, and they turn to and focus on all that leads to misery and doom.

This is the etiquette to which the individual should pay proper attention, namely remembering Allah a great deal throughout the night and day, especially at the two ends of the day, sincerely, with

proper focus and humility, and calmly, focusing on what one says, with proper conduct and dignity, calling upon Allah and remembering Him with full presence of mind, and not being heedless, for Allah does not answer the supplication of one who is distracted and not focused on what he is saying.

Then Allah tells us that He has slaves who persistently worship and serve Him, namely the angels. So you should understand that Allah is not seeking to have more of His creation worshipping Him because He does not have enough, or to be honoured because He is lacking in that; rather He wants what is beneficial for you and for you to gain from Him many times more than what your deeds are worth. Hence He says:

﴿Verily those who are near your Lord﴾ namely the angels who are close to Him, the bearers of the Throne and the cherubim ﴿are not too proud to worship Him﴾; rather they persist in humbly worshipping Him, submitting to the commands of their Lord ﴿they glorify Him﴾ night and day, without ceasing ﴿and prostrate before Him﴾ alone, with no partner or associate. So let the people follow the example of these noble angels and persist in worshipping the Sovereign, the All-Knowing.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-A'râf.

All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah,  
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*



سَأَلْتُمُونِي عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ  
بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا  
ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ  
﴿٢﴾ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ  
حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ١-٤)

- 8:1. They ask you [O Muhammad] about the spoils of war. Say: The spoils of war belong to Allah and the Messenger, so fear Allah and set things right among yourselves. Obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are [truly] believers.
- 8:2. The true believers are those whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is mentioned, and when His revelations are recited it increases them in faith, and they put their trust only in their Lord;
- 8:3. those who establish prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them.



8:4. Such are the true believers; they will have high ranks with their Lord, and forgiveness and a generous provision.

The word *anfāl* (translated here as «spoils of war») refers to the booty that Allah granted to this Ummah, namely the property of the disbelievers (captured in battle). These verses in this soorah were revealed concerning the Battle of Badr, the first major booty that the Muslims captured from the polytheists. There was a dispute among some of the Muslims concerning it, so they asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Allah (ﷻ) revealed the words: «They ask you [O Muhammad] about the spoils of war» – how they are to be divided and to whom?

«Say» to them: the spoils of war belong to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), to decide concerning it however they will, so you have no right to object to the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ); rather, when Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) decide something, you must accept their ruling and submit to it. This is included in the words «so fear Allah» by complying with His commands and avoiding that which He prohibits.

«and set things right among yourselves» that is, set things right and turn disputes, disconnection and turning away into friendship, mutual love and upholding of ties. Thus you will become united and will put an end to what has occurred of arguments, disputes and conflict that resulted from cutting off ties with one another.

Setting things right among people includes showing a good attitude towards them and forgiving those among them who misbehave; this will dispel much of the resentment and severing of ties that may be in people's hearts. The instruction that includes all of that is to be found in this verse: «Obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are [truly] believers». For faith calls one to obey Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), so the one who does not obey Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) is not a believer.

If anyone falls short in obeying Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), that is due to his lack of faith, because faith is of two types: complete faith which results in success, which is praiseworthy, and faith that is of a lesser degree. What is referred to here is complete faith. Allah says: ﴿The true believers﴾, who adhere to all the teachings of faith ﴿are those whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is mentioned﴾ that is, they are filled with fear and awe, and that fear of Allah (ﷻ) dictates that they should refrain from that which is prohibited. Fear of Allah (ﷻ) is one of the greatest signs that restrain one from committing sin.

﴿and when His revelations are recited it increases them in faith﴾, the reason being that they listen to it with presence of mind, contemplating the meaning, and as a result of that their faith increases, because contemplation is one of the actions of the heart, and it is inevitable that they will learn a meaning that they did not know, or they will be reminded of something that they had forgotten, or it will make their hearts inclined towards good and make them long for the reward of their Lord, or will make them fear His punishment, or they will be deterred from sin. All of these are things that increase one in faith.

﴿and they put their trust only in their Lord﴾ alone, with no partner or associate. In other words, they rely in their hearts on their Lord to bring what is in their best interests and ward off that which may harm them in spiritual or worldly terms, and they trust that Allah (ﷻ) will do that.

Trust in Allah is the motive for all good deeds, which cannot exist or be completed without it

﴿those who establish prayer﴾ both obligatory and supererogatory, doing all acts of the prayer, both outward and inward, with presence of mind which is the spirit and essence of the prayer.

﴿and spend out of what We have provided for them﴾ – this includes obligatory spending, such as zakâh, expiation, and spending on wives

and relatives, as well as recommended spending such as charity of all kinds.

«Such» that is, those who have these qualities «are the true believers», because they combine Islam and faith; good deeds, both inward and outward; knowledge and action; and fulfilling their duties towards Allah and towards His slaves.

Allah mentions the actions of the heart (such as intentions, feelings and emotions) first, because they are the basis of physical actions and are superior to them. This indicates that faith may increase and decrease; it increases by doing acts of obedience and it decreases by doing the opposite.

The individual should pay attention to his faith and tend it. The best way of doing that is contemplating the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and reflecting upon its meanings.

Then Allah mentions the reward of the true believers: «they will have high ranks with their Lord» that is, according to the level of their deeds

«and forgiveness» of their sins «and a generous provision», which is what Allah has prepared for them in paradise, such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever crossed the mind of man.

This indicates that the one who does not reach their level of faith – even if he enters paradise – will not attain what they attain of perfect honour from Allah.



﴿كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكُرِهُونَ ۝٥﴾  
 يُجَدِّدُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ مَا نَبَّيْنَكَ أَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ۝٦﴾ وَإِذْ  
 يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشُّوكَةِ

تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحَقِّقَ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقَطَعَ دَائِرَ الْكُفْرِينَ ﴿٧﴾ لِيُحَقِّقَ  
 الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٥-٨)

- 8:5. It is like when your Lord caused you to go forth from your home on a mission of truth, even though some of the believers disliked it
- 8:6. And disputed with you concerning the truth after it had been made manifest, as if they were being driven towards death and beheld it with their very eyes.
- 8:7. And [remember] when Allah promised you one of the two enemy parties, that it would fall to you, and you wished that the unarmed group would fall to you. But it was Allah's will to vindicate the truth by His words and to cut off the root of the disbelievers,
- 8:8. so that He might prove the truth to be true and the false to be false, even though the evildoers hate it.

Here Allah highlights – ahead of this blessed major battle – the qualities that the believers should attain, because whoever attains them will be in a good state and his deeds will be sound and correct; one of the most significant of these is jihad in His cause.

Just as their faith was true and their reward was the truth that Allah promised them, similarly Allah brought His Messenger (ﷺ) forth from his home to meet the polytheists at Badr on a mission of truth, which Allah (ﷻ) loves and which He willed and decreed.

Even though it did not occur to the believers that there would be fighting between them and their enemy during this excursion, when it became clear to them that this was going to happen, some of the believers began to argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) about that, and they were reluctant to meet their enemy; it was as if they were being driven towards death and beheld it with their very eyes.

But in fact this attitude of theirs was not appropriate, especially after it became clear to them that they had gone forth on a mission of truth and that it was something that Allah had enjoined and was pleased with. In such a situation there is no room for argument, because the right time for arguing and debating is when there is doubt and confusion about the right thing to do. But in this case the right thing was quite clear, therefore there should be no option but to submit and comply.

However, many of the believers were not part of this argument at all, and they were not reluctant to meet their enemy. Those whom Allah rebuked subsequently accepted the idea of jihad and Allah made them steadfast and made available to them measures of reassurance that put their minds at rest, as we shall see below.

The original reason for them going forth was to intercept the caravan of Quraysh that had travelled to Syria with Abu Sufyân ibn Ḥarb, which was a big caravan.

When they heard that the caravan was on its way back from Syria, the Prophet (ﷺ) mobilised the people, and three hundred plus men set out with him. They had seventy camels with them, which they took turns riding and carried their luggage on them. Quraysh heard about them, so they went forth to protect their caravan, with a large number of well-armed and well-equipped men, both riding and on foot; their number reached approximately one thousand.

Allah promised the believers one of the two groups: either they would capture the caravan or defeat the army. They wanted the caravan, because the Muslims were not well off and the caravan was unarmed, but Allah (ﷻ) wanted for them something better and more sublime than what they wanted.

He wanted them to defeat the army that had come forth with the leaders and prominent figures of the polytheists.

﴿But it was Allah's will to vindicate the truth by His words﴾ and to support the followers of truth

﴿and to cut off the root of the disbelievers﴾ that is, to eradicate the people of falsehood, and to show His slaves something of His support for the truth that had never crossed their minds.

﴿so that He might prove the truth to be true﴾ by means of what appeared of proof and evidence to validate and affirm the truth and its soundness

﴿and the false to be false﴾ by establishing proof and evidence of its falseness

﴿even though the evildoers hate it﴾, for Allah does not care about them.



﴿إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ  
مُرَدِّفِينَ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا  
مِنَ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنزِلُ  
عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَىٰ  
قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُنزِلَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١١﴾ إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا  
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا سَأَلْتَنِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَأَضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ  
وَأَضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ. وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ  
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَبْأَدِ اللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٣﴾ ذَلِكَم فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ  
عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٩-١٤)

- 8:9. And [remember] when you were calling upon your Lord for help, and He answered you: I am sending to your aid a thousand angels, coming host after host.

- 8:10. Allah granted it only as good news with which to reassure your hearts, for victory comes only from Allah. Verily Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.
- 8:11. And [remember] when He caused drowsiness to overcome you as an assurance from Him, and He sent down water from the sky to cleanse you and to purify you of the whispers of the Shaytân, and to strengthen your hearts and to steady your footsteps.
- 8:12. [Remember] when your Lord inspired the angels [saying]: Verily I am with you, so support those who believe. I will instil terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. So strike them above the neck and strike all their limbs.
- 8:13. That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger, and whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, Allah is indeed severe in punishment.
- 8:14. That is for you, so taste it. And verily for the disbelievers there will be the punishment of the fire.

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«And [remember] when you were calling upon your Lord for help» that is, remember the blessing of Allah to you, when you were about to meet your enemy and you sought the help of your Lord and asked Him for His aid and support.

«and He answered you» and helped you in a number of ways, such as the following:

- He sent to your aid «a thousand angels, coming host after host» that is, one group after another  
 «Allah granted it» that is, the sending down of the angels «only as good news with which to reassure your hearts» and raise your spirits; otherwise, victory is only in the Hand of Allah, not with large numbers of men and weapons  
 «Verily Allah is Almighty» and no enemy can overcome Him; rather He is the Subduer Who may defeat an enemy no matter

what their number and no matter how well-armed and well-equipped they may be.

«Most Wise» as He decrees matters by making available the means that lead to them and putting things in the right place at the right time.

- In response to your supplication He sent down drowsiness upon you, «to overcome you», that is, it took away the fear and dread in your hearts, «as an assurance from Him» to you, and as a sign of victory, to give you peace of mind.
- He sent down upon you rain from the sky to cleanse you of impurity and dirt, and to purify you of the insinuations and whispers of the Shayṭān. «and to strengthen your hearts» that is, to make them steadfast, for steadfastness of heart leads to physical steadfastness (in battle) «and to steady your footsteps», for the ground was soft sand, but when the rain fell on it, it became firm and the foothold became steady.
- He inspired the angels «[saying]: Verily I am with you» with My help, aid and support «so support those who believe» that is, inspire courage against the enemy in their hearts, encourage them to strive in jihad, and remind them of its virtue «I will instil terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve» which is the greatest help you have against them, for if Allah makes the believers steadfast and instils terror in the hearts of the disbelievers, the disbelievers will not be able to stand up to them and Allah will cause them to flee before them. «So strike them above the neck» that is, on the neck «and strike all their limbs» and joints.



This is addressed either to the angels whom Allah inspired to make steadfast those who believed, in which case it indicates that the angels took part in the fighting on the day of Badr, or it is addressed to the believers, and Allah is encouraging them and teaching them how to fight the polytheists, and instructing them to show them no mercy.

That is because ﴿they opposed Allah and His Messenger﴾; they fought them and showed enmity towards them ﴿and whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, Allah is indeed severe in punishment﴾, and part of His punishment is that He sends His believing allies against His enemies and they kill many of them.

﴿That﴾ punishment mentioned here ﴿is for you, so taste it﴾, O you who opposed Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), a punishment that is hastened in this world.

﴿And verily for the disbelievers there will be the punishment of the fire﴾.

This story highlights some of the greatest signs of Allah which proves that what Muhammad (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allah, brought was true. These signs include the following:

- Allah made them a promise and fulfilled it for them.
- Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:
 

﴿There has already been for you a sign in the two groups that met [in combat]: one was fighting in the cause of Allah, the other disbelieving [in Allah]; they saw them with their own eyes twice their number. But Allah supports with His help whomever He wills. Verily, in this there is a lesson for those who have insight.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 13)
- Allah answered the supplication of the believers when they sought His help by the means mentioned here. This highlights His great care for His believing slaves and how He made measures available by means of which He strengthened their

faith and made their footsteps steady, and He relieved them of harm and devilish whispers.

- By His kindness towards His slaves, Allah makes it easy for them to obey Him and makes available to them the means of attaining that both inwardly and outwardly.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحَفًا فَلَا تُولُوهُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَنْ يُولُوهُمْ يُومِدْ دُبُرَهُ إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِقَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَرِّزًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَيَبْسُ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦﴾﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ١٥-١٦)

- 8:15. O you who believe, when you encounter the disbelievers on the march, never turn your backs to them.
- 8:16. Whoever turns his back to them on that day – unless it is for tactical reasons, or falling back to join another group – will incur the wrath of Allah, and his abode will be hell, a hapless journey's end.

Here Allah instructs His believing slaves to have courage based on faith, to adhere firmly to His commands, and to strive to take measures to strengthen themselves spiritually and physically, and He forbids them to flee when the two parties meet in battle.

﴿O you who believe, when you encounter the disbelievers on the march﴾ that is, when you are drawn up in ranks for battle and the two armies begin to approach one another ﴿never turn your backs to them﴾; rather stand firm and fight them, and be patient in combatting them, for by doing so you are supporting the religion of Allah and that will strengthen the hearts of the believers and strike fear into the disbelievers.

﴿Whoever turns his back to them on that day – unless it is for tactical reasons, or falling back to join another group – will incur the

wrath of Allah, and his abode will be hell, a hapless journey's end». This indicates that fleeing from the battlefield with no excuse is a major sin, as mentioned in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadiths; in this verse there is a stern warning against that.

What this verse means is that if one retreats for tactical reasons, to take up a new position in order to be more effective in fighting the enemy, in that case there is nothing wrong with it, because one is not turning back in order to flee the enemy; rather he is turning back in order to gain some advantage over the enemy, or to come at him from an unexpected direction and catch him unawares or trick him, or to achieve some other military aim. If a fighter falls back to join another group for protection or help in fighting the disbelievers, that is permissible. If that group is also part of the army, then the matter is quite clear.

But if that group is not in the battlefield, such as if the Muslims are fleeing from the disbelievers and they seek refuge in some Muslim land or with some other Muslim army, then there are reports from the Ṣaḥâbah which indicate that this is permissible, although that may depend on whether the Muslims think that fleeing is likely to lead to better consequences and save their lives. But if they think that they will be able to defeat the disbelievers if they stand their ground and fight, then – in this case – it is not possible that they could have a concession allowing them to flee because, in that case, it would not be possible to understand what kind of fleeing is forbidden in this verse, at the time when it speaks in general terms. At the end of the soorah we will see that this was later restricted by the numbers involved.



﴿قُلْتُمْ تَقَاتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَاتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتُمْ إِذْ رَمَيْتُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ  
وَلِيَسْبِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءٌ حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ

اللَّهُ مُوهِنٌ كَيْدَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنْ تَسْتَفِيحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ وَإِنْ تَنْهَوْا  
 فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتِكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ  
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ١٧-١٩)

- 8:17. It was not you who killed them; rather Allah killed them. And when you threw [a handful of dust], it was not your act, but Allah's, so that He might test the believers with a great test. Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.
- 8:18. That is what happened; and verily Allah will undermine the schemes of the disbelievers.
- 8:19. [O disbelievers,] if you were seeking a verdict, then the verdict has come to you. If you desist, it will be better for you, but if you resume, We will resume [Our support of the believers], and your forces will avail you nothing, no matter how great in number they are, for verily Allah is with the believers.

Here Allah tells us that when He defeated the polytheists on the day of Badr, and the Muslims killed them, ﴿It was not you who killed them﴾ by your strength and power ﴿rather Allah killed them﴾ when He helped you to do that by means of what is mentioned above.

﴿And when you threw [a handful of dust], it was not your act, but Allah's﴾. At the time of fighting, the Prophet (ﷺ) went into his hut and started calling upon Allah, beseeching Him for His help. Then he threw a handful of dust into the faces of the polytheists, and Allah caused it to hit their faces, and there was not one among them who was not hit in his face, mouth and eyes with it. When their resolve broke and they lost momentum, and there appeared among them failure and weakness, they were defeated. Here Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ): it was not by your strength – when you threw the dust – that it reached their eyes; rather We caused it to reach them by Our strength and power.

«so that He might test the believers with a great test» that is, Allah (ﷻ) is able to grant victory to the believers over the disbelievers without them actually fighting, but He wanted to test the believers and enable them to attain the highest degrees and most sublime status by means of jihad, and to give them an immense and goodly reward.

«Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing» – He hears what people conceal and disclose, and He knows what is in their hearts of good intentions or otherwise, so He decrees different things for people in accordance with His knowledge and wisdom, and the best interests of His slaves, and He requites each person in accordance with his intentions and deeds.

«That» namely the victory that Allah granted you «is what happened; and verily Allah will undermine the schemes of the disbelievers» that is, He weakens all the plots and schemes that they hatch against Islam and its people, and He makes their plots backfire on them.

«[O disbelievers,] if you were seeking a verdict» that is, if you want Allah to send His vengeance and punishment against the wrongdoers «then the verdict has come to you» when Allah sent His punishment upon you, which was vengeance against you and a lesson to the pious. «If you desist» that is, if you stop demanding a verdict «it will be better for you», because He may give you respite and not hasten the punishment for you.

«but if you resume», demanding a verdict and fighting the believers «We will resume [Our support of the believers]» against you. «and your forces» that is, your helpers and supporters on whom you rely in your fight «will avail you nothing» «for verily Allah is with the believers».

Those with whom Allah is will be supported and will prevail even if they are weak and few in number. What is meant by Allah being with them is that He supports the believers to a degree commensurate with their level of faith and righteous deeds.

If the enemy is given the upper hand over the believers on some occasions, that is only because of shortcomings on the believers' part and their failure to do the duties required by faith. Otherwise, if they do what Allah has enjoined in every respect, no army of theirs would ever be defeated as a final outcome, and their enemy would never have the upper hand over them in such a way that they can never recover from it.



﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ  
وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٢٠-٢١)

8:20. O you who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not turn away from him when you are constantly hearing [his message].

8:21. And do not be like those who say: We hear, but do not listen.

When Allah (ﷻ) stated that He is with the believers, He instructed them to do the duties required by faith, so that they might attain His help and support:

﴿O you who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger﴾ by doing what they enjoin and avoiding what they prohibit.

﴿and do not turn away from him﴾ that is, from this command to obey Allah and obey His Messenger (ﷺ)

﴿when you are constantly hearing [his message]﴾ that is, what is being recited to you of the Book of Allah and His commands, instructions and advice, for your turning away in this situation is utterly reprehensible.

﴿And do not be like those who say: We hear, but do not listen﴾ that is, do not be content with mere empty claims that are not real,

for that is a state with which Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) are not pleased. Faith is not wishful thinking or pretence; rather it is what resides in the heart and is confirmed by actions.



﴿ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴾ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ (سورة الأنفال)

(٢٣-٢٢)

- 8:22. Verily the worst of creatures before Allah are the [wilfully] deaf and dumb, who do not understand.
- 8:23. If Allah had seen any good in them He would have made them hear, but if He had made them hear, they would have turned away in aversion.

﴿Verily the worst of creatures before Allah﴾ on whom all signs and warnings have no impact  
 ﴿are the [wilfully] deaf﴾ that is, deaf to the truth  
 ﴿dumb﴾ that is, unable to speak truth  
 ﴿who do not understand﴾ that which would benefit them and give it precedence over that which would harm them. These people are worse, before Allah, than any animal, for Allah has given them hearing, sight and hearts to use them in obedience to Him, but they use them in disobedience to Him. Thus they are deprived of much good, because they had the opportunity to be among the best of people, but they refused that and chose for themselves to be among the worst of people.

The hearing that Allah says they do not have is hearing in the sense of that which has a positive impact on the heart. As for hearing in the sense of that which establishes proof against them, Allah has established proof against them by means of what they heard of His

revelations, but He did not cause them to hear in any beneficial way, because He does not see any good in them that would qualify them to listen and benefit from His revelations.

﴿If Allah had seen any good in them He would have made them hear, but if﴾, hypothetically speaking, ﴿He had made them hear, they would have turned away﴾ from obedience ﴿in aversion﴾, not paying heed to the truth in any way. This indicates that Allah (ﷻ) does not withhold faith and goodness except in the case of one in whom there is nothing good, the one who is not going to benefit. To Him be all praise, for He is possessed of great wisdom.



﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ اللَّهُ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاتَّقُوا فَتَنَةَ لَأَنصَابِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾

(سورة الأنفال: ٢٤-٢٥)

- 8:24. O you who believe, respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life. Know that Allah stands between a man and his heart, and that it is to Him that you will be gathered.
- 8:25. Beware of retribution that will not only befall the wrongdoers among you, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.

Allah enjoins His believing slaves to do what faith requires of them, which is to respond to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) by complying with their commands and hastening to do so, calling people to Him, avoiding and refraining from that which they prohibit, and telling others not to do it.

﴿when he calls you to that which will give you life﴾. This is a description of everything that Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) call



people to, and it highlights its benefits and the wisdom behind it. For it is in being a true slave to Allah (ﷻ), constantly obeying Him and obeying His Messenger (ﷺ), that the heart is brought to life.

Then Allah (ﷻ) warns against not responding to Him and His Messenger (ﷺ):

«Know that Allah stands between a man and his heart» so beware of rejecting the command of Allah as soon as it comes to you, lest there be a barrier between you and Him when you need Him after that, and there will be dissent among you. For Allah stands between a man and his heart, and He controls the hearts and directs them as He will.

The individual should often repeat the supplication, “O Controller of the hearts, make my heart adhere firmly to Your religion; O Director of the hearts, direct my heart to obey You and Your Messenger (ﷺ).”

«and that it is to Him that you will be gathered» that is, you will be gathered on a day concerning which there is no doubt, and He will requite the doer of good for his good deeds and the doer of evil for his sins.

«Beware of retribution that will not only befall the wrongdoers among you» rather it will befall the wrongdoer and others, if wrongdoing prevails and no one tries to stop it. Then His punishment will include both the one who does wrong and others. Avoiding this retribution is done by forbidding the evil and suppressing those who do evil and spread mischief; to the extent that is possible, they should not be given the opportunity to commit sin and wrongdoing.

«and know that Allah is severe in punishment» to the one who exposes himself to His wrath and avoids attaining His pleasure.



﴿وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ فَغَاوْنَكُمْ وَأَيْدِكُمْ يَبْصِرُونَ. وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾﴾ (سورة

- 8:26. And remember when you were few in number, and regarded as weak in the land, and you were afraid lest the people snatch you away. Then He gave you refuge, and strengthened you with His help, and provided you with good things so that you may give thanks.

Here Allah (ﷻ) reminds His slaves of how He helped them after they had been humiliated, increased their numbers after they had been few, and made them rich after they had been poor.

﴿And remember when you were few in number, and regarded as weak in the land﴾ that is, subjugated and subjected to the control of others

﴿and you were afraid lest the people snatch you away﴾ that is, seize you.

﴿Then He gave you refuge, and strengthened you with His help, and provided you with good things﴾. He gave you a place of refuge that you could take as your home, and He defeated your enemies at your hands, and you acquired booty from their wealth that made you well off.

﴿so that you may give thanks﴾ to Allah for His great blessings and kindness, by worshipping Him and not ascribing any partner to Him.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمْنَتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ  
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

(سورة الأنفال: ٢٧-٢٨) ﴿٢٨﴾

- 8:27. O you who believe, do not knowingly betray Allah and His Messenger or betray your own trusts.
- 8:28. Know that your wealth and your children are but a trial and that with Allah there is an immense reward.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His believing slaves to pay heed to that which He instructed them to do and to avoid. For Allah (ﷻ) offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were fearful of it; but man undertook it – he was indeed unjust and foolish (*cf.* 33: 72). So whoever fulfils the trust deserves a great reward from Allah, but whoever does not fulfil it – rather he betrays it – deserves a severe punishment, for he has betrayed Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), as well as the trust, and he has let himself down by having the worst of characteristics and committing the worst of deeds, which is betrayal. This causes him to miss out on the most perfect of characteristics, which is fulfilling the trust.

Because man is tested with his wealth and children, love of these things may prompt him to give precedence to his own whims and desires over fulfilling his trust. Hence Allah (ﷻ) tells us that wealth and children are a trial by means of which Allah tests His slaves; they are something that is given temporarily and must be given back to the One Who gave it and entrusted him with it, «and... with Allah there is an immense reward».

If you have reason and sound thinking, then you should give precedence to His great reward over small, transient, diminishing pleasure. The wise person weighs things up and gives precedence to that which is more deserving of being given precedence.



﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٢٩)

8:29. O you who believe. If you fear Allah, He will give you the insight to distinguish between right and wrong, expiate your sins and forgive you, for Allah is Possessor of abundant grace.

Complying and fearing Allah is the way to, and the sign of, blessings and success. Allah has made a connection between fear of Him and a great deal of good in this world and the hereafter. Here He says that the one who fears Allah will attain four things, each one of which is better than this world and all that is in it:

The first is insight (*furqān*), which is knowledge and guidance, by means of which one may differentiate between true guidance and misguidance, truth and falsehood, lawful and prohibited, those who are blessed and those who are doomed.

The second and third are expiation of bad deeds and forgiveness of sins. Each of these is included with the other when either of them is mentioned on its own. When they are mentioned together, expiation of bad deeds has to do with minor sins and forgiveness of sins has to do with expiation of major sins.

The fourth is the great reward for the one who fears Him and gives precedence to pleasing Him over his own whims and desires.

﴿for Allah is Possessor of abundant grace﴾.



﴿وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُبْسِتُوا أَوْ يُقَتِّلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينِ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٣٠)

8:30. And [remember] when the disbelievers plotted against you, to take you captive, kill you or expel you. They plot and plan, and Allah also plans; but Allah is the best of planners.

﴿And [remember]﴾, O Messenger (ﷺ), the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you

﴿when the disbelievers plotted against you﴾ that is, when the polytheists discussed in Dār an-Nadwah what to do with the Prophet (ﷺ): either to keep him in detention with them, in chains; or to rid

themselves of his evil – or so they said; or to expel him and banish him from their land. The proponents of each of these options presented his case, then they agreed upon the view of the worst of them, namely Abu Jahl (may Allah curse him), which was to take a young man from each clan of Quraysh and give him a sharp sword, then let all of them kill him as one, thus spreading the blame among all the clans, so that Banu Hâshim would have no choice but to accept the blood money (*diyah*), because they would not be able to fight all of Quraysh. The plan was that they would lie in wait for the Prophet (ﷺ) at night and pounce upon him when he got up from his bed.

But the revelation came to him from heaven; he came out to them, threw dust on their heads and left. Allah blinded them so that they could not see him, then when they were wondering why it was taking so long for him to come out, someone came to them and said: May Allah cause your doom! Muhammad (ﷺ) came out and threw dust on your heads. And each of them brushed the dust from his head.

Allah protected His Messenger (ﷺ) from them and gave him permission to migrate to Madinah. So he migrated there, and Allah supported him with his Companions, the *Muhājireen* and *Anṣâr*. He began to prevail until he entered Makkah by force and subdued its people, then they submitted to him and came under his rule, after he had departed from them secretly, fearing for his life. Glory be to the One Who is most kind to His slave, Whom no one can defeat.



﴿ وَإِذْ أَنْتَلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَتْ هَذَاهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَامْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ اثْبِتْنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمَا كَانَتْ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ ۗ وَمَا كَانَتْ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ

أَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ عَلَمًا جَاءَنَا مِنَ اللَّهِ فَآتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ سَمَوَاتِكُمْ وَإِنَّا لَنَرِيكَ كَذِبًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٤﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٣١-٣٤)

- 8:31. When Our revelations are recited to them, they say: We have heard. If we wished, we could say something like this. It is nothing but tales of the ancients.
- 8:32. And [remember] when they said: O Allah, if this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky or send us a painful punishment.
- 8:33. But Allah would not punish them whilst you were among them, nor would He punish them as long as they seek forgiveness.
- 8:34. And why should Allah not punish them when they prevent people from reaching the Sacred Mosque, although they are not its rightful guardians. Its rightful guardians can be none but those who fear Allah, but most of them do not understand.

Here Allah (ﷻ) speaks of the stubbornness of those who rejected the Messenger (ﷺ).

﴿When Our revelations are recited to them﴾ that highlight the truth of that which the Messenger (ﷺ) brought ﴿they say: We have heard. If we wished, we could say something like this. It is nothing but tales of the ancients﴾. This stemmed from their stubbornness and wrongdoing. Allah challenged them to produce a soorah like it, and to call upon whomever they could besides Allah, but they were not able to do that, so it became clear that they were quite incapable of doing that.

These words were a mere claim on the part of the one who uttered them, and reality showed it to be false. It was well known that the Prophet (ﷺ) was unlettered; he could neither read nor write, and he did not travel to study any of the stories of the ancients. He brought this great Book, which falsehood cannot reach from before it or behind it — it is a revelation from One Who is All-Wise, Praiseworthy (*cf.* 41: 42).

«And [remember] when they said: O Allah, if this» that is, what Muhammad (ﷺ) is claiming «is indeed the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky or send us a painful punishment». They said this to show that they were certain of their falsehood and ignorant of how they should react. If they had some specious argument in support of their falsehood that led them to be certain on the basis of deep knowledge, they should have said to the one who debated with them and claimed that truth was on his side: If this is the truth from You, then guide us to it. That would have been better and more appropriate for them.

But as they said «O Allah, if this is indeed the truth from You...» It is known by the mere fact of their saying it that they were foolish and ignorant wrongdoers, for if Allah hastened the punishment for them, no trace would be left of them. But Allah (ﷻ) warded off the punishment from them because of the presence of the Messenger (ﷺ) among them. Hence He said:

«But Allah would not punish them whilst you were among them». The presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) offered them protection against the punishment.

Even though they said this openly, in front of everyone, they understood how bad it was. They were afraid of the punishment befalling them, so they asked Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness. Hence Allah says:

«nor would He punish them as long as they seek forgiveness».

This protection prevented the punishment befalling them even after all its prerequisites were met.

Then Allah says: «And why should Allah not punish them» that is, what would protect them from the punishment of Allah, when they have done that which incurs it, namely barring people from the Sacred Mosque, especially the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions, who are more deserving of it than them.

«although they» that is, the polytheists

﴿are not its rightful guardians [awliyā'ahu]﴾. It may be that the pronoun *hu* (in the word *awliyā'ahu*, translated here as ﴿its rightful guardians﴾) refers to the Sacred Mosque; that is, they have no more right to it than anyone else. Or it may be that the pronoun refers to Allah (ﷻ), in which case the phrase would mean “they are not His allies (*awliyā'*)”.

﴿Its rightful guardians can be none but those who fear Allah﴾, for they are the ones who believe in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), affirm the oneness of Allah, worship Him alone and are sincerely devoted to Him alone.

﴿but most of them do not understand﴾. Hence they claimed for themselves something to which others had a greater right.



﴿وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٣٥)

8:35. Their prayer at the House [of Allah] is nothing but whistling and clapping of hands. So taste the punishment for your disbelief.

Allah (ﷻ) only established His Sacred House for the rituals of His religion to be practised therein and for worship to be devoted to Him alone therein. As for these polytheists who barred people from it, their prayer therein, although prayer is the greatest kind of worship, was ﴿nothing but whistling and clapping of hands﴾. These were the acts of ignorant and foolish people in whose hearts there was no veneration for their Lord or knowledge of His rights, and no respect for the best and noblest of places. If this is how their prayer was in that place, then what about the rest of their acts of worship?

By what criteria were they more entitled to this House than the believers:



﴿Those who humble themselves in their prayers, who turn away from all that is vain [of words and deeds].﴾ (al-Mu'minoon 23: 2-3)

– and have all the other praiseworthy qualities that Allah has described?

No wonder Allah caused them to inherit His Sacred House and gave them guardianship of it, and said to them, after giving them guardianship of it:

﴿O you who believe, truly the polytheists are impure, so do not let them come near the Sacred Mosque after this [final] year of theirs...﴾

(at-Tawbah 9: 28)

And here He says: ﴿So taste the punishment for your disbelief﴾.



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمُهُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٣٦-٣٧)

(٣٧)

- 8:36. The disbelievers spend their wealth to bar [people] from the path of Allah, and they will continue to spend it, then it will become a source of regret for them, then they will be defeated, and as for those who disbelieve, into hell they will be gathered,
- 8:37. So that Allah may separate the wicked from the good, placing the wicked one on top of another, heap them all up and throw them into hell. It is they who will be the losers.

Here Allah (ﷻ) highlights the enmity of the polytheists and their schemes, plots, opposition to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) and their

efforts to extinguish His light and silence His word, and He tells us that their plots will backfire on them, for the plotting of evil affects none but its authors (35: 43).

﴿The disbelievers spend their wealth to bar [people] from the path of Allah﴾ that is, to suppress the truth and support falsehood, and to resist affirmation of the oneness of the Most Merciful and establish the religion of the idol worshippers

﴿and they will continue to spend it﴾ that is, they will pay all these expenses, and they would not mind, because they adhere firmly to falsehood and they strongly resent the truth. But that will be ﴿a source of regret for them﴾ that is, a cause of sorrow, disgrace and humiliation ﴿then they will be defeated﴾ and will lose their wealth and all that they hoped for, and they will be punished most severely in the hereafter. Hence Allah says:

﴿and as for those who disbelieve, into hell they will be gathered﴾ that is, they will be gathered there so that they might taste its punishment, because it is the realm of evil and evildoers.

Allah (ﷻ) wants to differentiate evil from good, and make each distinct from the other, putting each in a place where it belongs. So He will put evil deeds, wealth and people with one another

﴿heap them all up and throw them into hell. It is they who will be the losers﴾ who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection, and that is true loss.



﴿قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَلْفَةً لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ آتَتْهُمُ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ بِمَا يَكْفُرُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَكُمْ نِعَمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعَمَ النَّصِيرِ ﴿٤٠﴾﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٣٨-٤٠)

- 8:38. Say to those who disbelieve that if they desist, what is past will be forgiven; but if they persist, then the precedent of the earlier peoples is already established.
- 8:39. Fight them until there is no more persecution and all worship is devoted to Allah alone; but if they desist, then Allah sees well all that they do.
- 8:40. If they pay no heed, then know that Allah is your Protector, an excellent Protector and an excellent Helper!

By His kindness towards His slaves, people's disbelief and their persisting in stubbornness does not prevent Him from calling them to the path of true guidance and forbidding them to do that which leads to misguidance and doom.

«Say to those who disbelieve that if they desist» from their disbelief, by submitting to Allah alone, with no partner or associate «what is past» of their sins «will be forgiven; but if they persist» and go back to their disbelief and stubbornness «then the precedent of the earlier peoples is already established». This refers to the destruction of the disbelieving nations. So let them see what befell the stubborn, for soon they will learn the consequences of their ridicule (6: 5).

This is addressed to the disbelievers. To the believers, when He instructed them on how to deal with the disbelievers, Allah says: «Fight them until there is no more persecution» or ascription of partners to Allah, or barring people from the path of Allah, and they submit to the rulings of Islam «and all worship is devoted to Allah alone». This is the goal of fighting and jihad against the enemies of the faith; it is to ward off their evil from the faith and to defend the religion of Allah, Who created people to follow this path, so that it will be supreme over all other religions. «but if they desist» from what they are doing of evil

﴿then Allah sees well all that they do﴾ and nothing is hidden from Him of their affairs.

﴿If they pay no heed﴾ and persist in disobedience and negligence  
﴿then know that Allah is your Protector, an excellent Protector﴾ Who takes care of His believing slaves, helps them to attain that which is in their best interests and makes easy for them that which benefits them in spiritual and worldly terms  
﴿and an excellent Helper﴾ Who helps and supports them, and wards off from them the plots and schemes of the wicked.

The one whose protector and helper is Allah will have no fear, but the one whom Allah opposes will have no honour and will not be able to achieve anything.



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## Glossary of Islamic Terms\*

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<i>abu</i> (or <i>abi</i> )	أبو، أبي	father (of)
<i>ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamā'ah</i>	أهل السنة والجماعة	'people of the Sunnah and the community'
angel	ملاك	A being made of light who is totally obedient to Allah and has no free will. Allah has assigned some angels specific tasks, like those who record our good and bad deeds, the Angel of Death, the guardians of hell, etc.
<i>Anṣār</i>	أنصار	'helpers': the Muslim citizens of Madinah who gave refuge to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other Muslim emigrants from Makkah
' <i>awrah</i>	عَوْرَة	the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view; for males it is the area between the navel and the knees, and for females it is everything except the hands and the face
<i>banu</i> (or <i>bani</i> )	بَنُو، بني	<i>lit.</i> 'children (of)'; <i>usu.</i> referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor

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\* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (i.e., is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

<i>barzakh</i>	بَرْزَخ	an intermediate state between death and the Day of Resurrection; it is also said to be a 'place' where the souls of the deceased will remain until the blowing of the trumpet
<i>dhihâr</i>	ظِهَار	<b>D</b> hihâr is the unlawful act of saying to one's spouse: 'You are as impermissible for me [to enjoy intimately] as my mother.' – and similar statements.
<i>dhikr Allâh</i>	ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ	remembrance of Allah; specifically, remembering Allah through praising and supplicating to Him
<i>diyah</i>	دِيَّة	blood money
<i>firdaws</i>	الْفِرْدَوْسُ	the highest level of paradise
<i>fuqahâ'</i>	فُقَهَاءُ	<i>sing.</i> <i>faqeeh</i> ; scholars of jurisprudence; jurists
hadith ( <i>hadeeth</i> )	حَدِيث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
Hajj ( <i>Hajj</i> )	حَجَّج	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba in Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his or her lifetime
Haram	حَرَم	the sacred area surrounding and including the Kaaba in Makkah; any inviolable or holy area
haram ( <i>harâm</i> )	حَرَام	forbidden according to Islamic law

Hejaz ( <i>Hijāz</i> )	حِجَاز	the Western region of the Arabian Peninsula, which includes Makkah and Madinah
Iblees	إِبْلِيسَ	another name for Satan in Arabic
<i>iḥrām</i>	إِحْرَام	the state of consecration for Hajj or 'umrah; the special clothing worn by the pilgrim in such a state
<i>jāhiliyah</i>	جَاهِلِيَّة	<i>lit.</i> 'ignorance'; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam
Jibreel	جِبْرِيلَ	the Arabic name for Gabriel (جِبْرِيلُ), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communications from Allah (ﷻ) to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)
jihād ( <i>jihād</i> )	جِهَاد	struggle or striving (in Allah's cause)
<i>jinn</i> (plural of <i>jinni</i> )	جِنٌّ	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'. They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can foretell the future, near or distant, or provide people with riches or some sort of power.
<i>juz'</i> (pl. <i>ajzā'</i> )	جُزْءٌ	a section of the Qur'an equal to one-thirtieth of the text
Kaaba ( <i>Ka'bah</i> )	الْكَعْبَةِ	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrāheem and Ismā'eel, which Muslims face when they pray

<i>khamr</i>	خَمْرٌ	intoxicants
<i>al-Lawh</i> <i>al-Mahfoodh</i>	اللَّوْحُ المَحْفُوظُ	the Preserved Tablet in heaven on which Allah's words and decrees are written
<i>maytah</i>	مَيْتَةٌ	dead animal; meat from an animal that was not slaughtered according to Islamic law
<i>mudd</i>	مُدٌّ	a measure of volume: <i>approx.</i> what one's two hands can scoop up; generally estimated to be $\frac{3}{4}$ litre (750 cl)
<i>Muhâ-jiroon</i> (or <i>Muhâjireen</i> )	مُهَاجِرُونَ	<i>lit.</i> 'emigrants' of any kind; used in Islamic discourse to refer to people who emigrate to safeguard their religion, specifically the Muslims who migrated with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah
<i>nafs</i>	نَفْسٌ	inner soul or self
<i>niṣāb</i>	نِصَابٌ	the zakât threshold; the minimum amount of something that one must own before being required to pay zakât on it
<i>qâḍi</i>	قَاضٍ	judge of an Islamic court
<i>qiyās</i>	قِيَاسٌ	analogy: a method of deriving rulings in jurisprudence
Quraysh	قُرَيْشٌ	the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism
<i>ṣā'</i>	صَاعٌ	a measurement of volume roughly equivalent to 3 litres, or four times the volume of a <i>mudd</i>



Ṣaḥābah	صَحَابَة	Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)
ṣaḥēeh	صَحِيح	a grade of hadith: sound or authentic
shar'ī	شَرْعِي	of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic
Sharia (sharee'ah)	شَرِيعَة	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah
Shayṭān	شَيْطَان	Satan
shirk	شِرْك	associating partners with Allah
ṣiddeeqoon	الصَّٰدِقِيْنَ	those who are strong and true in faith
soorah or soorat	سُورَة	chapter of the Qur'an
Sunnah	سُنَّة	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
sunnah	سُنَّة	acts that are recommended but not mandatory; one who performs them is rewarded, but one who neglects them is not punished
tafseer	تَفْسِير	exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings ( <i>usu.</i> of Qur'anic verses)
tawāf	طَوَاف	circumambulation of the Kaaba
tawḥeed	التَّوْحِيد	the oneness of Allah: the knowledge that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners
Ummah	أُمَّة	community or nation: <i>usu.</i> used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims

'umrah	عُمْرَةٌ	a minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah
unseen	خَفِي	a term used to denote phenomena or aspects that cannot be known using ordinary human faculties
<i>uṣool al-fiqh</i>	أُصُولُ الْفِقْهِ	principles of Islamic jurisprudence
<i>zakât</i> (or <i>zakâh</i> )	زَكَاةٌ	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth that is paid by Muslims and be distributed to others who qualify as recipients



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