
17.

Soorat al-Isrâ'
(Bani Isrâ'eel)

(Makki)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا
الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١)

17:1. Glory be to Him Who took His slave for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque, the environs of which We have blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs. Verily He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

Here Allah (ﷻ) declares Himself to be exalted and almighty, for all great actions belong to Him and all great favours come from Him, among which was the fact that He «took His slave» namely His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) «for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque» which is the noblest of all mosques «to the Distant Mosque» which is one of the most virtuous of mosques, for it is the place of the Prophets.

He took him on this journey in a single night, covering a huge distance, and He brought him back the same night, and He showed him some of His signs which increased him in guidance, deep insight, steadfastness and understanding. This was due to Allah's care for him and kindness to him, as He guided him to that which was easy in all his affairs, and He bestowed upon him blessings because of which he surpassed the earlier and later generations.

The apparent meaning of the verse indicates that the Night Journey (*Isrâ'*) occurred at the beginning of the night, and that the journey began from the Sacred Mosque itself, but it is proven in *aş-Şaheeh* that the Prophet (ﷺ) was taken on the night journey from the house of Umm Hâni' (*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhâ* – may Allah be pleased with her). Based on that, the virtue that belongs to the Sacred Mosque is applicable to the entire Ḥaram zone; the multiple reward for worship applies to acts of worship anywhere within the Ḥaram zone. This also indicates that the Night Journey involved both body and soul together, otherwise it would not have been a major sign and great virtue.

There are many proven hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) about the Night Journey which mention the details of what he saw and state that he was taken on a journey by night to Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis), and then taken up from there to the heavens, until he reached what is above the highest heavens. He also saw paradise and hell, and the Prophets in their various stations in the heavens. Allah enjoined fifty prayers upon him, then he kept going back and asking his Lord to reduce it, based on the advice of Moosâ, the one to whom Allah had spoken directly, until they became five prayers in deed and fifty in reward. He and his Ummah attained great honour on that night, the extent of which no one knows except Allah (ﷻ).

Allah refers to the Prophet (ﷺ) here as a slave, because he attained all that he attained of honour by virtue of being a perfect slave of his Lord.

«the environs of which We have blessed» with a lot of trees and rivers, and land that is always fertile.

Another aspect of that blessing is that it is favoured above other mosques, except the Sacred Mosque and the mosque of Madinah; it is encouraged to travel to it for the purpose of worshipping and praying therein. Allah also chose this place as a place for His Prophet (ﷺ) and chosen ones to live.



﴿وَأَتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوا مِن دُونِي
وَكَيْلًا ﴿٢﴾ ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا ﴿٣﴾ وَقَضَيْنَا
إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لَنُفْسِدَنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَنَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا
﴿٤﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ أُولَاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَا أُولِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُوا خِلَالَ
الدِّيَارِ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولًا ﴿٥﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكُرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنَاكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ
وَبَنِيكٍ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ وَإِن أَسَأْتُمْ
فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسْتَفْهُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا
دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيَتَبَرَّوْا مَا عُلُوًّا تَبَسَّرًا ﴿٧﴾ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يَرْحَمَكُمْ وَإِن عُذْتُمْ
عُدْنَا وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا ﴿٨﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٢-٨)

- 17:2. We gave Moosâ the Book, and made it a guide for the Children of Israel, [saying]: Do not take any other than Me as a disposer of affairs.
- 17:3. O descendants of those whom We carried with Nooh [in the ark], verily he was a grateful slave.
- 17:4. We declared to the Children of Israel in the Book: You will surely spread mischief in the land twice, and you will surely show great arrogance and tyranny.

- 17:5. When the first of the two came to pass, We sent against you slaves of Ours possessing great might and power, who wrought havoc throughout the land. And [this] decree was sure to be fulfilled.
- 17:6. Then We allowed you to prevail over them once again; We strengthened you with wealth and offspring, and made you greater in number.
- 17:7. If you do good, you do good for your own selves. If you do evil, you do it to your own detriment. So when the second of the two came to pass, [We sent your enemies against you] to humiliate and suppress you, and to enter the mosque [the temple in Jerusalem] as they did the first time, and to utterly destroy all that fell into their power.
- 17:8. It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, but if you repeat [the mischief], We will repeat [the punishment]. And We have made hell a place of detention for the disbelievers.

Allah often mentions the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the prophethood of Moosâ (ﷺ) together, and He mentions their Books and their laws together, because their Books are the best of all books, their laws are the most perfect of all laws, their prophethoods were the most sublime of prophethoods, and their followers comprise the majority of believers. Hence Allah says here:

«We gave Moosâ the Book» namely the Torah
 «and made it a guide for the Children of Israel» by which they might be guided from the darkness of ignorance to knowledge of the truth
 «[saying]: Do not take any other than Me as a disposer of affairs» that is, We told them that and We revealed the Book to them for that purpose, so that they might worship Allah alone, turn to Him and take Him alone as a disposer of affairs and controller in all their religious and worldly concerns, and so that they would not be attached to any other than Him, such as created beings that have no power over anything and cannot benefit them in any way.

«O descendants of those whom We carried with Nooh [in the ark]» that is, O offspring of those whom We blessed and carried with Nooh, «verily he was a grateful slave» these are words of commendation for Nooh for having given thanks to Allah, as he is described in such terms; this also encourages his descendants to follow his example of gratitude and to remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon them when He saved them and caused them to inherit the earth, and He caused others to drown.

«We declared to the Children of Israel in the Book» that they would spread mischief in the land twice by committing sins, being ungrateful for the blessings of Allah and acting in an arrogant and tyrannical manner. The first time that happened, Allah would give their enemies power over them and wreak vengeance upon them. This was a warning to them so that they might stop and pay heed.

«When the first of the two came to pass» that is, the first of the two occasions on which they would spread mischief. When that occurred, «We sent against you» as a punishment «slaves of Ours possessing great might and power» that is, they were courageous and strong in terms of numbers and weapons. Allah granted them victory over you, so they killed you, took your children captive, seized your wealth as plunder and wrought havoc throughout your land, breaking into your houses and entering and desecrating the temple in Jerusalem. «And [this] decree was sure to be fulfilled» that it would come to pass, because they were the cause of it.

The commentators differed concerning the identity of those who were sent against them, but they were unanimously agreed that they were a disbelieving people who came from Iraq or Mesopotamia or elsewhere. Allah sent them against the Children of Israel when they committed many sins, abandoned many of their laws and transgressed in the land.

«Then We allowed you to prevail over them once again» that is, over those who had been sent against you, so you expelled them from your land.

«We strengthened you with wealth and offspring» that is, We increased your provision and numbers, and We give you more strength against them.

«and made you greater in number» than them. This was because of your good deeds and your submission to Allah.

«If you do good, you do good for your own selves» because the benefit of that comes back to you, even in this world, as you have seen in your victory over your enemies.

«If you do evil, you do it to your own detriment» that is, the harm comes back to you, as Allah showed you by giving your enemies the upper hand over you.

«So when the second of the two came to pass» that is, the second time you spread corruption in the land, we sent your enemies against you once more.

«to humiliate and suppress you» by defeating you and taking you captive, so that they could enter the temple again as they had done the first time. What is meant by the temple is Bayt al-Maqdis.

«and to utterly destroy» that is, ruin and demolish
«all that fell into their power» – so they destroyed your houses, your places of worship and your crops.

«It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you» and give you the upper hand over them. And He did indeed have mercy on them and give them the upper hand, and He warned them against falling into sin: «but if you repeat [the mischief]» and spread mischief in the land again, «We will repeat [the punishment]». They did repeat their mischief, so Allah sent against them His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and wrought vengeance upon them. This was the recompense in this world, and that which is with Allah of recompense (in the hereafter) is more terrifying and more fearsome. Hence He says: «And We have

made hell a place of detention for the disbelievers»; they will burn therein and will remain there, and they will never emerge from it.

This passage contains a warning for this Ummah against committing sins, lest there befall them what befell the Children of Israel, for the way of Allah (in dealing with sinners) is the same and never changes or alters.

Anyone who examines how the disbelievers and wrongdoers have the upper hand over the Muslims will realise that this is because of the sin of the latter and is a punishment to them; if they adhere to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), He will give them power in the land and grant them victory over their enemies.



﴿ إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾ ﴾

(سورة الإسراء: ٩-١٠)

17:9. Verily this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right, and gives glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that theirs will be a great reward,

17:10. And that for those who do not believe in the hereafter, We have prepared a painful punishment.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the noble status and grandeur of the Qur'an, and that it «guides to that which is most just and right» that is, that which is most upright and sublime of beliefs, deeds and attitudes. Whoever follows that which the Qur'an promotes will be the most perfect and upright of people, and the most guided in all his affairs.

«and gives glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds», both obligatory and supererogatory, «that theirs will be a great reward»

which Allah has prepared for them in His paradise, the description of which no one knows except Him.

﴿And that for those who do not believe in the hereafter, We have prepared a painful punishment﴾. Thus the Qur'an includes both glad tidings and warnings. It tells us the means of attaining the glad tidings, namely faith and righteous deeds, and it tells us of that which will incur the warning, which is the opposite of that.



﴿وَيَدْعُ الْإِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَاءَهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١١)

17:11. Man prays for evil just as he prays for good, for man is ever hasty.

This is because of man's ignorance and haste, for he prays against himself, his children and his wealth when he is angry, and he rushes to pray for that just as he rushes to pray for good. But Allah – by His grace – answers his prayers for good but He does not answer his prayers for evil.

﴿If Allah were to hasten the punishment for people as they would hasten their reward, then their fate would have been sealed...﴾ (Yoonus 10: 11)



﴿وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتَيْنِ ۖ فَمَحَوْنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَكْدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابِ ۚ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلَنَّا تَفْصِيلًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٢)

17:12. We have made the night and the day as two [of Our] signs. We obscured the sign of the night with darkness and gave light to

the sign of the day, so that you might seek the bounty of your Lord and know the number of the years and the reckoning of time. And We have explained all things in detail.

﴿We have made the night and the day as two [of Our] signs﴾ that is, two signs that point to the perfect nature of Allah's power and the vastness of His mercy, and that no one should be worshipped except Him.

﴿We obscured the sign of the night with darkness﴾ that is, We have made it dark, for the purpose of stillness and rest

﴿and gave light to the sign of the day, so that you might seek the bounty of your Lord﴾ by going about in pursuit of your livelihood, doing your crafts, engaging in trade and setting out on your journeys.

﴿and know﴾ by the alternation of night and day, and the phases of the moon

﴿the number of the years and the reckoning of time﴾, and on the basis of that you run your affairs.

﴿And We have explained all things in detail﴾ that is, We have explained the signs so that all things may be clear, and truth may become distinct from falsehood, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...We have neglected nothing in the Book...﴾ (al-An'am 6: 38)



﴿وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَلْعَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا﴾

﴿أَقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٣-١٤)

17:13. Every man's deeds We have fastened to his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth for him a record [of his deeds] which he will find spread wide open.

17:14. [It will be said to him:] Read your own record; sufficient is your own soul as a reckoner against you this day.

Here Allah tells us of the perfect nature of His justice, for each person's deeds are fastened to his neck. In other words, everything that he does, good or evil, Allah will cause it to adhere to him and not go to anyone else, so that he will not be brought to account for the deeds of anyone else, and no one else will be brought to account for his deeds.

﴿and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth for him a record [of his deeds] which he will find spread wide open﴾, and in it will be everything that he did, good or evil, small or great: it will be said to him: ﴿Read your own record; sufficient is your own soul as a reckoner against you this day﴾. This is the ultimate justice and fairness, that it will be said to the individual: Take account of your own self, so that he will acknowledge his wrongdoing that brought the punishment upon him.



﴿مَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۗ وَلَا نُزِرُ وَأَرْزُ ۗ وَزُرْ ۗ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٥)

17:15. Whoever is guided, is only guided for [the good of] his own soul; whoever goes astray, only goes astray to his own detriment, and no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. Nor do We punish until We have sent a Messenger [to give warning].

The guidance or misguidance of each individual only affects him, and no one can bear the burden of another person's sins or ward off from him even an atom's weight of harm. Allah (ﷻ) is the most just of those who show justice; He does not punish anyone until proof has been established against him by sending the message, then he stubbornly rejects it.

As for the one who submits and follows the proof, or no proof reached him from Allah (ﷻ), Allah will not punish him.

This verse is quoted as evidence to prove that those who lived in the periods between Prophets, and the children of the polytheists (who die in infancy) will not be punished by Allah until He sends a Messenger to them, for He is far above injustice.



﴿ وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ بَعْدِ نُوحٍ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٦-١٧)

- 17:16. When it is Our will to destroy a city, We command its affluent people [to fear Allah], but they transgress. Thus the punishment becomes inevitable, then We destroy it completely.
- 17:17. How many nations We have destroyed since the time of Nooh! Your Lord is sufficiently aware of the sins of His slaves and sees them all.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that when He wants to destroy any wrongdoing city and eradicate it with His punishment, He commands its affluent people to fear Him, but they transgress, and their transgression reaches such a grave extent that «the punishment becomes inevitable» that is, the decree of punishment cannot be put back «then We destroy it completely».

There were many nations whom Allah destroyed with the punishment after the people of Nooh, such as 'Ād, Thamood, the people of Loot, and others. Allah punished them when their transgression became too much and their disbelief became extreme; at that point, Allah sent upon them His mighty punishment.

«Your Lord is sufficiently aware of the sins of His slaves and sees them all», so they have no reason to fear injustice, but the punishment will be commensurate with their deeds.



﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصَلُّهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا ﴿١٩﴾ كُلًّا نُمِدُّ هُنُوًا وَهَنُوًا مِنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا ﴿٢٠﴾ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٨-٢١)

- 17:18. Whoever seeks [the pleasures of] this fleeting life, We hasten therein whatever We will for whomever We please. Then We decree for him hell, which he will enter, disgraced and rejected.
- 17:19. But whoever seeks the hereafter and strives for it as it should be striven for, and is a [true] believer – such are the ones whose effort will be appreciated.
- 17:20. On all – both the latter and the former – We bestow of the bounty of your Lord. Verily the bounty of your Lord is not denied [to anyone].
- 17:21. See how We have bestowed more on some than on others [in this world], but verily the hereafter will have higher ranks and greater degrees of excellence for some over others.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that «Whoever seeks [the pleasures of] this fleeting life» in this world, which will diminish and come to an end, so he works and strives for that, and forgets how he started and how he will end, Allah will hasten for him whatever He wills of its worthless accumulation and pleasures that He has decreed for him

in al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfooḏh, but it is pleasure that is of no benefit and will not last.

Then He will decree for him in the hereafter ﴿hell, which he will enter﴾, and be punished therein ﴿disgraced and rejected﴾ that is, in a state of disgrace, shame and condemnation from Allah and from His creation, far removed from the mercy of Allah. Thus punishment and disgrace will be combined for him.

﴿But whoever seeks the hereafter﴾ and is content with it, and gives it precedence over this world ﴿and strives for it as it should be striven for﴾, as taught in the divinely-revealed Books and the prophetic traditions, and acts in accordance with that to the best of his ability, ﴿and is a [true] believer﴾ in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day ﴿such are the ones whose effort will be appreciated﴾ that is, it will be accepted, multiplied and stored up, and they will have their reward with their Lord. In addition to that, they will not miss out on their share of this world, for Allah will bestow worldly bounty on both believers and disbelievers, because He is generous and kind, ﴿Verily the bounty of your Lord is not denied [to anyone]﴾ that is, it is not withheld from anyone; rather all people enjoy His bounty and kindness.

﴿See how We have bestowed more on some than on others [in this world]﴾, because abundance or restriction of provision, ease and hardship, knowledge and ignorance, wisdom and foolishness, and so on, are things in which Allah has blessed some people more than others.

﴿but verily the hereafter will have higher ranks and greater degrees of excellence for some over others﴾. So there is no comparison at all between the delights and pleasures of this world and those of the hereafter. How great is the difference between the one who is in a

lofty dwelling in paradise, enjoying all sorts of pleasures, happiness, bliss and joy, and the one who is suffering in hell, being subjected to a painful punishment, having incurred the wrath of the Most Merciful Lord. In each of these two abodes, the differences between people cannot be enumerated.



﴿ لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُومًا مَّخْذُولًا ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٢٢)

17:22. Do not associate with Allah any other god, lest you find yourself disgraced and forsaken.

That is, do not believe that any created being is deserving of any kind of worship or that any of them can be associated with Allah, for that is blameworthy and leads to failure. Allah, His angels and His Messengers have forbidden the ascription of partners to Allah and have condemned in the strongest terms anyone who does that, describing this action in the worst terms, by using such words that one may conclude from them that the one who does this is the worst in characteristics and the most abhorrent in description.

Such a person is a failure in terms of both worldly and religious affairs, to the extent of his detachment from his Lord. Whoever puts his hopes in anything but Allah is a failure and will be left to the one in whom he put his trust, for no one of Allah's creation can benefit anyone except by Allah's leave. Just as the one who believes that there is any other god besides Allah is deserving of blame and is a failure, the one who affirms His oneness and devotes his worship to Allah alone, putting his hopes in Him and no other, is deserving of commendation and will receive help from Allah in all his affairs.



﴿ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَّ عِنْدَكَ
 الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا آفٍ وَلَا نَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا
 كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلِيلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي
 صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٢٣-٢٤)

- 17:23. Your Lord has ordained that you should worship none but Him and show kindness to parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, do not say to them even the mildest word of annoyance or reproach them; rather speak to them with respect.
- 17:24. And lower to them the wing of humility out of compassion, and say: My Lord, have mercy on them, as they cared for me when I was small.

Having forbidden the ascription of partners to Him, Allah (ﷻ) enjoins affirmation of His oneness.

﴿Your Lord has ordained﴾ as a religious instruction

﴿that you should worship none﴾ of the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, living or dead

﴿but Him﴾, for He is the One, the Eternal, Whom all creatures need, Who possesses all attributes of perfection and the greatest manifestation of those attributes, in such a manner that none of those whom He created resembles Him. He is the Bestower of blessings, both visible and hidden, Who wards off all calamities; the Creator, the Provider, the controller of all matters. He is the only One Who does all of that, and no other has any share of that.

After mentioning His rights, Allah speaks of fulfilling the rights of parents:

﴿and show kindness to parents﴾ that is, be kind to them in all ways, in word and deed, because they are the reason for one's existence, and they have so much love for their child, show him kindness and are

close to him, which confirms the rights of the parent over the child and the obligation of the child to show kindness to them.

«If one or both of them reach old age in your care» that is, if they reach this age, at which they become physically weak and need kind and gentle treatment, as is well known,

«do not say to them even the mildest word of annoyance» – this is the least offence, but it is a warning against saying anything that could be more offensive than that. What is meant is: do not offend them in the slightest manner.

«or reproach them» that is, rebuke them or speak harshly to them.

«rather speak to them with respect» in ways that they like, politely and gently, with soft words that will bring joy to their hearts and reassure them. That varies from one situation and time to another, according to people's traditions.

«And lower to them the wing of humility out of compassion» that is, be humble towards them, out of compassion and seeking reward from Allah, not because you fear them or hope to get what they have, and other reasons that may deprive one of reward (from Allah).

«and say: My Lord, have mercy on them» that is, pray for mercy for them in life and in death, as recompense for their having taken care of you when you were small. From this it is understood that the longer they take care of you, the more rights they have over you. Similarly, if someone other than the parents takes care of a person with regard to his religious and worldly interests, and shows him the right path in a sound manner, that person is indebted to the one who took care of him.



﴿ رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ ۚ إِن تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّابِ غَفُورًا ﴾

(سورة الإسراء: ٢٥) ﴿ ٢٥ ﴾

17:25. Your Lord knows best what is in your hearts. If you are righteous, then verily He is Oft-Forgiving to those who constantly turn to Him [in repentance].

That is, your Lord (ﷻ) sees what is hidden in your hearts of good and evil, and He does not look at your deeds or your physical appearance; rather He looks at your hearts and what is in them of good and evil.

«If you are righteous» in the sense that your intentions and aims are focused on pleasing Allah, and you are keen to draw close to Him, and there are no aspirations in your heart that are contrary to the will of Allah,

«then verily He is Oft-Forgiving to those who constantly turn to Him» that is, those who turn back to Him at all times. So if Allah sees into a person's heart and knows that there is nothing in it except devotion to Him and love for Him and for that which will bring him closer to Him, then – even if that person sometimes behaves in accordance with human inclinations – Allah will pardon him and forgive him for the occasional slip that is out of character.



﴿وَمَا تَذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا يُبْدِرُ تَبْدِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ الْمُبْدِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَإِنَّمَا تَعْرَضَنَّ عَنْهُمْ آيَاتَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُورًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٢٦-٣٠)

17:26. Give kinsfolk their due, and those in need, and wayfarers; but do not squander your wealth wastefully.

- 17:27. For squanderers are the brothers of the devils. And the Shayṭān [the Devil] is ever ungrateful to his Lord.
- 17:28. If you [O Muhammad] must turn away from them whilst seeking mercy from your Lord for which you hope,¹⁷ then say to them words of comfort.
- 17:29. Do not keep your hand tied to your neck [like a miser], or stretch it forth to its utmost extent [like a squanderer], lest you become blameworthy and destitute.
- 17:30. Verily your Lord gives abundantly to whomever He will and sparingly [to whomever He will]. Verily He is well aware of His slaves and sees them all.

«Give kinsfolk their due» of kindness and honour, both that which is obligatory and that which is sunnah. These rights vary according to the situation, the degree of relationship and the extent of need at different times.

«and those in need» – give them their due of zakâh and other forms of charity in order to meet their needs

«and wayfarers» this refers to the stranger who is cut off from his homeland. They should all be given from one's wealth, in such a way that does not harm the giver and is not more than is appropriate, because that would come under the heading of squandering, which Allah has prohibited.

«For squanderers are the brothers of the devils» because the Shayṭān only calls people to that which is blameworthy, so he calls people to be miserly and stingy, then if they disobey him, he calls them to be extravagant and to squander their wealth, whereas Allah (ﷻ) only enjoins moderation in all things and praises people for that, as He says, describing the righteous slaves of the Most Gracious:

¹⁷ This refers to a situation in which he had no resources with which to help them, and was himself hoping for mercy, that is, provision, from his Lord. (aṭ-Ṭabari)

﴿And who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor stingy, but follow a middle path between the [two].﴾ (al-Furqān 25: 67)

﴿Do not keep your hand tied to your neck [like a miser]﴾ this is a metaphor for extreme stinginess and miserliness

﴿or stretch it forth to its utmost extent [like a squanderer]﴾, spending it on that which is not necessary or more than is appropriate.

﴿lest you become﴾, if you do that,

﴿blameworthy﴾ that is, subject to blame for what you did

﴿and destitute﴾ that is, empty-handed, with no wealth left and not deserving any praise.

The command to give kinsfolk their due is addressed to the one who has the means and can afford it. As for the one who does not have the means or cannot afford it, Allah (ﷻ) instructs him to apologise by saying kind words:

﴿If you [O Muhammad] must turn away from them whilst seeking mercy from your Lord for which you hope﴾ that is, if you must turn away from giving to them until some other time, hoping that Allah will make things easier,

﴿then say to them words of comfort﴾ that is, kind and gentle words, with a promise to give them something as soon as you can afford it, and apologise for not being able to give them something at present, so that they may go back reassured and comforted, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity followed by hurtful words...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 263)

By His kindness towards His slaves, Allah (ﷻ) instructs them to expect mercy and provision from Him. By the same token, promising to give charity and be generous when one can afford it is in itself an act of worship, because thinking of doing a good deed is in itself a good deed. Hence the individual should do whatever he is able to do of good, and he should have the intention to do whatever he is not

able to do, so that he will be rewarded for that and in the hope that Allah may make it easy to do it, because of his hope.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He grants abundant provision to whomever He will among His slaves, and He grants it sparingly to whomever He will, in accordance with His wisdom.

﴿Verily He is well aware of His slaves and sees them all﴾ and He gives them according to what He knows is good for them, and He deals with them on the basis of kindness and generosity.



﴿وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣١)

17:31. Do not kill your children for fear of poverty, for We will provide for them and for you. Verily killing them is a grave sin.

This is by His mercy towards His slaves, for He is more merciful towards them than their own parents. Therefore He forbids parents to kill their children for fear of poverty and want, and He guarantees to provide for all. He informs us that killing them is a grave major sin; in fact it is one of the worst of major sins, because of the loss of mercy from the heart, grave disobedience and transgression by killing children who never did anything wrong.



﴿وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٢)

17:32. Do not approach fornication [or adultery], for it is shameful, an abominable way indeed.

The prohibition on approaching the matter is more eloquent than the prohibition on simply doing it, because this includes the prohibition of all precursors that lead to it, for:

«...whoever lets his flocks graze around the protected area will soon find his flocks transgressing upon it.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

That is especially applicable with regard to this matter, as many people have the strongest inclination towards it.

Allah describes fornication (or adultery), because of its abhorrent nature, as «shameful» that is, a sin which is regarded as shameful and evil according to Islamic teachings, reason and human nature, because it involves transgression of the sacred limits set by Allah, and it is also a transgression against the woman and against her family or husband, it causes trouble in marriages, mixes lineages, and leads to other negative consequences.

«an abominable way indeed» that is, an evil way, the way of one who has the audacity to commit that grave sin.



﴿ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيهِ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٣)

- 17:33. Do not kill, for that is forbidden by Allah, except in the course of justice. If anyone is killed wrongfully, We have given his heir authority [to seek legal retribution or compensation, or to forgive], but he should not exceed the bounds in the matter of killing, for he is already supported [by Islamic law].

This applies to every soul the killing of which is «forbidden by Allah», whether it is young or old, male or female, free or slave, Muslim or a non-Muslim who has a covenant with the Muslims.

«except in the course of justice» such as a life for a life; execution of a previously-married adulterer or an (apostate) who leaves his religion and splits from the main body of the Muslims; or cases of self-defence where the attacker cannot be warded off except by killing him.

«If anyone is killed wrongfully» that is, unlawfully «We have given his heir», who is the closest to him of his male relatives on his father's side and his heirs «authority» to seek legal retribution (*qiṣāṣ*) from the killer. That is when the conditions for this retribution are met, namely that the killing was deliberate and the killer was the aggressor (who initiated the fight), and both are of equal standing.

«but he» that is, the heir «should not exceed the bounds in the matter of killing, for he is already supported [by Islamic law]». Exceeding the bounds means overstepping the mark, either by mutilating the killer, or killing him in a manner different from that in which he killed the victim, or killing someone other than the killer.

This verse indicates that the right to legal retribution belongs to the heir, so no retribution can be exacted except with his permission, and if he forgives the killer, retribution is waived. It also indicates that Allah will help the heir of the victim against the killer and anyone who helped the killer, until he is able to settle the score.



﴿وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ ۖ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ ۗ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٤)

17:34. Do not touch the orphan's property, before he comes of age, except to improve it; and fulfil [all] covenants, for [every] covenant will be asked about.

This highlights Allah's kindness and mercy towards the orphan who has lost his father when he is still small and is not aware of what is in his own best interests, nor is he in a position to achieve that. Allah instructs the orphan's guardians to take care of him and his wealth, and to handle it in a manner that best serves his interests. The guardians are not to touch it «except to improve it» by doing business with it, not exposing it to danger, and working to make it grow. That should continue until the orphan «comes of age», that is, until he reaches puberty and becomes mature. When he comes of age, guardianship over him ends; he becomes in charge of his own affairs and his wealth is to be given to him, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«... Then, if you find that they have sound judgement, hand over their property to them...» (an-Nisā' 4: 6)

«and fulfil [all] covenants» that you make, whether the covenant is with Allah or with other people
 «for [every] covenant will be asked about» that is, you will be asked whether you fulfilled it or not; if you fulfilled it, then you will have a great reward, but if you did not, then you will carry a great burden of sin.



﴿ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ إِذَا كَلَّمْتُمْ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطِ اسْمُ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴾

(سورة الإسراء: ٣٥)

17:35. Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with accurate scales; that is better and more seemly in the end.

This is an instruction to be fair and to give full weight and measure, without overcharging or giving short measure. From the general meaning of the verse it is understood that all kinds of cheating are

prohibited, whether that has to do with price, quality or the terms of any deal entered into, and it is enjoined to be sincere and honest in all dealings.

﴿that is better﴾ than not doing so
 ﴿and more seemly in the end﴾ that is, it leads to better consequences, for by following this advice, one will be safe from any bad consequences and will attain blessing (*barakah*).



﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٦)

17:36. Do not pursue [beliefs, rumours, slander and the like] of which you have no certain knowledge, for verily, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, all of these will be asked about.

That is, do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge; rather you should make sure that everything you say or do is verified or proven. So do not think that you can get away with it, for it will be recorded either for you or against you.

﴿for verily, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, all of these will be asked about﴾. So the individual – who knows that he is responsible for all that he says and does, and for the way in which he uses his faculties which Allah has created so that he might worship Him – must prepare his answers to that questioning, and that can only be done by using all his faculties in servitude to Allah, doing acts of devotion to Him alone and refraining from that which Allah ﴿هٓ﴾ hates.



﴿وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا﴾ (٣٧) كُلُّ
 ذَٰلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوهًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذَٰلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ وَلَا
 تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتُلْقَىٰ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَلُومًا مَّدْحُورًا ﴿٣٩﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٧-٣٩)

17:37. Do not walk on the earth with insolence, for you cannot cleave the earth, nor can you rival the mountains in height.

17:38. The evil of all that is hateful to your Lord.

17:39. This is part of the wisdom that your Lord has revealed to you [O Muhammad]. Do not associate with Allah any other god, lest you be thrown into hell, blameworthy and outcast.

﴿Do not walk on the earth with insolence﴾ that is, with arrogance, too proud to accept the truth and looking down on others, for if you do that ﴿you cannot cleave the earth, nor can you rival the mountains in height﴾ in your arrogance; rather you will be insignificant before Allah and despised by people, hated and resented for having acquired the worst and most reprehensible of characteristics without being able to attain even some of what you are pursuing.

﴿The evil of all that﴾ namely the things that Allah has prohibited, that are mentioned above (17: 22), where Allah says ﴿Do not associate with Allah any other god﴾, and the prohibition on disobedience to parents, and so on,

﴿is hateful to your Lord﴾ that is, all of that will harm those who do it and Allah (ﷻ) hates it and disapproves of it.

﴿This﴾ that We have explained of these important rulings ﴿is part of the wisdom that your Lord has revealed to you [O Muhammad]﴾. Wisdom is enjoining good deeds and noble characteristics, and forbidding evil characteristics and bad deeds.

The good deeds mentioned in these verses are part of the sublime wisdom that the Lord of the worlds revealed to the leader of the Messengers in the noblest of Books, so as to enjoin them upon the best of nations. So they are part of that wisdom which, if anyone is granted it, then he has been granted a great deal of good.

This passage ends with the prohibition on worshipping anything other than Allah, as it began: «Do not associate with Allah any other god, lest you be thrown into hell» that is, to abide therein forever, for whoever ascribes any partner to Allah, Allah will forbid paradise to him, and his abode will be hell.

«blameworthy and outcast» that is, lest you be subject to blame, curses and criticism from Allah, His angels and all the people.



﴿ أَفَأَصْفَكَ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنْتًا ۚ إِنَّكُمْ لَقَائِدُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴾ (٤٠)

(سورة الإسراء: ٤٠)

17:40. Has your Lord favoured you with sons and taken for Himself daughters from among the angels? Verily, you are uttering a dreadful word!

This is a stern denunciation of those who claimed that Allah had taken from among His creation daughters.

«Has your Lord favoured you with sons» that is, Has He chosen for you that which is best and perfect, and taken for Himself from among the angels females – as they claimed that the angels were the daughters of Allah.

«Verily, you are uttering a dreadful word!» which implies the worst insolence towards Allah, as you attribute offspring to Him, which would imply need on His part, and would imply that some of His

creation have no need of Him. Moreover, you attributed the inferior of the two to Him, namely the females, when He is the One Who created you, and you say that He chose the males for you. Exalted be Allah far above what the wrongdoers say.



﴿وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ آلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذَا لَا بُدَّ لَهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَأَنْفَقَهُونَ نَسِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿٤٢﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٤١-٤٤)

- 17:41. We have explained [the truth] in this Qur'an in various ways, so that they may pay heed, but it only increases them in aversion.
- 17:42. Say [O Muhammad]: If there were [other] gods with Him, as they say, they would surely have sought a way to the Lord of the Throne.¹⁸
- 17:43. Glory be to Him, and exalted be He far above what they say!
- 17:44. The seven heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, glorify Him. There is not a thing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification. Verily He is Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He has explained all issues to His slaves in this Qur'an. In other words, He discusses various rulings and clarifies them, presenting a great deal of evidence and proof for that to which He calls people, and He exhorts and reminds so that they

¹⁸ What is meant is that they would have sought a way to challenge Him (al-Qurtubi, from Ibn 'Abbās [*raḍiya Allāhu 'anhuma* – may Allah be pleased with both of them]); another view is that they would have sought a way to draw near to Him. (aṭ-Ṭabari)

will remember that which will benefit them and thus follow it, and that which will harm them and thus refrain from it. But most people insist on turning away from the revelations of Allah, because of their resentment towards the truth and their love for that which they are following of falsehood, to the extent that they are fanatically devoted to the falsehood and they do not listen to the revelations of Allah or pay attention to them.

The issue for which the most proof and evidence is presented is the oneness of Allah, which is the most important of fundamental issues. Allah enjoins it, forbids the opposite, and establishes a great deal of rational and textual proof for it, to the extent that if one listens to some of it, no room will be left in his heart for any doubt or confusion.

Among the evidence for that is the rational evidence that is mentioned here:

﴿Say﴾ to the polytheists who associate another god with Allah:
 ﴿If there were [other] gods with Him, as they say﴾ that is, according to their claims and fabrications,
 ﴿they would surely have sought a way to the Lord of the Throne﴾ that is, they would have tried to seek a way to worship Him and draw close to Him, seeking nearness to Him. So how can the weak human being, who realises how great is his need to be a true slave of his Lord, associate another god with Allah? Can this be anything but the worst wrongdoing and the greatest foolishness?

According to this interpretation, the meaning of this verse is similar to that of the verses in which Allah says: ﴿Those upon whom they call themselves seek nearness to their Lord﴾ (17: 57) and:

﴿On the day when He gathers them together with those whom they worshipped besides Allah, He will ask:¹⁹ Did you lead these slaves

¹⁹ This question will be put to those who were wrongfully worshipped, such as the angels, 'Eesâ (ﷺ), Prophets, righteous people, 'saints', idols and so on.

of Mine astray, or did they stray from the [right] path by themselves? They will say: Glory be to You! It was not proper for us to take anyone as an ally besides You [and worship him]²⁰... ﴿al-Furqān 25: 17-18﴾

Or it may be that what is meant by the words ﴿If there were [other] gods with Him, as they say, they would surely have sought a way to the Lord of the Throne﴾ is: they would have sought a way to reach Him and they would have tried to challenge Allah (ﷻ), then if they overcame Him, the one who prevailed would be the Lord and God. However, they already knew and admitted that the gods whom they worshipped besides Allah were subjugated and inferior, and had no control over anything. So why did they take them as gods, if they were like that? In this case, the meaning is like that of the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah has never begotten a son, nor is there any god besides Him. [In that case,] each god would have taken full control of what he had created, and each would have rushed to gain supremacy over the others...﴾ (al-Mu'minoon 23: 91)

﴿Glory be to Him, and exalted be He﴾ that is, He is to be declared holy and far above

﴿what they say﴾ of ascribing partners and rivals to Him, for He is sublime and great, and His Majesty is so immense that there can be no gods besides Him. Those who say such a thing have gone far astray and committed a grievous wrongdoing.

In comparison to His greatness, great creations are as nothing. In comparison to His Majesty, the greatness of the seven heavens and all those who are in them, and of the seven earths and all those who are in them, is very small indeed.

﴿... On the Day of Resurrection, the entire earth will be in His grip, and the heavens will be rolled up in His Right Hand...﴾ (az-Zumar 39: 67)

²⁰ A question is implied here: so how could we have asked anyone else to take us as allies and worship us besides You? (ash-Shawkāni)

Both the upper and lower realms are inherently in need of Him, and this need is never absent from anyone at any time. This need, in all aspects, is the need for creation, provision and care, a need which they have no choice but to feel until He becomes the object of worship and focus of love, to which they seek to draw near and they turn to Him in all situations. Hence He says:

﴿The seven heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, glorify Him. There is not a thing﴾ human, animal, tree, plant, inanimate, living or dead ﴿that does not glorify Him with praise﴾ implicitly or explicitly

﴿but you do not understand their glorification﴾ that is, the glorification of all other creatures that do not speak your language, but the Knower of the unseen encompasses them all with His knowledge.

﴿Verily He is Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving﴾ as He does not hasten to punish the one who says concerning Him a word at which the heavens might almost be torn apart, the earth split asunder, and the mountains come tumbling down (cf. 19: 90). Rather He gives respite, bestows blessings upon them, overlooks their deeds, grants them provision and calls them to His door, so that they might repent from this grave sin, so that He might give them an immense reward and forgive them. Were it not for His forbearance and forgiveness, the heavens would fall upon the earth and no living creature would be left on the surface of the earth.



﴿وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَسْتُورًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۖ وَإِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَحْدَهُ، وَلَوُا عَلَى أَذْنِبِهِمْ نُفُورًا ﴿٤٦﴾ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَى إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا ﴿٤٧﴾ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٤٥-٤٨)

- 17:45. When you recite the Qur'an, We place between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden barrier,²¹
- 17:46. And We have placed covers on their hearts so that they will not understand it, and deafness in their ears; when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in aversion.
- 17:47. We know best what they are listening for when they listen to you, and what they say when they converse in private, when the wrongdoers say: [If you were to follow Muhammad] you would be following none but a man who is bewitched.
- 17:48. See what they liken you to! Thus they have gone astray and cannot find a way.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about His punishment of those disbelievers in the truth who reject it and turn away from it: He then bars them from faith, as He says:

«When you recite the Qur'an» in which there is exhortation, admonition, guidance, faith, goodness and a great deal of knowledge, «We place between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden barrier» that prevents them from understanding it correctly, grasping the true meaning and submitting to the goodness to which they are called.

«And We have placed covers on their hearts» so that they do not understand the meanings of the Qur'an; rather they listen to it in such a way that proof is established against them «and deafness in their ears» so that they are prevented from hearing. «when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an» calling them to affirm His oneness, and forbidding them to ascribe partners to Him «they turn their backs in aversion» and resentment towards that idea, out of love for that which they are following of falsehood. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

²¹ That is so that they will not understand it, as a punishment for their (stubborn) disbelief. (aṭ-Ṭabari)

«When Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the hereafter shrink with aversion, but when [gods] other than Him are mentioned, they rejoice.» (az-Zumar 39: 45)

«We know best what they are listening for» that is, We only prevented them from benefiting when they hear the Qur'an because We know that their aim is wrong; they want to find the least reason to criticise it. They are not listening for the purpose of seeking guidance or accepting the truth; rather their intention is not to follow it. One who is like that will not benefit from listening to it in the slightest. Hence Allah says:

«...when they listen to you, and what they say when they converse in private, when the wrongdoers say» when they converse in private «[[If you were to follow Muhammad] you would be following none but a man who is bewitched». If this is the evil conversation that they had amongst themselves, basing it on the assumption that he was bewitched, then it is certain that they were not taking what he said seriously, and they thought that he was simply murmuring, not knowing what he was saying.

«See what they liken you to!» This is expressing astonishment because it is the most misguided of likenesses and the furthest from the truth.

«Thus they have gone astray» by doing that, or it became a cause of their misguidance, because they base their judgement of him on that assumption, and that which is based on something evil is worse than it. «and cannot find a way» that is, they will not be guided in any way, thus their share is pure misguidance and utter wrongdoing.



﴿وَقَالُوا آءِذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا وَّرُفْنَا آءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ﴿٤٩﴾﴾ ﴿قُلْ كُونُوا حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا ﴿٥٠﴾﴾ أَوْ خَلْقًا مِمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِي صُدُورِكُمْ فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَن يُعِيدُنَا قُلِ الَّذِي

فَطَرَكُمْ أَوْلَ مَرَّةٍ فَيَنْفُخُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هُوَ قُلْ عَسَى أَنْ
يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا ﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ وَتَظُنُّونَ إِن لَّبِئْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
﴿٥٢﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٤٩-٥٢)

- 17:49. They say: What! When we have turned into bones and dust, will we really be raised up and created anew?
- 17:50. Say: Even if you turned to stone or iron,
- 17:51. or any other substance you think even more unlikely [to be given life]. Then they will say: Who will bring us back [to life]? Say: The One Who brought you into being in the first instance. They will nod their heads at you [in disbelief and mockery] and say: When will that be? Say: It may well be soon.
- 17:52. On the day when He calls you, you will respond by praising Him and think that you have tarried but a short while.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us what was said by those who denied the resurrection, disbelieved in it and thought it unlikely.

﴿They say: What! When we have turned into bones and dust﴾ that is, when our bodies have disintegrated completely, ﴿will we really be raised up and created anew?﴾ That is, that will never happen and it is impossible – according to their claim. They demonstrated extreme ignorance when they disbelieved the Messengers of Allah, denied the signs of Allah, and compared the power of the Creator of the heavens and the earth to their puny and weak powers. As they saw that it was impossible for them and they could not do it, they assumed that the power of Allah was equally weak.

Glory be to the One Who made some of His creation, who claimed that they were people of mature thinking and intellect, into an example of ignorance of the most obvious of things, for which there is the clearest proof, in order to show His slaves that no one can achieve

anything except by His help, otherwise there is nothing but doom and misery.

﴿Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate now after You have guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Yourself; for You are the Bestower.﴾

(*Āl 'Imrân* 3: 8)

Hence Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to say to these people who denied the resurrection because they thought that it was unlikely:

﴿Say: Even if you turned to stone or iron, or any other substance you think even more unlikely [to be given life]﴾ that is, so that you will be safe – or so you claim – from the power of Allah reaching you or His will being done concerning you. For you cannot escape Allah, no matter what state you are in and no matter what you are turned to. You have no control over yourselves in this life or after death, so leave control and disposal of affairs to the One Who has power over all things and Who encompasses all things.

﴿Then they will say﴾ when you establish proof against them concerning the resurrection:

﴿Who will bring us back [to life]? Say: The One Who brought you into being in the first instance﴾. As He originated you, when you were nothing worth mentioning, He will recreate you:

﴿...As We originated creation, so We will repeat it...﴾ (*al-Anbiyâ'* 21: 104)

﴿They will nod their heads at you [in disbelief and mockery]﴾ that is, in denial and amazement at what you say

﴿and say: When will that be?﴾ That is, when will this resurrection of which you speak come to pass? They are not affirming the idea of the resurrection; rather this is foolishness on their part, and is intended to cause annoyance.

﴿Say: It may well be soon﴾. There is no benefit in knowing the exact time of it; rather the benefit is to affirm it, establish it as a belief and prove it. Otherwise everything that is coming is near at hand.

«On the day when He calls you» to the resurrection, and the Trumpet is blown

«you will respond by praising Him» that is, you will submit to His command and you will not be able to rebel against Him.

«by praising Him» – for He is worthy of praise for all that He does, and He will requite people for their deeds when He gathers them on the Day of Judgement.

«and think that you have tarried but a short while» because it will happen so quickly, and whatever you had enjoyed of pleasures will be as if it never happened. This is the event of which the deniers asked «When will that be?» They will regret it bitterly when it comes, and it is said to them:

«...This is what you used to deny.» (al-Muʿaffifeen 83: 17)



﴿ وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِنَّ يَشَاءُ يَرْحَمَكُمُ أَوْ إِن يَشَاءُ يُعَذِّبِكُمْ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَمَا آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زُبُورًا ﴿٥٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٥٣-٥٥)

17:53. Tell My slaves that they should say what is best,²² for Shayṭān sows discord among them. Verily Shayṭān is to man an avowed enemy.

17:54. Your Lord knows you best: if He wills, He will have mercy on you and if He wills, He will punish you. We have not sent you [O Muhammad] to be in charge of them.

²² What is meant is to speak in a courteous and gracious manner, and not to respond in kind to harsh words.

17:55. And your Lord knows best all who are in the heavens and on earth. Indeed We have exalted some of the Prophets above others, and to Dâwood We gave the Zaboor [Psalms].

This is by His kindness towards His slaves, as He enjoined upon them the best manners, deeds and words that lead to happiness in this world and the hereafter.

«Tell My slaves that they should say what is best» – this is enjoining all words that bring one closer to Allah, such as reading Qur'an, remembering Him (dhikr), acquiring knowledge, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and speaking good and kind words to people in a manner that is appropriate to their various positions and status. If there is a choice between two good things, then it is enjoined to give precedence to the better of the two, if it is not possible to combine both.

Speaking good words leads to developing good manners and doing righteous deeds, for the one who controls his tongue will be in control of all his affairs.

«for Shayṭân sows discord among them» that is, he strives to create trouble between people in a manner that is detrimental to their religious commitment and worldly affairs. The remedy for that is not to obey him, by avoiding the inappropriate talk to which he calls people, and by being soft and gentle with one another, so as to suppress the Shayṭân who seeks to spread discord among them, because he is their true enemy whom they should oppose, for he calls them to:

«...become inhabitants of the raging fire.» (*Fâtir* 35: 6)

As for brothers in Islam, even if the Shayṭân manages to sow discord among them and create enmity between them, the right thing to do is strive against their enemy and suppress their inclinations towards evil, through which the Shayṭân finds a way to influence

them. By doing so, they will be obeying their Lord, putting their affairs in order and following the path of wisdom.

«Your Lord knows you best», better than you know yourselves. Hence He only wants what is good for you and He only enjoins upon you that which is in your best interests. You may want something when the opposite is better.

«if He wills, He will have mercy on you and if He wills, He will punish you». Hence He guides whomever He will to take the measures that lead to mercy, and He forsakes whomever He will, so that he will go astray and will become deserving of punishment.

«We have not sent you [O Muhammad] to be in charge of them» and to control their affairs and requite them for their deeds. Rather Allah is in charge of them, and your role is to convey the message and guide people to the straight path.

«And your Lord knows best all who are in the heavens and on earth» of all types of creatures, so He gives each of them what he deserves, according to His wisdom, and He favours some of them over others in terms of both physical and intangible qualities, just as He favoured some of the Prophets, who all have in common the fact that they received revelation, over others in terms of virtues and characteristics that had to do with what Allah blessed them with of physical characteristics, pleasant manners and attitudes, righteous deeds, number of followers, and revelation of Books to some of them that contained rulings and beliefs, as He sent down to Dâwood the Zaboor (Psalms), which is the well-known Book.

As it is the case that Allah favoured some of them over others, and gave to some of them Books, why do those who reject Muhammad (ﷺ) deny what Allah has sent down to him and what He has blessed him with of prophethood and the Book?



﴿ قُلْ أَدْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٥٦-٥٧)

- 17:56. Say: Call on those whom you claim [to be gods]²³ besides Him; they have no power to relieve you of harm or divert it from you.
- 17:57. Those upon whom they call themselves seek nearness to their Lord, [competing to see] which of them will be nearest. They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment, for verily the punishment of your Lord is something to be dreaded.

«Say» to the polytheists who ascribe partners to Allah and take others as gods which they worship as they worship Allah, and they call upon them as they call upon Him, and instruct them to correct what they claim and believe, if they are sincere:

«Call on those whom you claim [to be gods]» besides Allah, and see whether they can benefit you or ward off harm from you, for they «have no power to relieve you of harm or divert it from you», such as sickness, poverty, hardship and so on. They cannot ward it off at all, and they also have no power to divert it from one person to another, or to change it from hardship to something less severe.

If this is how they are, then why do you call upon them besides Allah? For they have no attributes of perfection and do not do any useful deeds, so taking them as gods is lacking in religious understanding and reason, and it is foolishness.

²³ Those who are falsely worshipped, who are referred to in this and the following verse, are 'Eesâ, 'Uzayr and the angels; they have no power to benefit or harm in and of themselves, and are themselves devoted slaves of Allah.

What is astounding is that when foolishness becomes a common practice and is received from misguided parents, a person sees it as being right thinking, and he sees sincere devotion to Allah alone, the One Who is perfect and bestows all blessings, both apparent and invisible, as foolishness and as something strange, as the polytheists said:

﴿Has he made all the gods into one God? This is indeed most strange!﴾
(*Sād* 38: 5)

Then Allah tells us that those whom they worship besides Allah are completely distracted from them because they are concerned with showing their own need for Allah and seeking to draw near to Him:

﴿Those upon whom they call﴾ among the Prophets, the righteous and the angels

﴿themselves seek nearness to their Lord, [competing to see] which of them will be nearest﴾ that is, they compete in drawing near to their Lord, striving their utmost to do righteous deeds that will bring them closer to Allah and to His mercy, for they fear His punishment, so they avoid everything that may lead to it.

﴿for verily the punishment of your Lord is something to be dreaded﴾ that is, it is something to be feared greatly and one should keep away from anything that could lead to it.

These three things – fear, hope and love – which Allah describes as the characteristics of those who are close to Him are the basis and prerequisites for all goodness. Whoever has all of them, all his affairs will be in order, but if his heart is devoid of them, good things will disperse from around him and he will be surrounded by troubles.

The sign of love is that which Allah mentions, that a person strives hard to do everything that will bring him closer to Allah, and he competes with others in drawing closer to Him, intending all his deeds for Allah alone, being utterly sincere in doing them and doing them in the best possible manner. Whoever claims that he loves Allah, but does not do this, is lying.



﴿وَلَنْ مِّن قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْفَيْصَمَةِ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا كَانَ ذَٰلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ﴿٥٨﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٥٨)

17:58. There is no city but We will destroy it before the Day of Resurrection, or punish it severely. That is written in the Book [of our decrees].²⁴

That is, there is no city among the cities that disbelieved in the Messengers but it will inevitably be destroyed or punished severely before the Day of Resurrection. This is a decree that has been ordained by Allah, and it will inevitably come to pass. So let the disbelievers hasten to turn to Allah and believe in His Messengers, before they reach a point where punishment will become inevitable.



﴿وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَن نُّرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ وَآيَاتِنَا ثُمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا ﴿٥٩﴾﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرِّيَاءَ الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَنُحُوفُهُمْ فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٦٠﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٥٩-٦٠)

17:59. Nothing prevents Us from sending signs except that the earlier people rejected them. We sent the she-camel to Thamood as a clear sign, yet they rejected her. We send signs only by way of instilling fear.

17:60. And [remember] when We said to you: Verily your Lord encompasses humankind [with His knowledge and might]. We

²⁴ That is, *al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh*.

did not make the sight which We showed you,²⁵ and the accursed tree²⁶ [mentioned] in the Qur'an, except as a test for the people. We seek to instil fear in their hearts, but it only increases their inordinate transgression.

Here Allah (ﷻ) refers to His mercy in that He did not send down the signs demanded by the disbelievers. Nothing prevented Him from sending them except the possibility of their rejecting them, for if they had rejected them, the punishment would have been hastened for them and would have come upon them without delay, as happened to earlier generations who disbelieved in His signs.

One of the greatest signs is that which Allah sent to Thamood, namely the great she-camel, but they rejected that sign, so that fate befell them of which Allah tells us in His Book. And these people (the disbelievers of Makkah) are the same: even if great signs were to come to them, they would not believe. What prevented them from believing was not the fact that what the Messenger brought was unclear, as a result of which they were uncertain as to whether it was true or false, for He brought a great deal of proof which pointed to the soundness of the message he brought, which would lead to guidance for anyone who was seeking guidance. Any other sign (that they demanded) would be the same, so they would inevitably think of it as they thought of other signs. Therefore not sending another sign, when this was the case, was better for them.

﴿We send signs only by way of instilling fear﴾ that is, the purpose behind it is not to lead them to faith that could not be achieved otherwise; rather the purpose is to instil fear, so as to deter them (from their obstinate behaviour).

²⁵ This refers to the Prophet's Isrâ' (Night Journey).

²⁶ This refers to the tree of az-Zaqqoom, mentioned in (*ad-Dukhân* 44: 43-44), from which the people of hell will be fed.

«And [remember] when We said to you: Verily your Lord encompasses humankind [with His knowledge and might]», so they have nowhere to turn to and no refuge to escape from Him. This is sufficient for anyone who has intellect to refrain from that which is hateful to Allah, Who encompasses humankind.

«We did not make the sight which We showed you, and the accursed tree [mentioned] in the Qur'an, except as a test for the people». The majority of commentators are of the view that the sight mentioned here refers to the Night Journey (Isrâ') and the tree is the tree of az-Zaqqoom that grows from the depths of hell.

What is meant is that if these two things have become a trial or test that causes confusion to people, to the extent that the disbelievers become more stubborn in their disbelief and increase in evil, and some of those who had weak faith recanted their faith because what the Prophet (ﷺ) told them – of events that occurred during the Night Journey, and what happened during that journey from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque – was so extraordinary, and what he told them about a tree growing from the depths of hell was also extraordinary, and this is what made them reject faith and not accept it, then how about if they saw great signs and remarkable extraordinary events? Is that not more likely to lead to an increase in their evil? Therefore Allah had mercy on them and diverted that from them.

Hence you will understand that it is more appropriate that the Qur'an and Sunnah did not describe in clear terms major events that would occur at later times, because when it comes to things the like of which people have never seen, their minds may not accept them if they are told of them before they happen, which may then become a cause of doubt in the hearts of some believers, and may prevent others from entering Islam, as they are put off from it. Rather Allah refers to such matters in very general and ambiguous words that refer to all that will happen.

«We seek to instil fear in their hearts» by means of the signs
 «but it only increases their inordinate transgression».



﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ قَالَ أَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِينًا ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنِ أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَأُحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُكُمْ جَزَاءً مَوْفُورًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَأَسْتَفِزُّ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِم بِخَيْكَ وَرَجْلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعِدَّهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿٦٤﴾ إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا

﴿٦٥﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٦١-٦٥)

- 17:61. And [remember] when We said to the angels: Prostrate before Adam, and they [all] prostrated except Iblees. He said: Should I prostrate before one whom You have created from clay?
- 17:62. [Iblees] said: Do you see this one whom You have honoured above me? If You give me respite until the Day of Resurrection, I will surely bring his offspring under my sway, all but a few.
- 17:63. [Allah] said: Go ahead; whoever among them follows you, verily hell will be the recompense of you all, an ample recompense.
- 17:64. Entice whomever among them you can with your voice; mobilise your cavalry and infantry against them;²⁷ share with them in their wealth and their children,²⁸ and make promises to them. But Shayṭān makes promises to them only in order to deceive them.

²⁷ What is meant is use all the means at your disposal against them. (al-Qurṭubi)

²⁸ What is meant is causing them to acquire and dispose of wealth in unlawful ways, and to produce children in unlawful ways (by means of fornication).

17:65. Verily you will have no power over My slaves, and sufficient is Allah as a guardian.

Here Allah (ﷻ) points out to His slaves the extent of Shayṭān's enmity and his keenness to mislead them, and that when Allah created Adam, he (Shayṭān) was too arrogant to prostrate to him.

﴿He said﴾ out of arrogance: ﴿Should I prostrate before one whom You have created from clay?﴾ He claimed that he was better than him, because he had been created from fire. We have mentioned above how wrong this false analogy was, in many aspects.

When it became clear to Iblees that Allah had favoured Adam, he said to Allah: ﴿Do you see this one whom You have honoured above me? If You give me respite until the Day of Resurrection, I will surely bring his offspring under my sway﴾ that is, I will mislead them and not spare anyone, ﴿all but a few﴾. The evil one knew that there would inevitably be some who would oppose him and disobey him.

Therefore Allah said to him: ﴿Go ahead; whoever among them follows you﴾ and chooses you above his true Lord ﴿verily hell will be the recompense of you all, an ample recompense﴾ that is, it is saved for you as requital for your deeds.

Then Allah told him to do all that he could to misguide them, saying: ﴿Entice whomever among them you can with your voice﴾ – this includes everyone who calls others to sin. ﴿mobilise your cavalry and infantry against them﴾ – this includes everyone who rides or walks in the course of committing sin and disobedience towards Allah; he is one of the cavalry and infantry of the Shayṭān.

What is meant is that Allah tests people by means of this avowed enemy who calls them to disobey Allah by his words and deeds.

﴿share with them in their wealth and their children﴾ – this includes every sin that is connected to their wealth and children, such as withholding zakâh and expiatory payments, not paying dues, not disciplining children and raising them to do good and keep away from evil, taking wealth unlawfully or using it inappropriately, and acquiring money from bad sources.

In fact many of the commentators stated that sharing with the Shayṭân in wealth and children also includes not invoking the name of Allah when eating, drinking and having intercourse, because if a person does not invoke the name of Allah at those times, the Shayṭân will have a share of those things with him, as is mentioned in the hadith.

﴿and make promises to them﴾ that is, attractive promises that have no substance. Hence Allah says: ﴿But Shayṭân makes promises to them only in order to deceive them﴾ because his promise is false and has no value, such as when he makes sin and false beliefs fair-seeming to them and promises them reward for that, because they think that they are following truth. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿The Shayṭân threatens you with poverty and instructs you to be miserly, but Allah promises you His forgiveness and grace...﴾
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 268)

Having mentioned what the Shayṭân wants to do to people, and what helps to protect one from his temptations, which is true servitude to Allah, adherence to faith and putting one's trust in Him, Allah now says: ﴿Verily you will have no power over My slaves﴾ that is, you have no power to tempt them; rather Allah will ward off all evil from them, if they are true slaves to Him, and He will protect them from the accursed Shayṭân and suffice them against him.

﴿and sufficient is Allah as a guardian﴾ for the one who puts his trust in Him and complies with His commands.



رَبِّكُمْ الَّذِي يُزِيحُ لَكُمْ الْفَلَكَ فِي الْبَحْرِ لِيَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِكُمْ
 رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِلَاهًا فَلَمَّا جَنَحُوا إِلَى
 الْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا ﴿٦٧﴾ أَفَأَمِنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْصِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا لَكُمْ وَاكِيلًا ﴿٦٨﴾ أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ أَنْ يُعِيدَكُمْ فِيهِ تَارَةً
 أُخْرَىٰ فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِنَ الرِّيحِ فَيُغْرِقَكُم بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا
 بِهِ تَبِيعًا ﴿٦٩﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٦٦-٦٩)

17:66. It is your Lord Who drives forward the ships for you on the sea, so that you may seek of His bounty. Verily He is to you Most Merciful.

17:67. When danger threatens you at sea, all those on whom you call disappear [from your minds], except Him alone. But when He brings you safe to dry land, you turn away from Him. Man is ever ungrateful.

17:68. Do you then feel secure that He will not cause a tract of dry land to swallow you up, or that He will not send against you a violent squall of pebbles? Then you will find none to protect you.

17:69. Or do you feel secure that He will not send you back [to sea] once more, then send against you a tempest and drown you because of your disbelief? Then you will find no one to help you against Us.

Here Allah mentions the blessings that He has bestowed upon people, as He has made to be of service to them ships and other vessels, which He inspired them to make. And He has made the tumultuous sea to be of service to them, carrying them on its surface, so that people may benefit thereby, travelling, carrying their goods and doing trade. This is by His mercy towards His slaves, for He is

ever merciful and compassionate, giving them everything they want and that is useful for them.

One of the signs of His mercy, which indicates that He is the only One Who is deserving of worship, to the exclusion of all others, is that if harm befalls them on the sea, and they fear that they will die because of the high waves, those whom they used to worship besides Allah at times of ease, among the living and the dead, vanish from their minds, and it is as if they never called upon them at any time, because they realise that those (objects of worship) are helpless and incapable of granting relief from hardship. Instead they cry out to the Originator of the earth and the heavens, Whose help all creatures seek at times of hardship, and they call upon Him and beseech Him with utter sincerity in such situations.

But when Allah grants them relief from hardship and brings them safely to the shore, they forget the one on Whom they called, and they associate others with Him that can neither bring benefit nor cause harm, and can neither give nor withhold, and they turn away from showing sincere devotion to their true Lord and Sovereign. This is indicative of man's ignorance and ingratitude, except those whom Allah has guided and blessed with sound reasoning, so they are guided to the straight path. Such a one knows that the One Who grants relief from hardship and saves one from terrors is the only One Who deserves to be shown sincerity in all one's actions, at times of ease and of hardship.

As for the one who fails and is left to his own devices and weak reasoning, at the time of hardship he focuses only on his immediate interests and need to be saved in that situation. But when he is saved and the hardship is over, he thinks in his ignorance that he has managed to escape from Allah, and the idea of consequences in this world never crosses his mind, let alone consequences in the hereafter.

Therefore Allah reminds them by saying: ﴿Do you then feel secure that He will not cause a tract of dry land to swallow you up, or that

He will not send against you a violent squall of pebbles?﴾ That is, He is able to do all things: if He so willed, He would send down punishment upon you which would come upon you from beneath you by means of the earth swallowing you up, or from above you by means of showers of pebbles, and you would be destroyed, so do not think that death or destruction can only come at sea.

If you do think that, then do you feel confident that ﴿that He will not send you back [to sea] once more, then send against you a tempest﴾ that is, a strong wind that destroys everything in its path ﴿and drown you because of your disbelief? Then you will find no one to help you against Us﴾ and Allah does not wrong them in the slightest.



﴿ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٧٠)

17:70. We have indeed honoured the sons of Adam, given them means of transportation on land and sea, provided them with good things, and have favoured them above many of those whom We have created.

This is by His generosity and kindness towards them, the full extent of which no one can know. He has honoured the children of Adam in all ways, as He has honoured them with knowledge and reason, sending the Messengers, sending down the Books, making some of them His close friends and chosen ones, and bestowing upon them blessings both visible and invisible.

﴿given them means of transportation on land﴾ such as camels, mules, donkeys and other means of transportation ﴿and sea﴾ such as ships and other vessels

﴿provided them with good things﴾ such as food, drink, clothing and spouses. There is nothing good that has to do with their needs, but Allah has honoured them with it and made it available to them.

﴿and have favoured them above many of those whom We have created﴾ by means of that for which He has singled them out of blessings, virtues and qualities that are not given to other types of creatures.

So will they not give thanks to the One Who has bestowed these blessings and warded off harm? These blessings should not be a barrier between them and the One Who bestowed them, and they should not distract them from worshipping their Lord, let alone be used to disobey Him.



﴿يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمْتِاعِهِمْ فَمَنْ أُوِّيَ كِتَابُهُ بِيَمِينِهِ، فَأُوْلَئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧٦﴾ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٧١-٧٢)

17:71. [Mention, O Muhammad] the day when We will summon every community with their leaders. Those who are given their record of deeds in their right hands will read their record; they will never be wronged even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone.

17:72. Those who are blind [to the truth] in this world will be blind in the hereafter, and even further astray from the path [of truth].

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us how people will be on the Day of Resurrection, and that He will call all people, with their leaders and those who called them to true guidance, namely the Messengers and their deputies. Each nation will be presented, brought by their

Messenger who called them, and their deeds will be judged against the Book to which the Messenger called them: were their deeds in accordance with it or otherwise? Based on this criterion, they will be divided into two groups:

«Those who are given their record of deeds in their right hands» because they followed their leader who guided them to the straight path, followed His Book and did a great deal of good deeds and few bad deeds

«will read their record» happily and joyfully, rejoicing at what they see in it

«they will never be wronged even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone» with regard to what they did of good deeds.

«Those who are blind [to the truth] in this world» and did not accept the truth or submit to it, rather they followed misguidance

«will be blind in the hereafter» to following the path that leads to paradise, just as they did not follow it in this world

«and even further astray from the path [of truth]» because the requital matches the nature of the deed; as you sow, so shall you reap.

This verse indicates that every nation will be called to its religion and Book: did it act in accordance with it or not? They will not be called to account on the basis of the law of a Prophet whom they were not instructed to follow, for Allah does not punish anyone except after proof is established against him and he chooses to reject it.

People of goodness will be given their records of their deeds in their right hands and they will rejoice greatly; people of evil will be the opposite of that and they will not be able to read their records because of the severity of their distress and grief.



﴿ وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْخُذُوكَ خَلِيلًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَلَوْلَا أَنْ ثَبَّنَّاكَ لَفَدَّيْتَهُ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ﴾

إِذَا لَأَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٤﴾
 وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوكَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبَثُونَ
 خِلَافَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٥﴾ سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا
 تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٧٦﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٧٣-٧٧)

- 17:73. Verily, they were about to tempt you away from that which We have revealed to you [O Muhammad], so that you would fabricate something else and attribute it to Us; then they would have taken you as a close friend.
- 17:74. Had We not kept you steadfast, you would nearly have inclined towards them a little.
- 17:75. In that case, We would have made you taste a double punishment in this life, and a double punishment after death. Then you would have found none to help you against Us.
- 17:76. They were about to hound you from the land in order to expel you therefrom, but in that case they would not have remained there after you, except for a little while.
- 17:77. Such was Our way with the Messengers We sent before you [O Muhammad], and you will find no change in Our way.²⁹

Here Allah (ﷻ) mentions His favour to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and how He protected him from those who were keen to tempt him away by all means:

﴿Verily, they were about to tempt you away from that which We have revealed to you [O Muhammad], so that you would fabricate something else and attribute it to Us﴾ that is, they wanted something of you but they did not get it. They used tricks to make you fabricate and attribute to Allah something other than what We revealed to you,

²⁹ What is meant here is that it is the way of Allah to send His punishment upon people if they expelled the Messenger who was sent to them. (at-Ṭabari)

so that you would bring something that was in accordance with their desires and you would abandon that which Allah had sent down to you.

«(then) if you had done what they wanted (they would have taken you as a close friend) that is, one who was beloved and dearer to them than their own loved ones, because of what Allah has bestowed upon you of good manners and etiquette that endear you to everyone, near and far, friend and enemy.

But you should understand that they only oppose you and show enmity to you because of the truth that you have brought, not because of your character. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

«We know well that what they say grieves you [O Muhammad]. It is not you they disbelieve; rather it is the revelations of Allah that the wrongdoers deny.» (*al-An'âm* 6: 33)

Nevertheless, «Had We not kept you steadfast» in adherence to the truth, and blessed you by enabling you to refrain from responding to their call

«you would nearly have inclined towards them a little» because of their persistence and your desire that they be guided.

«In that case», if you had inclined towards what they wanted, «We would have made you taste a double punishment in this life, and a double punishment after death» because of the perfect blessing that Allah has bestowed upon you and because of your perfect knowledge. «Then you would have found none to help you against Us» to save you from the punishment that would have befallen you, but Allah (ﷻ) protected you from that which leads to evil and from people, and He made you steadfast and guided you to the straight path, and you did not incline towards them at all. Thus He granted you a perfect blessing.

«They were about to hound you from the land in order to expel you therefrom» that is, because they hated for you to stay among them, they almost drove you out of the land and expelled you from it.

If they had done that, they would not have remained there after you, except for a little while, until the punishment came upon them, as is the way of Allah with all nations, which never changes or varies. For every nation that rejected and expelled its Messenger, Allah hastened its punishment.

When those who disbelieved plotted against him and expelled him, it was not long before Allah punished them at Badr, where their leaders were killed and they were weakened; to Him be praise.

This passage points to the individual's great need for Allah to make him steadfast, and indicates that he should keep beseeching his Lord, asking Him to make him firm in his faith, and he should continue striving by all means to attain that, because Allah said to the Prophet (ﷺ), who is the most perfect of all people: «Had We not kept you steadfast, you would nearly have inclined towards them a little», so how about others?

It is also a reminder from Allah to His Messenger (ﷺ) of His blessings and how He protected him against evil. This indicates that Allah loves for His slaves to notice the blessing that He bestows upon them – when they are exposed to temptation – by protecting them from it and keeping them steadfast in their faith.

We also see that the higher a person's status is and the more blessings he receives from Allah, the greater his sin and the more serious the offence if he does something blameworthy, because Allah reminded His Messenger (ﷺ) that if he did that – although he is far above doing such a thing – then «We would have made you taste a double punishment in this life, and a double punishment after death. Then you would have found none to help you against Us».

These verses also tell us that when Allah wills to destroy a nation, their sins increase and become more serious in nature, thus the punishment becomes inevitable, as is His way with all nations, when they expelled their Messengers.



﴿ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ
 كَانَ مَشْهُودًا ﴿٧٨﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا
 مَّحْمُودًا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَدْخِلْنِي مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَأَخْرِجْنِي مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَاجْعَلْ لِي مِنْ
 لَدُنْكَ سُلْطَانًا نَّصِيرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا
 ﴿٨١﴾ ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٧٨-٨١)

- 17:78. Establish prayer at the decline of the sun [from the meridian] until the darkness of the night, and recite the Qur'an at dawn, for verily the recitation at dawn is ever witnessed [by the angels].³⁰
- 17:79. And during the night wake up and pray [*tahajjud*], an additional prayer for you [O Muhammad], so that your Lord may raise you to a station of praise and honour.
- 17:80. Say: My Lord, grant me a goodly entrance and a goodly exit,³¹ and grant me from You a supporting power.
- 17:81. And say: The truth has come and falsehood has perished. Falsehood is always bound to perish.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to establish prayer perfectly, with the proper outward movements and inward focus of mind, at the prescribed times.

﴿at the decline of the sun [from the meridian]﴾ that is, when it begins to sink towards the western horizon, after reaching its zenith. This includes *dhuhr* and *'aṣr* prayers.

³⁰ The five daily prayers are included in this verse, from *dhuhr* (mid-day) prayer through *'aṣr* (mid-afternoon) to *maghrib* (sunset) and *'ishā'* (night-time, when it becomes dark), and finally *fajr* (dawn).

³¹ Many commentators said that this refers to the Prophet's leaving Makkah and entering Madinah.

﴿until the darkness of the night﴾ this includes *maghrib* and '*ishâ*' prayers.

﴿and recite the Qur'an at dawn﴾ that is, *fajr* prayer. It is referred to as reciting the Qur'an because it is prescribed to recite at length in this prayer more than in others, and because of the virtue of recitation, because it is witnessed by Allah and by the angels of the night and the angels of the day.

This verse mentions the times of the five daily prayers, and indicates that the prayers that are to take place at these times are obligatory, because the command refers specifically to them.

It also indicates that being on time is a condition of the prayer being valid and that the time is the reason for the prayer being obligatory, because Allah enjoins us to establish the prayers at these times. It also indicates that *dhuhr* and '*aṣr*' may be put together for a valid reason, as may *maghrib* and '*ishâ*', because Allah mentioned their times together.

This verse also highlights the virtue of *fajr* prayer and of reciting at length in it, and highlights the fact that recitation is an essential part of the prayer, because calling an act of worship by the name of one of its parts indicates that that part is obligatory.

﴿And during the night wake up and pray [tahajjud]﴾ that is, pray at any part of the night

﴿an additional prayer for you [O Muhammad]﴾ that is, so that prayer at night may be something additional for you, so as to raise you in status, unlike others for whom it is expiation of sins.

And it may be that what is meant is that the five daily prayers are obligatory for you (O Muhammad [ﷺ]) and for the believers, unlike prayers at night, which are obligatory for you in particular (O Muhammad [ﷺ]), because of your special status before Allah; as He wants to honour you, He has made your duties greater than those of others, so as to increase you in reward and so that you may attain thereby the station of praise and glory (*al-maqâm al-mahmood*), which

is the station for which the first and the last will praise him, the station of greater intercession, when the people will seek the intercession of Adam, then Nooh, then Ibrâheem, then Moosâ, then 'Eesâ, and all of them will excuse themselves and refuse to do it, until they seek the intercession of the leader of the sons of Adam, to ask Allah to relieve them of the distress and anguish of the standing (on the Day of Resurrection). Then he will intercede with his Lord, Who will accept his intercession and make him stand in that station, for which he will be envied by the first and the last, and he will be praised by all people.

﴿Say: My Lord, grant me a goodly entrance and a goodly exit﴾ that is, make my entrance and my exit all in obedience to You and pleasing to You, because that means sincerity and compliance with Allah's command.

﴿and grant me from You a supporting power﴾ that is, clear evidence and definitive proof for all that I do or do not do.

This is the highest position that Allah may cause a person to attain, that all his situations are good and are means of drawing closer to his Lord, and that – in all situations – he may have clear evidence. This includes beneficial knowledge, righteous deeds and knowledge of various issues and proofs.

﴿And say: The truth has come and falsehood has perished﴾ – the truth is that which Allah revealed to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and commanded him to speak and proclaim. The truth has come which nothing can resist, and falsehood has perished, that is it has diminished and vanished.

﴿Falsehood is always bound to perish﴾ that is, this is the nature of falsehood, but it may have the upper hand for a while, if it is not opposed by the truth. But when the truth comes, falsehood diminishes and ends up lifeless. Hence falsehood is only popular at times and in places where there is no knowledge of the revelations and proofs of Allah.



﴿وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا﴾
(سورة الإسراء: ٨٢) ﴿٨٢﴾

17:82. We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and mercy for the believers, but it increases the wrongdoers in nothing but loss.

The Qur'an contains healing and mercy, but that is not for everyone; rather it is only for those who believe in it and have knowledge of it. As for the wrongdoers who do not believe in it, or who do not act in accordance with it, its verses only increase them in loss, as proof is established against them by means of it.

The healing that is contained in the Qur'an is broad in scope, and offers healing for spiritual maladies such as doubt, ignorance, corrupt views, deviation and bad intentions. It also contains certain knowledge by means of which all doubts may be dispelled, and exhortation and reminders that dispel all desires that are contrary to the command of Allah. It also offers healing from physical pain and sickness.

With regard to mercy, this refers to what the Qur'an contains of the means of attaining mercy and encouragement to pursue those means; when a person does those things, he will attain mercy, eternal happiness and reward in this world and the hereafter.



﴿وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَسَىٰ جَانِبَهُ ۖ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَئُوسًا﴾ (سورة

الإسراء: ٨٣)

17:83. When We bestow Our blessings upon man, he turns away and draws aside, but if misfortune befalls him, he is filled with despair.

This is the nature of man, by default, except those whom Allah guides. When Allah blesses man, he rejoices in the blessing and becomes insolent because of it, turning away and drawing aside from his Lord; so he does not give thanks and does not remember Him.

«but if misfortune», such as sickness and the like «befalls him, he is filled with despair» of anything good, and he loses all hope in his Lord, thinking that this misfortune will last forever.

But in the case of the one whom Allah guides, when blessings come to him he humbles himself before his Lord and give thanks for His blessings, and when misfortune strikes, he beseeches his Lord and puts his hope in Allah to restore his well-being and relieve him of what has befallen him, and thus the calamity is alleviated.



﴿ قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَىٰ شَاكْرَتِهِ ۗ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ سَبِيلًا ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٨٤)

(٨٤)

17:84. Say: Everyone acts according to his own disposition. But your Lord knows best who is more rightly guided as to the way.

«Say: Everyone» that is, all people «acts according to his own disposition» that is, as befits his nature. If he is one of the chosen and righteous, nothing befits him except to do deeds solely for the sake of the Lord of the worlds. In the case of others, who have been forsaken by Allah and are doomed to failure, nothing befits them except doing deeds for the sake of created beings, and they do not do anything except that which suits them.

﴿But your Lord knows best who is more rightly guided as to the way﴾ so He knows who is fit to be guided, and He guides him; and He knows who is not fit for guidance, so He forsakes him and does not guide him.



﴿وَسْئَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

(سورة الإسراء: ٨٥) ﴿

17:85. They ask you about the soul. Say: The soul is a matter known only to my Lord, and of knowledge you have been granted only a little.

This is an implied rebuke of the one who asks questions with no intention but to show stubbornness and try to frustrate the person questioned, and he does not ask about that which is important. They ask about the soul, which is a hidden matter that not everyone is able to describe properly or know its nature. Moreover, they are lacking in the knowledge they need and failing to ask about it.

Hence Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to answer the question by saying: ﴿Say: The soul is a matter known only to my Lord﴾ That is, it is one of the things that He created by saying to it, 'Be!' and it was. There is no great benefit in asking about it, when one lacks knowledge of other important issues.

This verse indicates that if a person is asked about something when it would have been more appropriate to ask about something else, he should refrain from answering and point the questioner towards that which he needs to know and which will benefit him.



﴿ وَلَئِن شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيلًا ﴿٨٦﴾
 إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّكَ إِنَّ فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيرًا ﴿٨٧﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٨٦-٨٧)

17:86. If We so willed, We could surely take away that which We have revealed to you; then you would find no one to help you in recovering it from Us.

17:87. But [it has been left with you] by the mercy of your Lord, for His favour to you has been great indeed.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that the Qur'an and the revelation that He gave to His Messenger (ﷺ) was a mercy from Him to the Messenger and His slaves, and it is the greatest blessing of all to His Messenger, for the bounty of Allah towards him is great and no one can evaluate it.

The One Who bestowed it upon you is able to take it away, then you would not find anyone who could recover it for you. So you should be happy to have it and rejoice in it, and do not let the disbelief of the disbelievers and the mockery of those who have gone astray make you sad, for the greatest blessing (namely the Qur'an) was offered to them, but they rejected it, because they are insignificant before Allah and He has forsaken them.



﴿ قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَن يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَتْ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴿٨٨﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٨٨)

17:88. Say: Verily if all of humankind and the jinn were to come together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could never produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another.

This is definitive proof of the soundness and truth of that which the Messenger (ﷺ) brought, as Allah challenged humankind and the jinn to produce its like, and stated that they would never be able to produce its like; even if they all cooperated to that effect they would never be able to do it.

And it came to pass as Allah told us, for those who disbelieved had the strongest motive to refute it in any way possible, and they had a strong command of the language and were very eloquent. If they had the least ability to meet the challenge, they would have done so.

Thus it is known that they surrendered completely, willingly or otherwise, and declared that they were incapable of producing something to match the Qur'an.

How could one who is created from clay and is lacking in all aspects, who possesses no knowledge, power, will, speech or perfection except that which is granted by his Lord, match the words of the Lord of the earth and the heavens, Who sees all that is hidden, Who is possessed of absolute perfection and majesty, and is worthy of all praise, and if all the sea, with seven more seas besides, were ink and all the trees were pens, the ink would run dry and the pens would wear out, but the words of Allah would never be exhausted?

Just as no one in creation is in any way like unto Allah in any of His attributes, His speech is one of His attributes, in which no one resembles Him. So there is nothing like unto Him in His essence, His names, His attributes and His actions – may He be blessed and exalted.

May he perish, the one who cannot see the difference between the words of the Creator and the words of created beings, and claims that Muhammad (ﷺ) fabricated it and attributed it to Allah, and that he made it up by himself.



﴿وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴿٨٩﴾ وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا ﴿٩٠﴾ أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ﴿٩١﴾ أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتِ عَلَيْنَا كَسَفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا ﴿٩٢﴾ أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِنْ زُخْرِفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَى فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرَفِيقِكَ حَتَّى تُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَقْرُؤُهُ ﴿٩٣﴾ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا ﴿٩٤﴾ وَمَا مَعَ النَّاسِ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا ﴿٩٥﴾ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَتْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا ﴿٩٦﴾ قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾﴾

(سورة الإسراء: ٨٩-٩٦)

- 17:89. We have explained [the truth] to man in this Qur'an, discussing different issues in various ways, yet most people persist in disbelief.
- 17:90. They say: We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us;
- 17:91. Or you have a garden of date palms and vines, and you cause rivers to gush forth in their midst;
- 17:92. Or you cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you claimed [will happen on the Day of Resurrection]; or you bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face;
- 17:93. Or you have a house made of gold; or you ascend to heaven, and even then we will not believe in your ascent unless you bring down to us a Book we can read. Say: Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a man, sent as a Messenger?

- 17:94. Nothing kept the people from believing, when guidance came to them, except that they said: Has Allah sent a [mere] human as a Messenger?
- 17:95. Say: If there had been angels on earth, walking about and settled therein, We would surely have sent down to them from heaven an angel as a messenger.
- 17:96. Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you. Verily He is well aware of His slaves and sees them all.

﴿We have explained [the truth] to man in this Qur'an, discussing different issues in various ways﴾ that is, We have various ways of exhortation and comparisons, and We have discussed repeatedly issues that people need to know, so that they may be reminded of them and fear Allah. But only a few of them pay heed, those for whom Allah has previously decreed happiness, and whom Allah helped and guided. But most people insist on showing ingratitude for this blessing, which is the greatest of all blessings, and they showed stubbornness by demanding signs other than the signs that Allah sent to His Prophet (ﷺ), and they came up with suggested signs from their own ignorant and unjust minds. Hence they said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who brought this Qur'an which contains all kinds of proof and signs:

﴿We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us﴾ that is, flowing rivers.

﴿Or you have a garden of date palms and vines﴾ so that you no longer need to walk about in the marketplaces, coming and going.

﴿Or you cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you claimed [will happen on the Day of Resurrection]﴾ that is, as a punishment.

﴿or you bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face﴾ that is, so we can see them with our own eyes and they testify to the truth of what you have brought.

﴿Or you have a house made of gold﴾ that is, adorned with gold and other materials

﴿or you ascend to heaven﴾ physically, ﴿and even then we will not believe in your ascent unless you bring down to us a Book we can read﴾.

As this stubbornness and these demands were the words of the most foolish and the most wicked of people, which implied rejection of the truth and an ill-mannered attitude towards Allah, and stemmed from a belief that it was the Messenger (ﷺ) who produced the signs by himself, Allah instructed him to declare Him to be far above that which they ascribed to Him, so He said:

﴿Say: Glory be to my Lord﴾ and exalted be He far above what they say, for His rulings and signs cannot be in accordance with their corrupt whims and desires and their misguided opinions.

﴿Am I anything but a man, sent as a Messenger?﴾ I have no control over the matter at all.

This matter is what prevented most people from believing: the fact that the Messengers who were sent to them were humans of their own kind. But this was by the mercy of Allah towards them; He sent to them Messengers from among themselves, for they would not have been able to learn from angels.

﴿If there had been angels on earth, walking about and settled therein﴾ then they would have been able to see angels and learn from them, so ﴿We would surely have sent down to them from heaven an angel as a messenger﴾ so that they could learn from them.

﴿Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you. Verily He is well aware of His slaves and sees them all﴾. Part of His testimony in support of His Messenger (ﷺ) is the miracles with which He supported him, the signs that He sent down to him and the victory that He granted him over those who opposed him. If the Messenger had fabricated any lies and attributed them to Allah, He would have seized him by his right hand, then cut off his aorta (*cf.* 69: 44-46). For Allah is All-Aware, All-Seeing, and nothing about His slaves is hidden from Him.



﴿وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَيَحْشُرُهُمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ عُمِيَٰ وَبُكِيَٰ وَصُمِيَٰ مَا وَنَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنَاهُمْ
سَعِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا وَرُفَاتًا أَلَا
لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ﴿٩٨﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ
عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلًا لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَأَبَى الظَّالِمُونَ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾ قُلْ
لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ تَمْلِكُونَ خَزَائِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَتُورًا
﴿١٠٠﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٩٧-١٠٠)

- 17:97. Whomever Allah guides is truly guided; whomever He causes to go astray, you will find no one to protect them from Him. On the Day of Resurrection, We will gather them on their faces, blind, dumb and deaf. Their abode will be hell; every time its flames die down, We will increase for them the fierceness of the blaze.
- 17:98. That will be their recompense because they rejected Our revelations and said: What! When we have turned into bones and dust, will we really be raised up and created anew?
- 17:99. Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, has power to create the like of them? He has decreed an appointed time for them, of which there is no doubt. Yet the wrongdoers persist in disbelief.
- 17:100. Say: If you possessed the treasures of my Lord's bounty, you would surely hold them back for fear of spending, for man is ever miserly.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He is the only One Who has the power to guide or leave astray. Whomever He guides, He shows him the path of ease and protects him from the path of hardship, so that he

will be truly guided. But whomever He sends astray, He will forsake him and leave him to his own devices, so he will have none to guide him other than Allah, and he will have no ally to protect him from the punishment of Allah, when Allah gathers them on their faces by way of humiliation and disgrace, blind and dumb, so that they will not be able to see or speak.

«Their abode» that is, their destination
«will be hell» in which all distress, anguish and punishment will be combined.

«every time its flames die down» and are about to be extinguished
«We will increase for them the fierceness of the blaze» that is, We will make it increase in flame. The punishment will never be reduced, nor will they be finished off so that they might die. The punishment will never be alleviated, but Allah (ﷻ) will not wrong them; rather He will requite them for disbelieving in His signs and denying the resurrection of which all the Messengers and Books spoke, and for demanding signs from their Lord and denying His perfect power.

«and said: What! When we have turned into bones and dust, will we really be raised up and created anew?» That is, that will never happen, because it is highly unlikely – according to their corrupt way of thinking.

«Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth», the creation of which is greater than the creation of man
«has power to create the like of them?» Indeed He is able to do that. But «He has decreed an appointed time for them, of which there is no doubt» otherwise, if He so willed, he could have brought them all at once.

«Yet», even though He has established proof and evidence for the resurrection, «the wrongdoers persist in disbelief», unjustly on their part and in rejection of the truth.

«Say: If you possessed the treasuries of my Lord's bounty» that never runs out or diminishes

﴿you would surely hold them back for fear of spending﴾ that is, lest what you spend from them runs out, even though it is impossible for the treasuries of Allah to run out. But man is inherently stingy and miserly.



﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ ۖ فَسَأَلَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يَمُوسَىٰ مَسْحُورًا ﴿١٠١﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا أَنْزَلَ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِصَافِرٍ وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يَنْفِرَعَوْتُ مَثُورًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْتَفِزَّهُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَقُلْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اسْكُنُوا الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيفًا ﴿١٠٤﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٠١-١٠٤)

(١٠٤)

- 17:101. We gave Moosâ nine clear signs – ask the Children of Israel. When he came to them, Pharaoh said to him: O Moosâ, indeed I think you are bewitched.
- 17:102. Moosâ said: You know full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these [signs] as clear evidence. Verily, O Pharaoh, I think that you are doomed!
- 17:103. So he resolved to drive them out of the land, but We drowned him and all those who were with him.
- 17:104. After his death, we said to the Children of Israel: Dwell in the land, but when the appointed time of the hereafter comes, We will bring you all together as a mixed crowd.

That is: you, O Messenger who is supported by signs, are not the first Messenger to be rejected by the people, for before you We sent Moosâ ibn 'Imrân, to whom We spoke directly, to Pharaoh and his people, and We gave him ﴿nine clear signs﴾, each of which on its

own would have been sufficient for anyone whose aim was to follow the truth, such as the snake, the staff, the flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, the blood, the plague and the parting of the sea. So if you doubt any of that, ﴿ask the Children of Israel﴾

﴿When he came to them, Pharaoh said to him﴾ despite these signs ﴿O Moosâ, indeed I think you are bewitched﴾.

﴿Moosâ said﴾ to him: ﴿You know full well﴾, O Pharaoh, ﴿that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these [signs] as clear evidence﴾ from Him to His slaves, so your statement is not correct. Rather you only said that in order to deceive your own people and out of disrespect towards their intelligence.

﴿Verily, O Pharaoh, I think that you are doomed!﴾ that is, disgraced and exposed to punishment, subject to condemnation, blame and curses.

﴿So he﴾ namely Pharaoh ﴿resolved to drive them out of the land﴾ that is, to expel them and banish them from the land ﴿but We drowned him and all those who were with him﴾ and we caused the Children of Israel to inherit their land.

Hence Allah says: ﴿After his death, we said to the Children of Israel: Dwell in the land, but when the appointed time of the hereafter comes, We will bring you all together as a mixed crowd﴾ that is, all of you, so that We may requite each one according to his deeds.



﴿وَالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٠٥)

17:105. With the truth We have sent it [the Qur'an] down, and with the truth it has descended. And We have not sent you but as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner.

That is, with the truth We sent down this Noble Qur'an, speaking of commands and prohibitions, reward and punishment.

﴿With the truth We have sent it [the Qur'an] down﴾ that is, with truth from Allah and justice, and with protection from every accursed devil.

﴿And We have not sent you but as a bearer of glad tidings﴾ to those who obey Allah, of reward in this world and the hereafter ﴿and a warner﴾ to those who disobey Allah, of punishment in this world and the hereafter. This requires that there should also be further explanation of the glad tidings and warnings that are given.



﴿وَقُرْءَانًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَى مُكْتَبٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ نَزِيلًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ قُلْ ءَامِنُوا بِهِ ؕ أَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَيَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا ﴿١٠٩﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٠٦-١٠٩)

- 17:106. It is a Qur'an that We have revealed with clarity so that you may recite it to the people slowly and with deliberation. And We have sent it down little by little.
- 17:107. Say: Believe in it, or do not believe. Verily, those who were given knowledge before it,³² when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration,
- 17:108. and they say: Glory be to our Lord. Verily the promise of our Lord is ever bound to be fulfilled.
- 17:109. They fall down on their faces, weeping, and it [the Qur'an] increases them in humility.

³² Namely the People of the Book (Jews and Christians).

That is, and We have sent down this Qur'an with clarity, to distinguish between guidance and misguidance, truth and falsehood ﴿so that you may recite it to the people slowly and with deliberation﴾, so that they may ponder and reflect upon its meanings, and derive knowledge from it.

﴿And We have sent it down little by little﴾ that is, piecemeal over twenty-three years.

﴿Whenever they come to you [O Muhammad] with an argument, We reveal to you the truth and the best explanation.﴾ (*al-Furqān* 25: 33)

Once it is clearly established that it is the truth concerning which there is no doubt whatsoever, then ﴿Say﴾ to those who reject it and turn away from it:

﴿Believe in it, or do not believe﴾, for Allah has no need of you and you will not harm Him in the slightest; rather you only harm yourselves, for Allah has slaves other than you and it is they to whom Allah has given beneficial knowledge.

﴿when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration﴾ that is, they are deeply moved by it and they submit to Him.

﴿and they say: Glory be to our Lord﴾ and exalted be He far above that which is not befitting to His Majesty that the polytheists ascribe to Him.

﴿Verily the promise of our Lord﴾ of the resurrection and requital for deeds

﴿is ever bound to be fulfilled﴾ – it will not be broken and there is no doubt about it.

﴿They fall down on their faces, weeping, and it [the Qur'an] increases them in humility﴾. These people are like those whom Allah blessed of the believers among the People of the Book, such as 'Abdullāh ibn Salām and others, who believed at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and after that.



﴿قُلْ أَدْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتُ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمَلِكِ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ وَكِيٌّ مِنَ الذَّلِيلِ وَكَبِيرَةٌ كَبِيرًا ﴿١١١﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١١٠-١١١)

- 17:110. Say [O Muhammad]: Call upon Allah, or call upon the Most Gracious [ar-Rahmân].³³ No matter which name you call upon Him by, to Him belong the most beautiful names. Do not raise your voice too loud in prayer, nor say it in too low a voice, but seek a way in between.
- 17:111. And say: Praise be to Allah Who has never begotten a son, and has no partner in His dominion, nor is anyone [needed] to protect Him due to [any] weakness. And magnify Him by proclaiming His greatness.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says to His slaves: ﴿Call upon Allah, or call upon the Most Gracious [ar-Rahmân]﴾ that is, whichever name you choose, for ﴿No matter which name you call upon Him by, to Him belong the most beautiful names﴾ that is, He does not have any name that is not beautiful, such that it would not be permissible to call upon Him by it; rather no matter what name you call upon Him by, it will serve the purpose. What should be done is to call upon Him for whatever is sought by the name that is appropriate to that need.

﴿Do not raise your voice too loud in prayer﴾ that is, in your recitation
 ﴿nor say it in too low a voice﴾ for neither is allowed.

³³ The polytheists of Quraysh objected when they heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying: O Allah, O Most Gracious (*Yâ Allâh, yâ Rahmân*). They said: Muhammad enjoins us to call upon One God at the time when he is calling upon two! So this verse was revealed to clarify that there is only One God, to Whom belong the most beautiful names and sublime attributes.

As for raising the voice too loud, if the polytheists who disbelieve in the Qur'an hear it, they revile it and they revile the one who brought it. As for reciting in too low a voice, that does not achieve the purpose because those who want to hear it cannot do so when the voice is too low.

﴿but seek a way in between﴾ that is, between being too loud and too low; in other words, a middle path between the two extremes.

﴿And say: Praise be to Allah﴾ to Whom belong all perfect attributes, praise and glory in all aspects, and Who is far above all faults and shortcomings.

﴿Who has never begotten a son, and has no partner in His dominion﴾; rather all dominion belongs to Allah, the One, the Subduer. Both the upper and lower realms are owned by Him and no one has any share in His dominion.

﴿nor is anyone [needed] to protect Him due to [any] weakness﴾ that is, He does not take anyone from among His creation as a friend in order to seek honour or help from that friendship, for He is the Self-Sufficient, the Most Praiseworthy, Who has no need of any created being on earth or in the heavens. Rather He takes people as close friends out of kindness and mercy towards them.

﴿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*)

﴿And magnify Him by proclaiming His greatness﴾ that is, venerate Him and proclaim His greatness by speaking of His great attributes, praising Him by His beautiful names, extolling His glorious actions and honouring Him by worshipping Him alone, with no partner or associate, and showing total devotion to Him alone.

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

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.

18.

Soorat al-Kahf

(Makki)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا ﴿١﴾ قِيمًا لِيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا
شَدِيدًا مِمَّنْ لَدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا
حَسَنًا ﴿٢﴾ مُكْتَبِينَ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣﴾ وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ﴿٤﴾
مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ
إِلَّا كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَعَلَّكَ بِنَجْعِ نَفْسِكَ عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ
أَسَفًا ﴿٦﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١-٦)

- 18:1. Praise be to Allah Who has sent down the Book to His slave, and has not allowed any crookedness therein,
- 18:2. a straightforward Book to warn of a severe punishment from Him, and to give glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds, that theirs will be a goodly reward,
- 18:3. wherein they will abide forever;
- 18:4. and to warn those who say: Allah has begotten a son.

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- 18:5. They have no knowledge of such a thing, nor did their forefathers. Monstrous is the word that comes out of their mouths. What they say is nothing but a lie.
- 18:6. Are you [O Prophet] going to destroy yourself with grief over them, because they do not believe in this message?
-

Praising Allah is extolling Him for His attributes which are all attributes of perfection, and for His blessings both apparent and hidden, spiritual and worldly. The greatest of all His blessings is His sending down of this great Book to His slave and Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ). So Allah praises Himself, which is an implicit instruction to people to praise Him for sending the Messenger (ﷺ) to them and sending down the Book to them.

Then He describes this Book as having two attributes which imply that it is perfect in all aspects. Firstly He states that there is no crookedness in it, and secondly He affirms that it is straightforward. Stating that there is no crookedness in it implies that there are no lies or falsehoods in its stories, no injustice in its commands and prohibitions, and nothing in it is without purpose.

Affirming that it is straightforward implies that it does not enjoin anything but that which is good, and it does not speak of anything but the most sublime issues, which are the issues that fill the heart with knowledge, faith and wisdom, such as when it tells us of the names, attributes and actions of Allah, and stories of the unseen, future and past. Its commands and prohibitions purify and cleanse souls, make them grow and perfect them, because they are based on perfect justice, fairness, sincerity and true servitude to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, alone, with no partner or associate. With regard to a Book that is described in such terms, it is very appropriate that Allah should praise Himself for having sent it down and that He should remind His slaves of this favour.

﴿to warn of a severe punishment from Him﴾ that is, to warn by means of this Holy Qur'an of the consequences that will result, by His will and decree, for those who go against his command. This includes punishment in this world and punishment in the hereafter. This is also one of His blessings, that He alarms His slaves and warns them of that which will cause them harm and destroy them. This is like the verse in which He, after giving a description of the fire, says: ﴿...Thus Allah instills fear in His slaves: O My slaves, then fear Me!﴾ (*az-Zumar 39: 16*)

By His mercy towards His slaves, He has decreed severe punishments for those who go against His command, and He has explained it to them and described the causes that lead to that.

﴿and to give glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds, that theirs will be a goodly reward﴾ that is, and Allah has sent down to His slaves the Book, to give glad tidings to those who believe in Him and in His Messengers and Books, those whose faith is complete. And He enjoined upon them righteous deeds, both obligatory and encouraged, on the basis of both sincerity and following the teachings of the Sunnah.

﴿that theirs will be a goodly reward﴾ – this is the reward that Allah has made dependent on faith and righteous deeds, the greatest and most significant of which is attaining the pleasure of Allah and admittance to paradise, in which there is that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever crossed the mind of man.

The fact that the reward is described as goodly indicates that the reward will not be interrupted by anything that could cause annoyance or undermine its joy in any way. If there had been any such element in the reward, it would not have been described as goodly.

Moreover, this goodly reward is one in which ﴿they will abide forever﴾ and it will never leave them and they will never leave it. Rather it is a life of ever-increasing bliss. These glad tidings require

a mention of the deeds that may lead to that of which the glad tidings speak, therefore this Qur'an refers to every good deed that leads to that which will bring joy to the heart.

﴿and to warn those who say: Allah has begotten a son﴾ namely the Jews, Christians and polytheists who utter such monstrous words. They are not speaking on the basis of certain knowledge, or knowledge that they or their forefathers whom they imitate and follow possessed; rather they followed nothing but conjecture and whims and desires.

﴿Monstrous is the word that comes out of their mouths﴾ that is, it is something extremely abhorrent that deserves the severest punishment. What could be worse than to describe Allah as taking a child, which implies imperfection and shortcomings, and suggests that someone other than Him has a share with Him in the attributes of Lordship and divinity, and is a lie against Him? ﴿Who does greater evil than he who fabricates lies against Allah?﴾ (18: 15) Hence Allah says here: ﴿What they say is nothing but a lie﴾ that is, a pure lie in which there is no element of truth. See how He proves this notion to be false, gradually moving from one thing to another that is even more wrong. So first of all He says: ﴿They have no knowledge of such a thing, nor did their forefathers﴾, for speaking about Allah without knowledge is undoubtedly prohibited and wrong. Then, secondly, He tells us that it is a reprehensible and abhorrent notion, as He says: ﴿Monstrous is the word that comes out of their mouths﴾. And, thirdly, He states that it is a lie and is contrary to the truth.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was keen for people to be guided and he strove hard to achieve that; he would rejoice and be happy when people were guided and he would feel sad and be filled with sorrow for the misguided disbelievers, out of compassion and pity towards them. Therefore Allah instructed him not to be distracted by worry or sorrow for these people who did not believe in this Qur'an, as He said later in this passage: ﴿Are you [O Prophet] going to destroy yourself with

grief over them, because they do not believe?﴾ (18: 6). And He says elsewhere:

﴿...So do not let yourself waste away in sorrow for them...﴾ (Fâṭir 35: 8)

﴿Are you [O Prophet] going to destroy yourself with grief over them﴾ that is, with sorrow over them? For your reward is due from Allah, and if Allah knew of any good in these people, He would have guided them, but He knows that they are fit for nothing but the fire. Therefore He has forsaken them, and they were not guided, so distracting yourself with worry and sorrow for them will not benefit you.

There is a lesson in this and similar verses: the one who is instructed to call people to Allah must convey the message and strive by all possible means to guide them and block the path of misguidance as much as he can, whilst putting his trust in Allah. Then if they are guided, all well and good, otherwise he should not grieve or feel sad, for that weakens one's resolve and saps one's strength, and there is no benefit in it. Rather he should carry on and persist in doing what he is instructed to do and is already doing, for anything other than that is beyond his means. Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ):

﴿...you [O Muhammad] cannot guide whomever you like...﴾ (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 56)

Moosâ (ﷺ) said:

﴿...O my Lord, I have control only over myself and my brother...﴾ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 25)

In the case of people other than the Prophets it is even more appropriate to note that they have no control over the guidance of others. Allah (ﷻ) says:

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



﴿ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ﴾ (٧) وَإِنَّا
لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا ﴿٨﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٧-٨)

- 18:7. Verily We have made all that is on earth as an adornment for it, in order to test them [humankind] and see which of them are best in conduct.
- 18:8. And verily We will reduce all that is on it to a barren wasteland.

Here Allah tells us that He has made all that is on the face of the earth, delicious food and drink, fine dwellings, trees, rivers, crops, fruits, beautiful scenery, elegant gardens, enchanting voices, delightful images, gold and silver, horses and camels, and so on – all of that Allah has made as an adornment for this realm, and as a trial and test.

﴿in order to test them [humankind] and see which of them are best in conduct﴾ that is, the most sincere and correct in deeds. Yet despite that, Allah will cause all the things mentioned here to diminish, vanish and come to an end, and the earth will become a barren wasteland, all its pleasures gone, its rivers cut off, all traces of goodness disappeared and its delights vanished. This is the reality of this world, which Allah has made clear to us as if we could see it with our own eyes. He warns us against being deceived by it, and encourages us to seek the realm where delights will last forever and the one who reaches it will be blessed; all of that is out of mercy towards us. Those who look at this world as it appears to be, without looking at its reality, will be deceived by its adornments and finery, so they will live in this world like animals, enjoying it like grazing cattle, not paying any attention to the rights of their Lord or caring to know Him; rather their main focus is pursuit of worldly pleasures, regardless of how they attain them or indulge in them. When death approaches such a person, he

feels anxious because he is going to vanish and will no longer enjoy its pleasures, and not because of his deeds of negligence and sin.

But the one who looks at the reality of this world, and understands the purpose of it and of his own creation, will take from it that which will help him to fulfil the purpose for which he was created, and he will make the most of the valuable life that he has been given. So he will regard this world as a place through which he passes, not a place to settle down and have fun, for it is a place through which to travel, not a place of final abode. So he strives hard to know his Lord, obey His commands and do good deeds. This is the best status before Allah, and he deserves from Allah all honour, pleasure and joy. He looks at the reality of this world, whereas the one who is deceived looks only at its outward appearance, and He strives for the sake of his hereafter, whereas the one who wastes his time strives for worldly gain. What a great difference there is between the two.



﴿ أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا ﴾ ٩ إِذْ أَوَى
الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا
﴿ فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا ﴾ ١١ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيُعَلِّمُوا
الْحَرْبِينَ أَحْسَنَ لِمَا لَيْسُوا أُمَّدًا ﴾ ١٢ (سورة الكهف: ٩-١٢)

18:9. Do you think that the people of the cave and the inscription³⁴ were more wondrous than Our other signs?

18:10. When the young men took refuge in the cave, they said: Our Lord, bestow upon us mercy from Yourself, and guide us through our ordeal.

³⁴ The inscription (*ar-raqeem*) was a tablet or plaque on which were written the names and lineage of the people of the cave. (*al-Jalálayn*)

- 18:11. Then We caused them to fall into a deep sleep in the cave for many years.
- 18:12. Then We awoke them so that We might see which of the two parties would best calculate the length of their stay [in the cave].

«Do you think that the people of the cave and the inscription were more wondrous than Our other signs?» This appears in the form of a question, but what is meant is a negatory statement and instruction not to think that the story of the people of the cave and what happened to them was something unprecedented among the signs of Allah, or that it was a brilliant sign of His wisdom that was unique and unparalleled. Rather Allah (ﷻ) has sent many wondrous and amazing signs that were akin to the signs of the people of the cave, and even greater than that. And Allah is still showing His slaves signs in the universe and in their own selves, through which truth becomes distinct from falsehood, and guidance from misguidance. This negatory statement does not mean that the story of the people of the cave was not a wonder, for it is one of the wondrous signs of Allah; rather what is meant is that there are many such wonders, therefore limiting our amazement and wonder to this story only, to the exclusion of others, is a sign of lack of knowledge and reason. Rather the believer should think of all the signs of Allah that Allah calls people to reflect upon, for that is the key to faith and the way to attain knowledge and certainty.

Allah describes them as «people of the cave and the inscription» – which was a plaque on which their names and their story were written – because they stayed in that cave for a long time.

Then Allah tells us their story in brief, followed by more details.

«When the young men took refuge in the cave» with the aim of seeking protection for themselves and keeping away from the persecution of their own people,

﴿they said: Our Lord, bestow upon us mercy from Yourself﴾ that is, make us steadfast, protect us from evil and help us to do good.

﴿and guide us through our ordeal﴾ that is, make easy for us that which is best for us, and put right all our affairs, both spiritual and worldly. Thus they combined striving and fleeing from persecution to a place where they could hide, with beseeching Allah and asking Him to help them in their ordeal, and demonstrating that they were not relying on themselves or on other people.

Hence Allah answered this supplication and saved them by means of something they never reckoned on.

﴿Then We caused them to fall into a deep sleep in the cave for many years﴾, that is, three hundred and nine years. By means of the sleep mentioned, their hearts were protected from confusion and fear, and they were also protected from their people, so that they might become a clear sign.

﴿Then We awoke them﴾ from their sleep

﴿so that We might see which of the two parties would best calculate the length of their stay [in the cave]﴾. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Similarly [as We caused them to sleep], We awoke them so that they might question one another﴾ (18: 19). Learning how long they stayed there and reaching the right figure will lead one to acknowledge the perfect might, wisdom and mercy of Allah (ﷻ), for if they had remained asleep, their story would not have been known to anyone.



﴿مَحْنُ نَقْصِ عَلَيْكَ نَبَاهِمُ بِالْحَقِّ إِنْهُمْ فِيهِءَ ءَامَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى
 وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُوكَ
 مِنْ دُونِهَا إِلَهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا ﴿١٤﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٣-١٤)

18:13. We recount to you their story in truth: they were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.

18:14. We strengthened their hearts when they stood up and declared: Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We will never call upon any god besides Him; if we did, we would then have uttered an abomination.

The details of the story begin here. Allah recounts the story to His Prophet (ﷺ) in truth, and there can be no doubt or confusion concerning it.

«they were young men who believed in their Lord» the word translated here as «young men» appears in a plural form which indicates that they were few, that is, less than ten in number. They believed in Allah alone, with no partner or associate, unlike their people.

«and We increased them in guidance». In other words, because they took the initiative and were guided to faith in the first place, Allah increased them in guidance, which is beneficial knowledge and righteous deeds, as He says elsewhere:

«Allah increases in guidance those who are guided...» (*Maryam 19: 76*)

«We strengthened their hearts» that is, We gave them patience and make them steadfast, and We instilled reassurance in their hearts in that alarming situation. This was by Allah's kindness towards them: He enabled them to believe and be guided, and He granted them patience, steadfastness and reassurance.

«when they stood up and declared: Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth» that is, the One Who created us and granted us provision, Who controls us and cares for us, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the only One Who could create these mighty creations, not those idols and images that do not create or grant provision, and have no power to bring benefit or cause harm, or to cause death, give life or bring about resurrection. They quoted the

oneness of divine Lordship as evidence for the oneness of divinity, hence they said:

﴿We will never call upon any god besides Him﴾ that is, from among created beings

﴿if we did﴾ that is, if we called upon other gods besides Him, after we have come to know that He is the Lord God and it is not permissible or appropriate to worship any but Him

﴿we would then have uttered an abomination﴾ that is, something that is far removed from truth. Thus they combined affirmation of the oneness of Lordship and the oneness of divinity, and adherence to that, with the declaration that He is true and all others besides Him are false. This is indicative of their perfect knowledge of their Lord and increased guidance from Allah.



﴿هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمًا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَوْلَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِمُ سُلْطَانٌ بَيِّنٌ
فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٥)

18:15. These people of ours have taken for worship gods other than Him; why do they not bring any clear authority for what they do? Who does greater evil than he who fabricates lies against Allah?

Having mentioned what Allah had bestowed upon them of faith and guidance, they then mentioned what their people were following, of taking gods besides Allah. They resented them for that, and stated that their people had no proof for that; rather they were extremely ignorant and misguided.

﴿why do they not bring any clear authority for what they do?﴾ that is, proof and evidence for what they are following of falsehood, but they can never do that; rather that is a fabrication against Allah

on their part, and telling lies about Him, and this is the worst type of wrongdoing. Hence Allah says: «Who does greater evil than he who fabricates lies against Allah?»



﴿وَإِذْ آخَرْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأْوُوا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّجْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَرْفَقًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٦)

18:16. Now that you have withdrawn from them and all that they worship, except Allah, take refuge in the cave; your Lord will shower His mercy upon you and will make fitting provision for you in your situation.

They said to one another: As you have withdrawn from your people both physically and in religious terms, there is nothing left but to be saved from their evil and to take measures that will lead to that. That is because they had no way of fighting them and they could not remain among them when they were following a religion other than theirs.

«take refuge in the cave» that is, go and hide there
«your Lord will shower His mercy upon you and will make fitting provision for you in your situation».

As stated above, Allah tells us that they called upon Him, saying: «Our Lord, bestow upon us mercy from Yourself, and guide us through our ordeal» (18: 10). Thus they combined the declaration that they had no power or strength, turning to Allah to take care of them and praying for that, with trusting that Allah would do that. So it is no wonder that Allah showered His mercy upon them and made fitting provision for them in that situation. He preserved their religious commitment and physical well-being, made them a sign to His creation and made their name renowned, which was part of His mercy towards them. He made

things easy for them, so that even the place where they slept was the most appropriate for their situation. Hence He says:



﴿ وَرَبَّى السَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَوُّرًا عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرَّبَتْ مِنْهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لِيَهْدِيَ اللَّهُ بِاللَّهِ الْغَوِيَّ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ يَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا ﴿١٧﴾ وَتَحَسَّبُوهمْ أَنْكَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنَقَلْنَا لَهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَكَلَبْنَا كَلْبَهُمْ بِرِجْلَيْهِ فِى الْوَعِيدِ لَوْ أَطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمَلَمْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُجْبًا ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٧-١٨)

18:17. You would have seen the sun, when it rose, declining to the right from their cave, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they were in the spacious part of it. That was one of the signs of Allah. He whom Allah guides is rightly guided; but he whom Allah causes to go astray, for him you will find no guardian to guide him.

18:18. You would have thought they were awake, although they were sleeping. We caused them to turn over, onto their right and left sides, while their dog lay at the cave's entrance with legs outstretched. If you had seen them, you would certainly have turned and fled, filled with fear of them.

Allah protected them from the sun by making available to them a cave where, when the sun rose, it declined to the right away from it, and when it set, it turned away from it to the left, so its heat did not touch them and cause damage to their bodies.

﴿while they were in the spacious part of it﴾ that is, of the cave, namely a wide part of it. That was so that fresh air and breezes could reach them, thus taking away any staleness and protecting them from such discomfort as would exist in a narrow space, especially as they stayed

there for a long time. This is one of the signs of Allah that point to His power and His mercy towards them, and how He answered their prayers and guided them, even in this situation. Hence He says:

﴿He whom Allah guides is rightly guided﴾ that is, there is no way to attain guidance except from Allah, for He guides to all that is best in both realms (this world and the hereafter).

﴿but he whom Allah causes to go astray, for him you will find no guardian to guide him﴾ that is, you will not find anyone to care for him or control his affairs in a way that is good for him, or to show him the way to goodness and success, for Allah has decreed misguidance for him, and none can put back His decree.

﴿You would have thought they were awake, although they were sleeping﴾ that is, if you had seen them, you would have thought they were awake, when in fact they were asleep. The commentators said: that is because their eyes were open, so that they would not be damaged, so the one who looked at them would have thought that they were awake, although they were asleep.

﴿We caused them to turn over, onto their right and left sides﴾ this was also to protect their bodies, for the earth naturally consumes bodies that are in direct contact with it. But by the decree of Allah, He caused them to turn over onto their right and left sides, as much as was needed to prevent the earth causing damage to their bodies. Allah (ﷻ) was able to protect them from the earth without turning them over, but He is Most Wise, and He wanted His universal laws to be consistent and for causes and effects to remain in place.

﴿while their dog lay at the cave's entrance with legs outstretched﴾ that is, the dog that was with the people of the cave experienced the same as they did of sleep, as he was guarding them, lying at the entrance to the cave with his legs outstretched. This has to do with their protection from the earth. As for their protection from other people, Allah tells us that He protected them by means of fear, as He surrounded them with an atmosphere of fear so that if anyone had

come across them, his heart would have been filled with fear, and he would have turned and fled. This is what helped them to remain there for so long without anyone coming to know of them, even though they were very close to the city. The evidence that they were so close is that when they woke up, they sent one of their number to buy some food for them from the city, whilst they stayed there and waited for him. This indicates that they were very close to the city.



﴿وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٩-٢٠)

18:19. Similarly [as We caused them to sleep], We awoke them so that they might question one another. One of them said: How long have you been here? They said: We have been here for a day, or part of a day. They said: Your Lord knows best how long you have been here. Let one of you go to the city with this silver of yours, and find out which is the best food [to be had] and bring some to you. But let him be cautious and not let your presence be known.

18:20. For if they find out about you, they will stone you or force you to return to their religion, and in that case you will never prosper.

﴿Similarly [as We caused them to sleep], We awoke them﴾ from their lengthy sleep

﴿so that they might question one another﴾ that is, so that they might discuss how long they had actually stayed there.

﴿One of them said: How long have you been here? They said: We have been here for a day, or part of a day﴾. This was based on speculation on the speaker's part. It is as if they were confused and uncertain about the length of their stay, hence ﴿They said: Your Lord knows best how long you have been here﴾. Thus they referred knowledge of the matter to the One Whose knowledge encompasses all things, in general terms and in detail.

Perhaps after that Allah (ﷻ) informed them of how long they had remained there, because He awoke them so that they might question one another, and He tells us that they did question one another and give their answers to the best of their knowledge, but at the end of their discussion they were still uncertain. But Allah must have told them the certain answer, and we know that because of the reason why He awoke them, for He would not have done that with no purpose. By His mercy towards the one who seeks the truth in matters that he should learn about and strive for that purpose as much as he can, Allah will clarify matters for him. Moreover we know this from a subsequent verse in which Allah says: ﴿Thus We caused them to be discovered, so that the people might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there can be no doubt about the Hour﴾ (18: 21). If knowledge concerning the length of their stay was not certain, there would not have been a sign or evidence for what is mentioned (in 18: 21, namely the Hour).

Moreover, when they questioned one another, and there happened that of which Allah tells us, they sent one of their number with their silver – that is, the dirhams that they had with them – to buy some food for them to eat from the city that they had left, and they instructed him to choose the best and most delicious food, and to be cautious and exercise stealth when going there, buying it and coming back, so that no one would be aware of his presence or that of his brothers.

They also mentioned what they feared if people were to find out about them, for one of two things would happen to them: either they

would stone them and kill them in the worst manner, because of their resentment towards them and their religion, or they would force them to give up their religion and go back to the people's religion, in which case they would never prosper; rather they would lose their religion and would lose out in this world and the hereafter.

From these two verses we learn a number of things:

- It is encouraged to seek knowledge and discuss it, because Allah awoke them for that purpose.
- The proper etiquette to follow in the event of being uncertain about an issue of knowledge; it should be referred to someone who knows about it, and we should not go beyond what we know.
- It is valid to delegate someone to buy and sell on behalf of another person, and to have partners in doing so.
- It is permissible to eat good and delicious food, so long as that does not go to the extent of extravagance that is prohibited, because Allah tells us that they said: ﴿and find out which is the best food [to be had] and bring some to you﴾ (18: 19). This applies especially if a person is used to that and nothing else will suit him. Perhaps this is the evidence for many of the commentators who suggested that these people were the sons of kings, because they told him to bring the best food, that is usually eaten by rich and prominent people.
- It is encouraged to be cautious and keep a low profile, and to keep away from places where one could be persecuted for religious reasons, using discretion and concealing any information about oneself and one's fellow believers. These young men were very devoted to their religion and they fled from religious persecution, leaving their homeland for the sake of Allah.
- Allah tells us how evil could lead to harm and corruption, that should make one hate it and keep away from it. This is the way

of the believers of earlier and later generations, because they said (if the disbelievers forced them to recant their faith): ﴿and in that case you will never prosper﴾ (18: 20).



﴿وَكَذَلِكَ أَعْتَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَن وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُنْيَانًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٢١)

18:21. Thus We caused them to be discovered, so that the people might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there can be no doubt about the Hour, at a time when they were disputing among themselves concerning the matter [of resurrection]. Some said: Build a structure over them; their Lord knows best about them. Those who prevailed in the matter said: We will surely build a place of worship over them.

Here Allah tells us that He caused the people to find out about the people of the cave. That – and Allah knows best – came about after they had woken up and sent one of their number to buy food for them, and they instructed him to be cautious and keep a low profile. But Allah willed something that was in the people’s best interests, and would increase the reward (of the people of the cave), which was that the people would see in them a visible sign of Allah, to show that the promise of Allah is true, beyond any shadow of doubt, and it is not something far-fetched or unlikely, after the people had been disputing about the matter, some of them believing in the promise of resurrection and requital, whilst others denied it. Thus Allah caused their story to increase the believers in insight and certainty, and to establish proof against those who denied it, and the people of the cave attained reward for that.

Allah caused the story to become well known, and He raised them in status until they were held in high esteem by those who discovered them, who said: ﴿Build a structure over them﴾. Allah knows best about them and what their ultimate fate will be.

﴿Those who prevailed in the matter﴾ – who were the people in authority – ﴿said: We will surely build a place of worship over them﴾ where we will worship Allah and remember their story and what happened to them. This is something that is not allowed, as the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade it and criticised those who do it. The fact that it is mentioned here does not mean that it is not blameworthy. Rather the context here has to do with veneration of the people of the cave and praise for them, and tells us that the respect of those who found out about them reached such a level that they decided to build a place of worship over them, after the people of the cave had been so afraid of their own people and had taken precautions to avoid being discovered, then matters turned out as you see.

This story tells us that whoever flees from persecution for the sake of his religion, Allah will protect him from that; whoever strives to maintain his well-being, Allah will grant him that; whoever seeks refuge with Allah, Allah will grant him refuge and cause him to be a means of guidance for others; whoever puts up with humiliation for His sake, seeking His pleasure, the ultimate consequences will be high status for him that will be achieved in a manner that he does not expect.

﴿...and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 198)



﴿سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا

قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَّةً ظَهْرًا وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾ (سورة
الكهف: ٢٢)

18:22. Some will say: There were three of them, their dog being the fourth. Others will say: There were five of them, their dog being the sixth, guessing at the unseen. And others will say: There were seven of them, their dog being the eighth. Say [O Muhammad]: My Lord knows best their number. None but a few have any real knowledge of them. So do not enter into discussion with them about them except in a brief and polite manner, or ask any one of them concerning them.

Here Allah tells us of the differences of opinion among the People of the Book regarding the number of the people of the cave. This difference stemmed from guesswork about a matter of the unseen, and their speaking about something of which they had no knowledge. There were three views among them:

Some of them said that there were three of them, with their dog being the fourth. Others said that there were five of them, with their dog being the sixth. After mentioning these two views, Allah tells us that they were guessing at the unseen, which indicates that they were incorrect.

And some of them said that there were seven of them, with their dog being the eighth. This – and Allah knows best – is the correct view, because Allah stated that the first two were wrong, but He did not state that this was wrong, which indicates that it is correct.

This is a kind of dispute which is of no benefit, because knowing how many they were does not serve any interest for people, whether spiritual or worldly, hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿My Lord knows best their number. None but a few have any real knowledge of them﴾ and they are the ones who got it right and knew that they got it right. ﴿So do not enter into discussion﴾ that is, do not argue or debate

﴿with them about them except in a brief and polite manner﴾ that is, based on knowledge and certainty, which should also serve a purpose. As for arguing that is based on ignorance and guesswork at the unseen, in which there is no benefit – either because the person arguing is stubborn, or the issue is unimportant and there is no religious benefit in knowing about it, such as the number of the people of the cave, and so on – then arguing a great deal about it or discussing it on an ongoing basis is a waste of time and could damage relationships among people for no good reason.

﴿or ask any one of them﴾ namely the People of the Book ﴿concerning them﴾ namely the people of the cave. That is because what they say about them is based on guessing at the unseen and speculation that does not serve any real purpose or lead to any certainty. This indicates that it is not allowed to seek fatwas from one who is not fit to issue fatwas, either because he does not have sufficient knowledge concerning the issue asked about, or because he is careless in his talk and may give any answer, as he has no fear of Allah to deter him from doing so. As it is forbidden to ask questions of such a person, it is more appropriate that the person himself should be forbidden to answer questions (because he is ignorant).

This verse also indicates that it may be forbidden to ask a person about some things and not others, so he may be asked about that of which he has knowledge, but not other matters, because Allah did not forbid us to ask them questions in all cases; rather He only forbade us to ask them about the story of the people of the cave and similar matters.



﴿وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَايْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَٰلِكَ عَدَا ﴿٣٢﴾ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَٰذَا رَشْدًا ﴿٣٤﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٢٣-٢٤)

- 18:23. Never say of anything: I will surely do that tomorrow,
 18:24. without adding: If Allah wills. And remember your Lord if you forget,³⁵ and say: I hope that my Lord will guide me to something closer to right guidance than this [matter concerning which I forgot to say: If Allah wills].

This prohibition is like others; although it was addressed to the Messenger (ﷺ) for a specific reason, it is also applicable to all accountable individuals. Allah forbade the individual to say, concerning matters in the future, ﴿I will surely do that﴾ without also mentioning the will of Allah. This is so as to avoid falling into error, which is speaking of the unseen future without being certain as to whether he will do it or not, or whether it will happen or not. That is because failing to say “if Allah wills” is attributing the action to the will of the individual, independently of Allah, and that is not allowed, because the will is all Allah’s.

﴿But you cannot will it unless Allah, the Lord of the worlds, so wills it.﴾ (at-Takweer 81: 29)

Moreover, mentioning the will of Allah makes things easier, brings *barakah* (blessing) and is a means of seeking the help of one’s Lord.

But because people are only human, they will inevitably sometimes forget this and not mention the will of Allah (by saying “if Allah wills”). Therefore Allah instructs the individual to say it after that, when he remembers, so as to do what is required and ward off what one seeks to avoid.

From the general meaning of the words ﴿And remember your Lord if you forget﴾ we understand that it is enjoined to remember Allah when one forgets, because that will alleviate forgetfulness and

³⁵ What is meant is that if you realise that you said something you wanted to do in the future without saying “if Allah wills (in *shâ’ Allâh*)”, you should say this phrase when you realise that, even if that is after a while.

cause the individual to remember what he forgot. Similarly, the one who forgets to remember Allah is instructed to remember his Lord, and not to be among the negligent.

Because the individual needs Allah to help him and guide him to what is right, and protect him from falling into error in word and deed, Allah instructs him to say: «I hope that my Lord will guide me to something closer to right guidance than this [matter concerning which I forgot to say: If Allah wills]». Thus He instructs him to call upon Allah and put his hopes in Him, and trust Him to guide him to that which is closer to right guidance. No wonder that if a person is like this, then he does his utmost and tries hard to seek guidance and the right path, he deserves to be helped and guided, and to receive divine aid that will help him to do the right thing in all his affairs.



﴿وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَبْصَرَ بِهِ، وَأَسْمَعُ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ، مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٢٥-٢٦)

18:25. They remained in their cave for three hundred years, plus nine.

18:26. Say: Allah knows best how long they remained there. To Him belongs [knowledge of] all that is unseen in the heavens and on earth. How well He sees and how well He hears! Besides Him they have no protector, and He allows none to share in His decree.

Having forbidden the Prophet (ﷺ) to ask the People of the Book about the issue of the people of the cave – because they have no knowledge of that, but Allah is the Knower of the unseen and the seen,

the Knower of all things – He now tells him how long they stayed there, and states that the knowledge of that is with Him alone, for this is a matter of the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and only He has knowledge of the unseen thereof. What He has told us about it on the lips of His Messengers is the certain truth concerning which there is no doubt, and whatever He did not inform His Messengers of, no one in creation can know it.

«How well He sees and how well He hears!» This is an expression of admiration of the perfection of His hearing and seeing, which encompass all that can be heard and seen. This comes after the statement that His knowledge encompasses all that can be known.

Then Allah tells us that He alone is the protector in a general sense and in a specific sense, for He is the only One Who takes care of and is in control of all of creation, and Who protects His believing slaves, bringing them forth from the depths of darkness to the light, guiding them to that which is easy and protecting them from that which is difficult and hard. Hence He says: «Besides Him they have no protector» that is, it is He Who protected and took care of the people of the cave, by His kindness and generosity, and He did not leave them to the care of any of His creation.

«and He allows none to share in His decree» this includes His universal decree and His religious decree. He is the One Who is in control of His creation, in terms of His will and decree, creation and control, and He is the One Who rules over them in terms of commands and prohibitions, reward and punishment.

Having stated that the unseen of the heavens and the earth belong to Him, so no created being has any way of knowing that except through the way in which He has informed His slaves of it – which is this Qur'an which tells a great deal about unseen matters – Allah (ﷻ) then instructs us to focus on the Qur'an:



﴿وَأَنْتَ مَا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُتَسَحِّفًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٢٧)

18:27. Recite [and follow] what has been revealed to you [O Muhammad] of the Book of your Lord; none can change His words, and none will you find as a refuge other than Him.

Recitation requires following; in other words, follow what Allah has revealed to you by knowing and understanding its meanings, believing the stories mentioned therein, and complying with its commands and prohibitions, for it is a great Book of which no one can change the words. It does not change because it is true and just, and because it reached the utmost level of beauty and eloquence.

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

Because it is perfect, it is impossible for it to change. If it were imperfect, it would be exposed to change, to a greater or lesser extent. This is a commendation of the Qur'an and implicit encouragement to focus on it.

﴿and none will you find as a refuge other than Him﴾ that is, you will never find any other than your Lord to whom you may turn. Once it has become clear that He is the only One to turn to in all one's affairs, this indicates that there is no other option but to worship Him alone and pray to Him at times of ease and of hardship, for He is the only One Who is needed in all situations and the only One to be asked for all one's needs.



﴿وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ، وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ، عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٢٨)

18:28. Content yourself with [the company of] those who call upon their Lord every morning and afternoon, seeking His Countenance, and do not turn your eyes away from them, desiring the adornment of the life of this world. And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own whims and desires, and is reckless in his deeds.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) – and others who are also subject to divine commands and prohibitions – to content themselves with the believers who are obedient and always remember Allah.

﴿those who call upon their Lord every morning and afternoon﴾ that is, at the beginning and end of the day, seeking thereby the Countenance of Allah. He describes them as worshipping Him sincerely, which implies that one should keep company with good people and strive to make oneself content with their company and mix with them, even if they are poor, because there are many benefits in keeping company with them.

﴿and do not turn your eyes away from them﴾ that is, do not overlook them and turn your gaze away from them.

﴿desiring the adornment of the life of this world﴾, for that is harmful and is of no benefit, and it may undermine one's religious interests, because it leads to being attached to this world and focusing one's ideas and thoughts on it, which leads to the heart losing interest in the hereafter. That is because the adornment of this world is pleasing to the onlooker and bewitches the mind, which in turn distracts the

heart from the remembrance of Allah and causes it to focus on pleasures and desires. This will cause him to waste his time and will cause his affairs to be in disarray, and it will lead to eternal loss and everlasting regret. Hence Allah says: ﴿And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance﴾, so he becomes heedless of Allah, and He punishes him by making him heedless of His remembrance.

﴿who follows his own whims and desires﴾ that is, he becomes a follower of his own whims and desires and strives to get whatever he desires, even if that leads to his doom and loss, for he takes his own whims and desires as his god, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Have you seen the one who takes his own whims and desires as his god, whom Allah causes to go astray despite his knowledge...﴾
(*al-Jāthiyah* 45: 23)

﴿and is reckless in his deeds﴾ that is, with regard to his own interests. Allah forbids obeying such a person, because he only calls to that which is bad.

This verse indicates that the one who should be obeyed and who should be a leader of people is the one whose heart is filled with love for Allah, and that is reflected in his speech, so he constantly remembers Allah and seeks the pleasure of his Lord, and he gives precedence to that over his whims and desires. By doing so he is making the most of his time; his affairs are in order, his deeds are righteous and he calls people to that which Allah has blessed him with. Thus he deserves to be followed and to be made a leader.

The contentment mentioned in this verse is contentment and patience in obeying Allah, which is the highest level of contentment and patience. By achieving that, other types of contentment and patience may also be achieved.

This verse indicates that it is encouraged to remember Allah, call upon Him and worship Him at both ends of the day, because Allah

praised people for doing that, and every time Allah praises the doer of an action, this indicates that Allah loves this action, and if He loves it, then He enjoins it and encourages people to do it.



﴿ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۗ إِنَّا أَعَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ ۗ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٢٩﴾ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿٣٠﴾ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ ۗ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٣١﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٢٩-٣١)

- 18:29. Say: This is the truth from your Lord. So let him who will, believe; and let him who will, disbelieve. For the wrongdoers We have prepared a fire which will encompass them like the walls of a pavilion. If they cry for help, they will be given water like boiling oil that will scald their faces. What a dreadful drink, and what a miserable resting-place!
- 18:30. As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, verily We will not cause the reward of those who do good to be lost.
- 18:31. They will have gardens of perpetual abode through which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and will wear green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade, reclining therein on couches. What an excellent reward, and what a pleasant resting-place!

That is, say to the people, O Muhammad (ﷺ): This is the truth from your Lord. In other words, guidance has become distinct from misguidance, and the attributes of those who are blessed have become

distinct from the attributes of those who are doomed, by means of what Allah has explained on the lips of His Messenger (ﷺ). Once the truth has become clear and there is no doubt or confusion left concerning it, then ﴿let him who will, believe; and let him who will, disbelieve﴾. In other words, there is no option left but to follow one of the two paths, according to whether one is guided or not. Allah has given man free will, by virtue of which he may either believe or disbelieve, and choose either good or evil. Whoever believes has been guided to that which is right, and whoever disbelieves, proof has been established against him. No one is to be compelled to believe, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands out clear from error...﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 256*)

The words ﴿So let him who will, believe; and let him who will, disbelieve﴾ are not to be understood as giving permission for both options; rather that is a threat and a warning to those who choose disbelief after the matter has been explained perfectly. By the same token, these words do not mean that the believers should give up fighting the disbelievers.

Then Allah (ﷻ) mentions the final destination of the two groups. ﴿For the wrongdoers﴾ because of their disbelief, evildoing and sin ﴿We have prepared a fire which will encompass them like the walls of a pavilion﴾ that has no windows or exit, and there is no way to escape from it, and they will be burned by the exceedingly hot fire.

﴿If they cry for help﴾ that is, if they ask for a drink to extinguish the severe thirst that they experience

﴿they will be given water like boiling oil﴾ or like molten lead, because of its extreme heat

﴿that will scald their faces﴾ so how about their innards? Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...and scalding water will be poured over their heads, which will cause their insides and their skins to melt. They will be lashed with rods of iron.﴾ (al-Hajj 22: 19-21)

﴿What a dreadful drink﴾ that they wanted to quench their thirst and reduce the punishment somewhat, but it will increase their thirst and make the punishment more severe

﴿and what a miserable resting-place﴾ the fire will be. This is a negative description of the fire, highlighting what a bad place it is in which to rest, for there will be no rest there; rather it is a harsh and severe punishment that will not be reduced even for a short while. There they will lose all hope and will despair of all goodness, and the Most Merciful will forget them in their punishment, as they forgot Him.

Then Allah tells us about the other group: ﴿As for those who believe and do righteous deeds﴾ that is, they combined belief in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messenger, the Last Day and the divine decree, both good and bad, with righteous deeds, both obligatory and recommended

﴿verily We will not cause the reward of those who do good to be lost﴾. Good deeds are those which are intended for the sake of Allah, in accordance with the teachings of Islam. These are the good deeds which Allah will not cause to be lost in the slightest; rather He will preserve them for those who do them, and He will reward them in full, according to their deeds and by His grace and kindness. He describes their reward in the following verse: ﴿They will have gardens of perpetual abode through which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and will wear green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade, reclining therein on couches﴾ that is, those who are described above as having faith and doing righteous deeds will have lofty gardens with many trees and rivers that flow beneath those elegant trees, and fine dwellings. Their adornment therein will be gold and their garments will be of green silk and heavy brocade of a soft type, and they will be reclining on adorned couches covered with

fine cloth. The fact that they will be reclining on couches is indicative of perfect relaxation and the absence of tiredness and exhaustion; they will have servants who will bring them whatever they desire, and to complete the blessing they will abide therein for ever and ever.

This splendid abode will be ﴿an excellent reward﴾ for those who strove hard, and ﴿a pleasant resting-place﴾ in which they will rest and enjoy all that it contains of whatever their hearts desire and their eyes delight in of happiness and joy, never-ending pleasure and blessing. What resting-place could be better than an abode in which the least of its inhabitants may walk in his domain and in what Allah has blessed him with of palaces and gardens, for two thousand years, never thinking that there is any bliss greater than this, as he was given all that he wished for and there was added to that other things that may never have crossed his mind. Moreover, their bliss will be eternal, constantly increasing in beauty and quality. We ask Allah, the Most Generous, not to deprive us of the best of what He has of bliss because of the negative consequences of our shortcomings and sins.

This and similar verses indicate that the adornment is for both males and females, as was mentioned in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadiths, because it is mentioned in general terms: ﴿They will be adorned﴾. The same also applies to silk and the like.



﴿ وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمْ بِنَخْلِ
 وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا ﴿٣٢﴾ كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكْلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمِ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلْفَهُمَا
 نَهْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٣٢-٣٣)

18:32. Present to them the example of two men: to one of them We gave two gardens of grapevines and surrounded them with date palms, with a cornfield lying in between.

18:33. Each garden brought forth its produce and did not fail to yield its best, and We caused a stream to flow through them.

Here Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ): Present to the people the example of these two men, the one who was grateful for the blessings of Allah and the one who was ungrateful, and their conduct, words and deeds, and what resulted from that of punishment and reward in this world and the hereafter, so that they may pay heed and learn a lesson from them and what happened to them. There is no benefit in knowing the identity of the two men, or the time or place in which they lived, and that does not help one to reach the right conclusion. The lesson may be learned from their story alone, and mentioning other details would be superfluous. One of these two men was the one who was ungrateful for the immense blessings of Allah. Allah gave him two beautiful gardens of grapevines,

﴿and surrounded them with date palms﴾ that is, in these two gardens there were all kinds of fruits, especially the noblest of trees and plants, namely the grapevine and the date palm. The grapevines were in the middle of the garden, with the date palms surrounding them; this gave the gardens a beautiful and elegant look, and exposed the trees and date palms to the sun and wind, which enabled the fruit to reach maturity, ripening and taking shape. In addition to that, between the two gardens there was a cornfield. There is nothing left to know about them except to say: how were the fruits of these two gardens and did they have sufficient water for irrigation?

Allah (ﷻ) tells us that each of the gardens ﴿brought forth its produce﴾ that is, its fruits and crops, in abundance and ﴿did not fail to yield its best﴾. In addition to that, there was a stream running freely through them, bringing a lot of water.

﴿وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿٣٤﴾
 وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا أَظُنُّ
 السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٣٦﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٣٤-٣٦)

18:34. So he was a man of wealth. He said to his companion, as he was conversing with him: I am wealthier than you and have a greater entourage.

18:35. He went into his garden, having thus wronged himself, and said: I do not think that this will ever perish,

18:36. Nor do I think that the Hour will ever come. Even if I am brought back to my Lord, I will surely find a better place than this.

So that man ﴿was a man of wealth﴾. The word translated here as ﴿wealth﴾ appears (in the original Arabic) in the indefinite form, which implies a great deal of wealth. His two gardens produced their full potential of fruits and crops; their trees began to bend under their load and never suffered from any blight or problem. This is the ultimate in worldly adornments and pleasure with regard to agriculture, therefore this man was deceived by it; he began to boast insolently and he forgot about the hereafter.

As the owner of the two gardens was conversing about some ordinary matters with his companion, who was a believer, he began to boast to him, saying:

﴿I am wealthier than you and have a greater entourage﴾. He was proud of his great wealth and the power of his supporters, including his slaves, servants and relatives. This was ignorance on his part, for what pride can there be in external matters that are not indicative of any virtue, whether psychological or moral? Rather it is more like the pride of a young boy in wishes that have no basis in reality.

Moreover, he did not stop at boasting in this manner to his companion, until he showed his ignorance and wrongdoing, as he went into his garden, ﴿and said: I do not think that this will ever perish﴾ that is, diminish and come to an end. He was content and pleased with this world, and he denied the resurrection and said: ﴿Nor do I think that the Hour will ever come. Even if I am brought back to my Lord﴾, let us suppose for the sake of argument, ﴿I will surely find a better place than this﴾ that is, He will give me something better than these two gardens. This can only have been one of two things: either he knew the reality of the matter, so he said these words by way of mockery and ridicule, which further increased his disbelief and ingratitude, or this is what he really thought, in which case he was the most ignorant of people, with the least share of reasoning and intellect. What connection can there be between what one is given in this world and what one will be given in the hereafter, such that one might think, on the basis of ignorance, that the one who is given bounty in this world will necessarily be given bounty in the hereafter? Rather what is usually the case is that Allah keeps worldly gains away from His close friends and chosen ones, whilst granting such things in abundance to His enemies, who have no share in the hereafter. What appears to be the case here is that this man knew the reality of the matter, but he said these words by way of mockery and ridicule, based on the fact that Allah says: ﴿He went into his garden, having thus wronged himself﴾. The fact that he is described as having wronged himself when he went into his garden, as a result of what he had said (to his companion), indicates that he was stubborn and obstinate.



﴿ قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ

رَجُلًا ﴿٣٧﴾ لَنُكَأَ هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٣٨﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٣٧-٣٨)

- 18:37. His companion said to him, in the course of his conversation with him: Do you disbelieve in the One Who created you from dust, then from a drop of semen, then fashioned you into a man?
- 18:38. But as for me, [I say that] He is Allah, my Lord, and I will not associate anyone with my Lord.

His believing companion said to him, advising him and reminding him of his original state, as Allah has created him in this world: ﴿Do you disbelieve in the One Who created you from dust, then from a drop of semen, then fashioned you into a man?﴾ For it is He Who has blessed you by bringing you into existence and providing for you, and He continued to shower you with His blessings and caused you to develop and grow until you became a man, in perfect physical shape and with complete mental faculties. Thus He made the means available to you and bestowed upon you the blessings of this world. So what you possess of worldly wealth was not gained by means of your own strength and power; rather it was by the blessings that Allah (ﷻ) has bestowed upon you. So how can it be fitting for you to disbelieve in and be ungrateful to Allah Who created you from dust, then from a drop of semen, then He fashioned you into a man? How can you deny His blessings and claim that He will not resurrect you, and that if He does resurrect you, He will give you a better garden than this? This is not appropriate and it is not right.

Hence, when his believing companion saw his attitude and how he was persisting in disbelief, ingratitude and transgression, he told him about himself, by way of expressing his gratitude to his Lord and announcing his belief, at a time when he was hearing specious arguments and doubts: ﴿But as for me, [I say that] He is Allah, my Lord, and I will not associate anyone with my Lord﴾. So he affirmed His Lordship and that He is the only Lord, and he committed himself to obeying and worshipping Him alone, and pledged that he would not associate any created being with Him.

Then he told his companion that the blessing that Allah had bestowed upon him of faith and Islam – even though he had little wealth and few children – was the true blessing and that anything other than that was liable to diminish and vanish, then the punishment would come upon him, as he said:



﴿ وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَا أَقَلُّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٣٩﴾ فَعَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَيُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا ﴿٤٠﴾ أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَاءً غَورًا فَلَنْ نَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَأُحِيط بِشَمْرِهِ فَاصْبَحَ يُغْلِبُ كَفَيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٤٢﴾ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِتْنَةٌ يَصْرُوهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْصِرًّا ﴿٤٣﴾ هُنَالِكَ الْوَلِيَّةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٣٩-٤٤)

- 18:39. Why could you not have said, when you entered your garden: Whatever Allah wills [will come to pass]; there is no power but with Allah? Although you see me less than you in wealth and children,
- 18:40. Yet my Lord may well give me something better than your garden, and send upon [your garden] thunderbolts from heaven, leaving it barren and slippery.
- 18:41. Or its water may disappear under the ground, so that you will never be able to find it again.
- 18:42. And so all his produce was destroyed, and he began to wring his hands in sorrow at the loss of what he had spent on it, as it lay in ruins with all its trellises fallen in, saying: Would that I had never associated anyone with my Lord!
- 18:43. He had none to support him against [the punishment of] Allah, nor was he able to help himself.

18:44. In that case, the only protection is that of Allah, the True God. He gives the best reward and the best outcome.

That is, the believer said to his disbelieving companion: Although you boasted to me about your great wealth and many children, and you see that I have less wealth than you and fewer children, that which is with Allah is better and more lasting, and what is hoped for of His goodness and kindness is superior to everything in this world for which people compete.

«Yet my Lord may well give me something better than your garden, and send upon [your garden]», because of which you transgressed and were deceived

«thunderbolts from heaven» that is, as a punishment, with heavy rain or otherwise

«leaving it» as a result of that

«barren and slippery» that is, with its trees uprooted, its fruits destroyed, its crops drowned and its benefits disappeared.

«Or its water» that is essential to its survival

«may disappear under the ground, so that you will never be able to find it again» that is, it may disappear in such a way that it cannot be reached by digging with pickaxes or by any other means. The believer prayed against his garden in anger for the sake of his Lord, because it had deceived its owner and caused him to transgress and be content with it. He did this in the hope that his companion would turn back to his Lord, come to his senses and realise where he stood.

Allah answered his supplication, «so all his produce was destroyed» that is, the punishment destroyed it and wiped it out, so that there was nothing left of it. All the trees and their fruits, and all his crops, were destroyed, and he regretted it deeply and was very sad.

«and he began to wring his hands in sorrow at the loss of what he had spent on it» that is, because he had spent a great deal of his worldly wealth on it, but when it was destroyed and vanished, he had nothing

to compensate for it. He also regretted his ascription of partners to Allah and his evil deeds, therefore he said: «Would that I had never associated anyone with my Lord!».

«He had none to support him against [the punishment of] Allah, nor was he able to help himself» that is, when the punishment befell his garden, he lost that which he had boasted about to his companion when he said: «I am wealthier than you and have a greater entourage» (18: 34). They did not ward off this punishment from him at all, at the time when he needed them most, and he could not help himself. How could he have helpers against the decree of Allah that He ordained and brought to pass? For if the inhabitants of heaven and earth were to come together to ward off anything of the decree of Allah, they would not be able to do that.

It is not far-fetched to say that by the mercy and kindness of Allah, the situation of this owner of the garden that was destroyed later improved, and Allah enabled him to turn back to Him and come back to his senses, and give up his rebellion and transgression. That is based on the fact that he expressed regret for his ascription of partners to his Lord, and that Allah took away from him that which had caused him to transgress, and He punished him in this world. If Allah wills good for a person, He hastens to punish him in this world. The grace of Allah cannot be encompassed by human minds, and no one can deny it except one who is an ignorant wrongdoer.

«In that case, the only protection is that of Allah, the True God. He gives the best reward and the best outcome» that is, in that case – when Allah sends His punishment upon those who transgressed and gave precedence to the life of this world – and He honours those who believed, did righteous deeds and gave thanks to Allah, and called others to do likewise – it becomes clear that the only protection is that of our True God. Whoever believes in Him and fears Him will be protected by Allah, Who will bestow all kinds of honour upon him and ward off all kinds of punishment and evil from him. But whoever does

not believe in his Lord or take Him as an ally and protector will be a loser in both spiritual and worldly terms. The reward of Allah in this world and the hereafter is the best reward that anyone may hope for.

From this great story we learn a number of lessons, including the following:

- We learn a lesson from the one on whom Allah had bestowed worldly blessings, but that distracted him from the hereafter and caused him to transgress and disobey Allah; those blessings will ultimately vanish and disappear, and even if he enjoys them for a little while, he will be deprived of them for a long time.
- If a person likes something of his wealth or offspring, he should attribute this blessing to the One Who bestowed it upon him and he should say, “*Mâ shâ’ Allâh, lâ quwwata illâ billâh* (Whatever Allah wills [will come to pass]; there is no power but with Allah)”. Thus his giving thanks to Allah will be a means for the blessing of Allah to remain with him, because the believer said to his companion: ﴿Why could you not have said, when you entered your garden: Whatever Allah wills [will come to pass]; there is no power but with Allah?﴾ (18: 39).
- A person may console himself for missing out on the pleasures and desires of this world by reminding himself of the good things that are with Allah, because that believer said: ﴿Although you see me less than you in wealth and children, yet my Lord may well give me something better than your garden﴾.
- Wealth and children are of no benefit if they do not help one to obey Allah, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere: ﴿It is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us; but those who believe and do righteous deeds – it is they who will have a multiple reward for their deeds...﴾ (Saba' 34: 37)
- One may pray for destruction of the wealth of one who is wealthy if it is the cause of his transgression, disbelief and loss, especially if he thinks that because of his wealth he is superior to the believers, and he boasts to them of that.

The consequences of Allah's protection or the absence thereof will only become clear when the dust settles and recompense becomes due. ﴿In that case, the only protection is that of Allah, the True God. He gives the best reward and the best outcome﴾ (18: 44).



﴿وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَالْخُلُوطُ بِهِ تَنبَاتُ
الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ
زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ﴿٤٦﴾﴾
(سورة الكهف: ٤٥-٤٦)

- 18:45. Present to them the likeness of the life of this world: it is like the rain that We send down from the heavens; by means of it, all kinds of plants are brought forth from the earth, but soon they become dry stubble scattered about by the wind. Allah has power over all things.
- 18:46. Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But righteous deeds of lasting merit bring a better reward with your Lord and are a better source of hope.

Here Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ) first of all, and subsequently to those who take up his position of teaching and calling people to Allah: Present to the people the likeness of the life of this world, so that they may understand its nature and know it properly, inside and out, and then compare it with the hereafter, and give precedence to that which is most deserving of being given precedence. For the likeness of this world is that of rain that is sent down upon the earth and it brings forth all kinds of beautiful plants at a time when their beauty gladdens the hearts of onlookers and catches the eye of the heedless. Then suddenly they become dry stubble scattered about

by the winds, and those fresh green plants and blossoming flowers disappear, and that splendid view vanishes, and the earth becomes dusty and dry, causing the onlookers to lose interest in it and creating alienation in their hearts.

This is how this world is: whilst the one who focuses on this world is enjoying his youth, surpassing his peers, acquiring wealth, indulging in physical pleasures, fulfilling his desires at all times and thinking that this will continue for the rest of his life, suddenly death comes upon him or he loses his wealth, and his happiness disappears and his joy and pleasure vanish; he is faced with pain and anguish at the loss of his youth, strength and wealth, and he is left with nothing except his deeds, good or bad. At that time the wrongdoer will bite on his hand with regret, when he realises the reality with which he is faced, and he will wish to go back to this world, not to carry on fulfilling his desires, but to make up for what he missed out on at the time of negligence, by repenting and doing righteous deeds.

But the wise and prudent person who is rightly guided imagines himself in this situation and says to himself: Imagine that you have died, for you must inevitably die: which of the two situations would you prefer? To be deceived by the adornment of this realm and enjoying it in the manner of grazing animals, or to strive for that realm where food and shade are always available, in which one will have all that one desires and will enjoy all that delights the eye? Thus a person may know whether he is guided or forsaken, winning or losing.

Hence Allah (ﷻ) tells us that wealth and sons are the adornment of the life of this world, and they are no more than that; what will remain and benefit a person, bringing him joy, are righteous deeds of lasting merit. That includes all acts of obedience, both obligatory and recommended, having to do with the rights of Allah and the rights of His slaves, such as prayer, zakâh, charity, Hajj, *'umrah*, *tasbeeh*, *tahmeed*, *tahleel*, *takbeer*, reading Qur'an, seeking beneficial knowledge, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong,

upholding ties of kinship, honouring one's parents, fulfilling the rights of wives, slaves and animals, and all acts of kindness towards people. All of these are righteous deeds of lasting merit, and they bring a better reward with Allah and are a better source of hope. Their reward will remain and be multiplied for ever and ever, and that reward and benefit are hoped for at the time of need. This is what people should compete for and strive to attain.

Reflect on how Allah gives this likeness for this world and how it will diminish, and He tells us that in it there are two types of things:

The first type is adornment that is enjoyed for a short while, then it diminishes without bringing any benefit; rather it may in fact bring harm – this refers to wealth and sons.

The second type will remain and bring eternal benefit; this is the righteous deeds of lasting merit.



﴿ وَيَوْمَ نُسِيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٧﴾ وَعَرِضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّن نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَوْعِدًا ﴿٤٨﴾ وَوَضَعَ الْكُتُبَ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُسْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يُبَوِّلُنَا مَا لِي هَذَا أَلْكَتَبَ لَا يَغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا ۗ وَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا ۗ وَلَا يَظُنُّرَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٤٧-٤٩)

18:47. And [remember] the day when We will remove the mountains and you will see the earth as a levelled plain; We will gather them all together and not leave any one of them behind.

18:48. They will be presented before your Lord in rows, [and He will say]: Now you have come to Us as We created you the first time, even though you claimed that We had not made any such appointment for you.

18:49. And the record of deeds will be placed [in their hands] and you will see the evildoers filled with dread at what it contains. They will say: Woe to us! What sort of record is this, that leaves no deed, small or great, unaccounted for? They will find all they did recorded there, and your Lord will not wrong anyone.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the Day of Resurrection and what it will bring of great terrors and dreadful hardship.

﴿And [remember] the day when We will remove the mountains﴾ that is, He will remove them from their places and make them like sand-hills, then He will make them like carded wool (*cf. 101: 5*), then they will diminish and vanish, becoming like scattered dust, and the earth will be levelled, becoming a smooth, flat plain in which there is no depression or elevation (*cf. 20: 106-107*). Allah will gather together all creatures on that earth, and He will not leave anyone but He will gather him.

Indeed, He will gather together the first and the last from the remotest deserts and the depths of the sea; He will bring them back together after they were scattered and will restore them after they had disintegrated, as a new creation, then they will be presented before him in rows, so that He may check them, examine their deeds and judge between them on the basis of His justice in which there is no unfairness or injustice, and He will say to them: ﴿Now you have come to Us as We created you the first time﴾ that is, without wealth, without family, without tribe. They will have nothing with them except the deeds that they did and whatever they earned of good or evil, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Now you have come to Us alone, as We created you the first time, and you have left behind all that We had bestowed on you. We do not see with you your intercessors who you claimed were entitled to a share of your worship and devotion...﴾ (*al-An'ām 6: 94*)

And here Allah will say, addressing those who denied the resurrection, now that they have seen it with their own eyes: ﴿even though you claimed that We had not made any such appointment for you﴾ that is, you denied the requital for deeds, and you rejected the promises and warnings of Allah, but now you have seen it and tasted it. At that point, the books of deeds that were written by the noble angels will be brought, and people will feel a sense of alarm and distress, and the evildoers will be filled with apprehension. When they see their deeds written down, and their words and actions listed, they will say:

﴿Woe to us! What sort of record is this, that leaves no deed, small or great, unaccounted for?﴾ That is, no mistake, small or great, has been omitted without being written down and recorded; no deed, whether it was done in private or in public, at night or by day, has been omitted. ﴿They will find all they did recorded there﴾ and they will not be able to deny it

﴿and your Lord will not wrong anyone﴾. At that time they will be requited and will be made to admit their deeds, and they will be subjected to disgrace and punishment. That is because of what their own hands sent on ahead of them, for Allah does not wrong His slaves; rather they are not beyond His justice or grace.



﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ ۖ أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا

(سورة الكهف: ٥٠) ﴿

18:50. And [remember] when We said to the angels: Prostrate before Adam, and they [all] prostrated except Iblees. He was one of the jinn, so he rebelled against the command of his Lord. Will you then take him and his progeny as allies instead of Me, even

though they are enemies to you? What a wretched exchange for the wrongdoers!

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the enmity of Iblees towards Adam and his progeny. Allah instructed the angels to prostrate to Adam as a sign of honour and respect, and in obedience to the command of Allah, and they obeyed, «except Iblees. He was one of the jinn, so he rebelled against the command of his Lord». He said:

«...Should I prostrate before one whom You have created from clay?»
(*al-Isrâ' 17: 61*)

– and:

«...I am better than he...» (*al-A'râf 7: 12*)

Thus he manifested his enmity towards Allah and towards your father and you, so how could you take him and his progeny, namely the devils, «as allies instead of Me, even though they are enemies to you? What a wretched exchange for the wrongdoers!» That is, what a bad choice they made for themselves by taking the Shayṭân – who does not enjoin anything upon them but obscenity and evil – as an ally, instead of the Most Gracious, in alliance with Whom all happiness, prosperity and success are to be found.

This verse encourages us to take the Shayṭân as an enemy and mentions that no one takes the Shayṭân as an ally except a wrongdoer, and what wrongdoing could be greater than that of one who takes his real enemy as an ally and turns away from the Most Praiseworthy Protector?

«Allah is the Protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. As for those who disbelieve, their protectors are the false gods; from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness...» (*al-Baqarah 2: 257*)

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

«...they will have taken the devils as friends and allies instead of Allah...» (*al-A'râf 7: 30*)



﴿ مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ
 الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا ﴿٥١﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ
 يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّوْبِقًا ﴿٥٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٥١-٥٢)

- 18:51. I did not call them [Iblees and his progeny] to witness [or assist in] the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor even the creation of their own selves; I do not seek the assistance of those who lead people astray.
- 18:52. And [remember] the day when He will say: Call on My [so-called] partners, as you claimed. They will call on them, but they will not respond to them. And We will place between them a barrier.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says: I did not call on these devils and these people who have gone astray to witness «the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor even the creation of their own selves» that is, I did not cause them to be present at that time, or consult them concerning it, so how can they be creators of any of that? The Only One Who has the power of creation and control, and Who has perfect wisdom in governing creation, is Allah, the Creator of all things, Who controls them according to His wisdom. So how could partners be ascribed to Him from among the devils, who are taken as allies and obeyed as Allah should be obeyed, when they did not create anything or witness the creation of anything, and they did not assist Allah (ﷻ) in that? Hence He says: «I do not seek the assistance of those who lead people astray» that is, I do not seek their help, for Allah does not need any help in any matter. It is not appropriate or befitting for Allah to give them any measure of control, for they are striving to mislead people and oppose their Lord. Therefore what is appropriate is that they should be kept far away and not be brought close.

Having mentioned the situation of those who ascribe partners to Him in this world, and declared that to be utterly invalid and those who do such a thing to be ignorant and foolish, Allah now tells us about their situation with their so-called partners on the Day of Resurrection. Allah will say to them:

﴿Call on My [so-called] partners﴾ that is, according to your false claim; otherwise, in fact, Allah has no partner on earth or in heaven. He will say: Call them and let them benefit you and save you from troubles.

﴿They will call on them, but they will not respond to them﴾ because all power and sovereignty on that day will belong to Allah, and no one will possess the slightest power to benefit himself or anyone else.

﴿And We will place between them﴾ namely the polytheists and the so-called partners they ascribed to Allah

﴿a barrier﴾ to separate them and keep them apart from one another.

At that point the enmity of the so-called partners towards those who described them as such will become apparent, and they will reject them and disavow them, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿When humankind are gathered [on the Day of Resurrection], they [the so-called partners] will become their enemies and will reject their worship of them.﴾ (al-Ahqâf 46: 6)



﴿وَرَاءَ الْمَجْرُمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا﴾ (سورة

الكهف: ٥٣)

18:53. The evildoers will see the fire and will realise that they are bound to fall into it, and will find no escape from it.

That is, on the Day of Resurrection, when the reckoning is complete and each group of people becomes distinct on the basis of their deeds,

and the punishment becomes due on the evildoers, they will see hell before they enter it, and they will panic and become very anxious, when they realise for certain that they will enter it.

﴿and will find no escape from it﴾ that is, no way out and no one to intercede for them without Allah's permission. This is aimed at scaring them in such a way that causes hearts to tremble.



﴿وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٥٤)

18:54. We have explained [the truth] to man in this Qur'an, discussing different issues in various ways, but man is more than anything argumentative.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the greatness and majesty of the Qur'an and how it encompasses all issues, explaining different matters in different ways, highlighting all types of beneficial knowledge and ways that lead to eternal bliss, and every way that protects against evil and doom. It contains explanations of what is lawful and what is prohibited, requital of deeds, encouragement and deterrents, true stories that benefit the heart by strengthening faith and giving reassurance and light. This dictates that one should surrender to this Qur'an, accept it, follow it, obey the instructions contained therein, and not dispute with it in any issue. Yet despite that, many people argue about the truth after it has become clear, and they debate on the basis of falsehood, seeking to undermine the truth. Hence Allah says: ﴿but man is more than anything argumentative﴾ that is, in debates and disputes concerning the Qur'an, even though that is not appropriate and is not fair on his part. What makes man like that and causes him not to believe in Allah is nothing other than wrongdoing and

stubbornness; it is not due to any shortcomings in the proof and evidence set out in the Qur'an.



﴿ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةٌ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٥٥)

18:55. Nothing prevents people from believing, now that guidance has come to them, or from seeking the forgiveness of their Lord, except [their demand] that the fate of the earlier peoples should come to them or that the punishment should appear before their eyes.

That is, nothing prevents the people from believing, at a time when guidance has reached them by means of which one may see the difference between guidance and misguidance, truth and falsehood, and proof is established against them, so that it is not lack of clarity that is preventing them from believing, rather wrongdoing and transgression are preventing them from believing so that there is nothing left except for their demand to be fulfilled, for such is the way of Allah, in which He dealt with the earlier peoples: if they did not believe then the punishment should be hastened for them or they should see that the punishment is coming, and behold it face-to-face. In other words, they should fear it and repent from their disbelief before there comes the punishment that cannot be put back.



﴿ وَمَا تُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَمُجَدِّدِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَطْلِ لِيُدْخِلَهُنَّوَأَبِيهِ الْحَقِّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أَنْذَرْتُهُمْ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٥٦)

18:56. We sent the Messengers only as bearers of good news and as warners. Yet with false arguments those who disbelieve seek to undermine the truth, and they make a mockery of My revelations and of the warning they were given.

That is, We did not send the Messengers in vain, or for people to take them as lords, or so that they might call people to themselves; rather We sent them so that they might call the people to all that is good, and forbid all that is evil, and so that they might give glad tidings, if people paid heed, of reward in this world and in the hereafter, and so that they might warn them, if they disobeyed, of punishment in this world and in the hereafter. Thus the proof of Allah was established against people. Yet despite that, the wrongdoers and disbelievers insisted on arguing on the basis of falsehood so as to refute the truth, and they strove to support falsehood as much as they could and to refute and undermine the truth. They ridiculed the Messengers and revelations of Allah, and they revelled in whatever knowledge they had (*cf.* 40: 83), but Allah insisted on perfecting His light, even though the disbelievers hate it (*cf.* 9: 32) and that the truth should prevail over falsehood.

﴿Nay, rather We hurl the truth against falsehood, and it crushes it, whereupon it perishes. Woe to you for what you ascribe [falsely, to Allah].﴾ (*al-Anbiyâ' 21: 18*)

By the wisdom and mercy of Allah, allowing those who argue against the truth on the basis of falsehood to continue is one of the primary means of making the truth clear and making its evidence manifest, and showing falsehood to be evidently false and corrupt. Thus things become clearer by means of this contrast between opposites.



﴿ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ، فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاؤُهُ، إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَرَبُّكَ الْعَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَلَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْيلًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا ﴿٥٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٥٧-٥٩)

- 18:57. And who does greater wrong than one who is reminded of the revelations of his Lord, but turns away from them, forgetting the [deeds] that his hands have wrought? We have placed covers on their hearts so that they will not understand it, and deafness in their ears. Even if you call them to guidance, they will never be guided.
- 18:58. But your Lord is Oft-Forgiving, full of mercy. If He were to take them to task for what they have earned, He would indeed have hastened their punishment; but they have an appointed time, from which they will find no escape.
- 18:59. And those cities did We destroy when they did wrong; We set an appointed time for their destruction.

Here Allah tells us that there is no greater wrongdoing or evil than that of a person who is reminded of the revelations of Allah, to whom truth is made distinct from falsehood, and guidance from misguidance, and he is warned of a punishment and reminded of the reward, but he turns away and does not pay heed to that of which he was reminded, he does not give up what he was following, he forgets what his hands have sent on ahead of sins, and he fails to remember that the Knower of the unseen is always watching him. His wrongdoing is greater than that of the heedless one whom the revelations of Allah did not reach, and he was not reminded of them. Even though the latter is

also a wrongdoer, his wrongdoing is less serious than that of the former, because the one who commits sin despite his awareness and knowledge is worse than one who is not like that.

But Allah will punish him because of his turning away from His revelations, his forgetting about his sins and his being content to follow the path of evil, even though he is aware of that, by closing to him the doors of guidance and placing a cover over his heart that will prevent him from understanding the revelations, so that even if he hears them, he will be unable to understand them in a way that may reach his heart.

﴿and deafness in their ears﴾ that is, deafness that will prevent the revelations from reaching them, and will prevent them from hearing the revelations in such a way that could benefit them. If this is their situation, then there is no way they can be guided.

﴿Even if you call them to guidance, they will never be guided﴾ because the one for whom there is hope of a response to the one who calls him to guidance is the one who has no knowledge. As for these people, who saw then became blind, and they saw the path of truth as true but they shunned it, and they saw the path of misguidance as misguided but they followed it, and Allah punished them by closing their hearts and placing a seal upon them, there is no way at all that they could be guided.

This verse is aimed at scaring the one who shuns the truth after having known it: for a barrier could be set up between him and it, so that he would not be able to follow it after that. Nothing is more alarming or a greater deterrent than that.

Then Allah tells us of the vastness of His forgiveness and mercy, for He forgives sins and accepts the repentance of the one who repents, showering him with His mercy and enfolding him in His kindness. If He were to take people to task for what their hands have wrought of sins, He would hasten the punishment for them. But He is forbearing

and does not hasten the punishment; rather He always gives respite, but He does not forget. The consequences of sin are inevitable, even if they are delayed for a long time. Hence Allah says:

﴿but they have an appointed time, from which they will find no escape﴾ that is, they have an appointed time when they will be requited for their deeds; it is inevitable and they cannot escape it or find any refuge from it or steer clear of it.

This is His way of dealing with the earlier and later generations: He does not hasten the punishment for them; rather He calls them to repent and turn to Him. Then if they repent and turn to Him, He forgives them and has mercy upon them, and He removes the punishment from them. Otherwise, if they persist in their wrongdoing and stubbornness, and the time that He has appointed comes, He sends His punishment down upon them. Hence He says:

﴿And those cities did We destroy when they did wrong﴾ that is, because of their wrongdoing; it was not wrongdoing on Our part. ﴿We set an appointed time for their destruction﴾ that is, a preordained time that they cannot bring forward or put back.



﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ﴿٦١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ إِنِنَا غَدَاءٌ نَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا أَنسَنِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبِغُ فَارْتَدَّ عَلَيْنَا آثَارُهُمَا قِصَصًا ﴿٦٤﴾﴾

(سورة الكهف: ٦٠-٦٤)

18:60. And [remember] when Moosâ said to his servant: I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas, even if it takes me years [of travel].

- 18:61. But when they reached the junction between them, they forgot about their fish, which made its way into the sea and swam away.
- 18:62. When they had travelled further on, Moosâ said to his servant: Bring us our morning meal; truly this journey of ours has exhausted us.
- 18:63. [The servant] said: Do you remember when we rested by the rock? I did indeed forget [to tell you about] the fish; it was none but the Shayṭân who caused me to forget. It made its way into the sea in an amazing manner.
- 18:64. [Moosâ] said: That is what we were looking for. So they turned back, retracing their footsteps.

Here Allah tells us about His Prophet Moosâ (ﷺ) and his great eagerness to pursue goodness and seek knowledge. He said to his servant, who was constantly by his side at home and when travelling, whose name was Yoosha' ibn Noon, to whom Allah subsequently granted prophethood:

«I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas» that is, I will carry on travelling, even if that leads to lengthy hardship and I become exhausted, until I reach the junction of the two seas. That was the place at which, as Allah had revealed to him, he would find one of the knowledgeable slaves of Allah who possessed knowledge that Moosâ did not possess.

«even if it takes me years» and I have to travel a long distance. What is meant is that longing and eagerness prompted Moosâ to say these words to his servant. This is indicative of his unwavering resolve and that is why he fulfilled it.

«But when they» namely he and his servant «reached the junction between them, they forgot about their fish». They had with them a fish which was their provision and from which they used to eat. He had been promised that when he lost the fish, that is where they would find that slave of Allah for whom they were

looking. That fish made its way into the sea, and this was one of the signs.

The commentators said that when they reached that place, some of the sea water splashed onto that fish, which was their provision, then it made its way, by Allah's leave, into the sea and came to life with the other sea creatures.

When Moosâ and his servant passed beyond the junction between the two seas, Moosâ said to his servant: «Bring us our morning meal; truly this journey of ours has exhausted us» that is, we have become tired. That tiredness only began when they travelled beyond that point, otherwise the lengthy travel that had brought them to the junction between the two seas had not caused them to feel tired before that. This was one of the signs that indicated to Moosâ that what he sought was there. Their longing to reach that place had made the journey easy for them, but when they went beyond that point, they began to feel tired. When Moosâ said these words to his servant, the servant said:

«Do you remember when we rested by the rock? I did indeed forget [to tell you about] the fish» that is, did you not know that when we stopped for the night beside that well-known rock, which was between the two seas, «I did indeed forget [to tell you about] the fish; it was none but the Shayṭân who caused me to forget. It made its way into the sea in an amazing manner» that is, when it moved towards the sea and leapt into it, that was something amazing.

The servant said this to him, and Moosâ had a promise from Allah that when he lost the fish, he would find al-Khiḍr. So Moosâ said:

«That is what we were looking for» that is, seeking «So they turned back, retracing their footsteps» and went back to the place where they had forgotten the fish. When they reached that place, they found one of the slaves of Allah, namely al-Khiḍr; he was a righteous slave, but he was not a Prophet, according to the correct view.



﴿ فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا ءَاتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِمَّا لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴾ (٦٥)
 قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَني مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ
 مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ، خُبْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾ قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ
 صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْتَلِنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحْدِثَ
 لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْنَاهَا لِنُغْرِقَ
 أَهْلِهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالَ لَا
 تُؤَلِّمْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا ﴿٧٣﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ
 قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَنِي بِنَفْسِي زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا ﴿٧٤﴾ ﴿سورة الكهف: ٦٥-٧٤﴾

- 18:65. There they found one of Our slaves, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us and to whom We had taught knowledge of Our own.
- 18:66. Moosâ said to him: May I follow you so that you may teach me something of that sound knowledge that you have been taught?
- 18:67. The man said: You will never be able to have patience with me,
- 18:68. for how can you have patience with something that you cannot fully comprehend?
- 18:69. Moosâ said: You shall find me, if Allah wills, patient; and I will not disobey you in any matter.
- 18:70. The man said: Then if you follow me, do not ask me about anything until I mention it to you myself.
- 18:71. So they set out until, when they had boarded a boat, he scuttled it. Moosâ said: Have you scuttled it in order to drown its passengers? You have certainly done a dreadful thing!
- 18:72. The man said: Did I not say: You will never be able to have patience with me?
- 18:73. Moosâ said: Do not take me to task for what I have forgotten, and do not make it too difficult for me to follow you.

18:74. So they set out until, when they met a boy, he killed him. Moosâ said: Have you killed an innocent soul who killed no one? You have done a terrible thing!

«There they found one of Our slaves, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us» that is, Allah had granted him special mercy, by virtue of which his knowledge increased and he did righteous deeds «and to whom We had taught knowledge of Our own». He was given knowledge that had not been given to Moosâ, although Moosâ (ﷺ) was more knowledgeable than him in most matters, especially matters of faith and the fundamentals of laws and regulations, because he was one of the Messengers of strong resolve, whom Allah favoured over all creation (of his own time) in terms of knowledge, righteous deeds and other things. When Moosâ met him, he presented his request to him, politely seeking his consent:

«May I follow you so that you may teach me something of that sound knowledge that you have been taught?» That is, may I follow you on the basis that you teach me some of that sound knowledge that Allah has taught you, by which I may be guided and know the truth with regard to these matters? For Allah had given al-Khiḍr a great deal of inspiration and intuition, through which he could see into the hidden depths of many things that could even be hidden from Moosâ (ﷺ). Al-Khiḍr said to Moosâ: I will not refuse your request, but «You will never be able to have patience with me» that is, you will not be able to follow me and stay by my side, because you will see things that you will not be able to have patience with, things that outwardly appear to be evil, but inwardly are otherwise. Hence he said:

«for how can you have patience with something that you cannot fully comprehend?» that is, how can you be patient with a matter when you have no knowledge of either its hidden or apparent aspects and you do not know the purpose behind it or how it will unfold?

Moosâ said: «You shall find me, if Allah wills, patient; and I will not disobey you in any matter». This was resolve on his part, before he was put to the test; resolve is one thing and actually having patience is another matter altogether. Therefore Moosâ (ﷺ) was not able to be patient when he was put to the test.

At that point al-Khiḍr said to him: «Then if you follow me, do not ask me about anything until I mention it to you myself» that is, do not ask any question or raise any objection, until I am the one who tells you about it, at the time when it is appropriate to tell you. So he forbade him to ask him, but he promised to explain to him the reality of things.

«So they set out until, when they had boarded a boat, he scuttled it» that is, al-Khiḍr pulled out a plank of it, and he had a reason for doing that which he was going to explain, but Moosâ (ﷺ) could not be patient, because it appeared outwardly to be something bad, for it was damage to the boat which could have caused its passengers to drown. Hence Moosâ said:

«Have you scuttled it in order to drown its passengers? You have certainly done a dreadful thing!» That is, something serious and awful. This was due to lack of patience on his part, so al-Khiḍr said to him: «Did I not say: You will never be able to have patience with me?» That is, it has happened as I said it would. This was due to forgetfulness on Moosâ's part, so he said: «Do not take me to task for what I have forgotten, and do not make it too difficult for me to follow you» that is, do not be too hard on me, and be easy-going with me; this came about because of forgetfulness, so do not take me to task the first time. Thus he both admitted his error and asked for forgiveness for it, as if he was saying: you should not be harsh with your companion, O Khiḍr. So al-Khiḍr forgave him.

«So they set out until, when they met a boy, he» that is, al-Khiḍr «killed him». Moosâ became very angry and was overtaken by

religious zeal, when his companion killed a small boy who had done no wrong.

﴿Moosâ said: Have you killed an innocent soul who killed no one? You have done a terrible thing!﴾ For what evil could be greater than killing a small child who had done nothing wrong and had not killed anyone? The first time Moosâ had forgotten, but this was not forgetfulness; rather it was a lack of patience.



Glossary of Islamic Terms*



<i>abu</i> (or <i>abi</i>)	أبو، أبي	father (of)
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>aṣr</i>	عَصْر	mid-afternoon; the obligatory prayer at that time
<i>banu</i> (or <i>bani</i>)	بنو، بني	<i>lit.</i> ‘children (of)’; <i>usu.</i> referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor
<i>bayt al-maqdis</i>	بَيْتُ الْمَقْدِسِ	the Islamic term for Jerusalem
<i>dhikr Allāh</i>	ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ	remembrance of Allah; specifically, remembering Allah through praising and supplicating to Him
<i>dhuhr</i>	ظَهْر	early afternoon; the obligatory prayer at that time

* 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 (that is, 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.

dirham	دِرْهَم	originally, a silver coin; a unit of currency
<i>fajr</i>	الفجر	dawn; the obligatory prayer at that time
fatwa (<i>fatwah</i>)	فَتْوَى	religious decision or decree
<i>hadd</i>	حَدّ	specific punishments prescribed in Sharia for specific offences such as theft and fornication
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>)	حَجّ	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>harām</i>)	حَرَام	forbidden according to Islamic law
Hejaz (<i>Hijâz</i>)	حِجَاز	the Western region of the Arabian Peninsula, which includes Makkah and Madinah
Iblees ' <i>ishâ</i> '	إِبْلِيسَ عِشَاء	another name for Satan (Shayṭān) in Arabic late evening; the obligatory prayer at that time
<i>isrâ</i> ' and <i>mi'rāj</i>	الإِسْرَاءُ وَالْمِعْرَاجُ	the night journey of the Prophet (ﷺ) from Makkah to Jerusalem and his ascension from there to visit heaven

<i>jāhiliyah</i>	جَاهِلِيَّة	<i>lit.</i> ‘ignorance’; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam
Jibreel	جِبْرِيل	the Arabic name for Gabriel (جبرائيل), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur’an and other communications from Allah (الله) to Prophet Muhammad (محمد)
jihad (<i>jihād</i>)	جِهَاد	struggle or striving (in Allah’s cause)
<i>jinn</i> (plural of <i>jinni</i>)	جِنّ	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>)	جُزْء	a section of the Qur’an equal to one-thirtieth of the text
Kaaba (<i>Ka’bah</i>)	الْكَعْبَة	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrāheem and Ismā‘eel, which Muslims face when they pray
<i>al-Lawḥ</i> <i>al-Maḥ-</i> <i>fooḥ</i>	اللَّوْحُ المحفوظ	the Preserved Tablet in Heaven on which Allah’s words and decrees are written
<i>maghrib</i>	مَغْرِب	sunset; the obligatory prayer at that time
mufti	مُفْتِي	an Islamic scholar who is qualified to deliver formal legal verdicts based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah

Quraysh	قُرَيْشٌ	the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism
<i>rak'ah</i> (pl. <i>raka'ât</i>)	رُكُوعَةٌ	a unit of the formal prayer (<i>ṣalâh</i>)
<i>Ṣahâbah</i>	صَحَابَةٌ	Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)
<i>ṣaḥeeḥ</i>	صَحِيحٌ	a grade of hadith: sound or authentic
<i>salâm</i>	السَّلَامُ	<i>lit.</i> 'peace'; the Islamic greeting of peace
<i>shar'i</i>	شَرْعِيٌّ	of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic
Shayṭân	شَيْطَانٌ	Satan
<i>shirk</i>	شِرْكٌ	associating partners with Allah
<i>soorah</i> or <i>soorat</i>	سُورَةٌ	chapter of the Qur'an
Sunnah	سُنَّةٌ	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
sunnah	سُنَّةٌ	acts that are recommended but not mandatory; one who performs them is rewarded, but one who neglects them is not punished
<i>tafseer</i>	تَفْسِيرٌ	exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings (<i>usu.</i> of Qur'anic verses)
<i>tahajjud</i>	تَهَجُّدٌ	voluntary night prayer offered between 'ishâ' and <i>fajr</i>
<i>tahleel</i>	تَهْلِيلٌ	the act of saying <i>lâ ilâha illâ Allâh</i> (there is none worthy of worship other than Allah)

<i>tahmeed</i>	تَحْمِيد	the act of saying <i>Alḥamdulillâh</i> (all praises and thanks are for Allah)
<i>takbeer</i>	تَكْبِير	the act of saying <i>Allâhu akbar</i> (Allah is the Greatest)
<i>tasbeeh</i>	تَسْبِيح	the recitation of phrases glorifying Allah; saying <i>subhân Allâh</i> (glory be to Allah)
<i>tawḥeed</i>	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
' <i>umrah</i>	عُمْرَة	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>zakât</i> (or <i>zakâh</i>)	زَكَاة	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth that is paid by Muslims and be distributed to others who qualify as recipients
<i>Zaqqoom</i>	زَقُّوم	the name of a tree in hell that has fruit shaped like devils' heads, which the inhabitants of hell must eat



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