

# TAFSEER AS-SA'DI

JUZ' 16-18

تفسير السجدي

تيسير الكريم الرحمن في تفسير كلام المنان

'Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di



الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي





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**JUZ' 16-18**

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# TAFSEER AS-SA'DI

## JUZ' 16-18

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جزء ١٦-١٨

Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di

Translated by  
Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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# Contents

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Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart .....	15
Arabic honorific symbols .....	19
Hadith grade terms .....	20

18.  
Soorat al-Kahf  
(continued)

Soorat al-Kahf 75-76. ....	21
Soorat al-Kahf 77 .....	22
Soorat al-Kahf 78-82. ....	22
Soorat al-Kahf 83-88. ....	33
Soorat al-Kahf 89-98. ....	36
Soorat al-Kahf 99-101. ....	40
Soorat al-Kahf 102 .....	42
Soorat al-Kahf 103-106. ....	43
Soorat al-Kahf 107-108. ....	45
Soorat al-Kahf 109 .....	47
Soorat al-Kahf 110 .....	49

19.  
Soorat Maryam

Soorat Maryam 1-6 . . . . .	51
Soorat Maryam 7-11 . . . . .	54
Soorat Maryam 12-15 . . . . .	57
Soorat Maryam 16-21 . . . . .	59
Soorat Maryam 22-26 . . . . .	62
Soorat Maryam 27-33 . . . . .	64
Soorat Maryam 34-36 . . . . .	68
Soorat Maryam 37-38 . . . . .	69
Soorat Maryam 39-40 . . . . .	71
Soorat Maryam 41-50 . . . . .	72
Soorat Maryam 51-53 . . . . .	79
Soorat Maryam 54-55 . . . . .	81
Soorat Maryam 56-57 . . . . .	82
Soorat Maryam 58 . . . . .	83
Soorat Maryam 59-63 . . . . .	85
Soorat Maryam 64-65 . . . . .	89
Soorat Maryam 66-67 . . . . .	92
Soorat Maryam 68-70 . . . . .	93
Soorat Maryam 71-72 . . . . .	94
Soorat Maryam 73-74 . . . . .	95
Soorat Maryam 75 . . . . .	97
Soorat Maryam 76 . . . . .	98
Soorat Maryam 77-80 . . . . .	99
Soorat Maryam 81-84 . . . . .	102



Soorat Maryam 85-87.....	103
Soorat Maryam 88-95.....	105
Soorat Maryam 96.....	107
Soorat Maryam 97-98.....	107

20.

Soorat Tâ Hâ  
(Makki)

Soorat Tâ Hâ 1-8.....	110
Soorat Tâ Hâ 9-12.....	114
Soorat Tâ Hâ 13-16.....	115
Soorat Tâ Hâ 17-23.....	118
Soorat Tâ Hâ 24-36.....	121
Soorat Tâ Hâ 37-41.....	125
Soorat Tâ Hâ 42-46.....	128
Soorat Tâ Hâ 47-48.....	130
Soorat Tâ Hâ 49-55.....	131
Soorat Tâ Hâ 56-61.....	136
Soorat Tâ Hâ 62-64.....	138
Soorat Tâ Hâ 65-69.....	140
Soorat Tâ Hâ 70-73.....	141
Soorat Tâ Hâ 74-76.....	145
Soorat Tâ Hâ 77-79.....	147
Soorat Tâ Hâ 80-82.....	149
Soorat Tâ Hâ 83-86.....	151
Soorat Tâ Hâ 87-89.....	153
Soorat Tâ Hâ 90-94.....	154
Soorat Tâ Hâ 95-97.....	156

Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 98 .....	158
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 99-101.....	158
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 102-104.....	160
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 105-112.....	161
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 113 .....	165
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 114 .....	166
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 115 .....	168
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 116-122.....	168
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 123-127.....	171
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 128 .....	175
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 129-130.....	176
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 131 .....	177
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 132 .....	179
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ 133-135.....	180

## 21.

Soorat al-Anbiyâ'  
(Makki)

Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 1-4 .....	183
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 5-6 .....	186
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 7-9 .....	188
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 10.....	191
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 11-15 .....	192
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 16-17 .....	193
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 18-20 .....	194
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 21-25 .....	196
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 26-29 .....	200

---

Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 30 . . . . .	202
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 31-33 . . . . .	203
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 34-35 . . . . .	205
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 36-41 . . . . .	206
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 42-44 . . . . .	209
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 45-46 . . . . .	211
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 47 . . . . .	213
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 48-50 . . . . .	214
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 51-57 . . . . .	216
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 58-67 . . . . .	219
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 68-71 . . . . .	223
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 72-73 . . . . .	224
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 74-75 . . . . .	226
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 76-77 . . . . .	227
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 78-82 . . . . .	228
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 83-84 . . . . .	232
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 85-86 . . . . .	233
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 87-88 . . . . .	234
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 89-90 . . . . .	236
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 91-94 . . . . .	238
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 95 . . . . .	241
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 96-97 . . . . .	241
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 98-103 . . . . .	243
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 104-105 . . . . .	245
Soorat al-Anbiyâ' 106-112 . . . . .	246

## 22.

## Soorat al-Hajj

(It was said that it is Makki or Madani)

Soorat al-Hajj 1-2 . . . . .	250
Soorat al-Hajj 3-4 . . . . .	253
Soorat al-Hajj 5-7 . . . . .	254
Soorat al-Hajj 8-10 . . . . .	257
Soorat al-Hajj 11-13 . . . . .	259
Soorat al-Hajj 14 . . . . .	261
Soorat al-Hajj 15 . . . . .	262
Soorat al-Hajj 16 . . . . .	263
Soorat al-Hajj 17-24 . . . . .	264
Soorat al-Hajj 25 . . . . .	267
Soorat al-Hajj 26-29 . . . . .	268
Soorat al-Hajj 30-31 . . . . .	271
Soorat al-Hajj 32-33 . . . . .	274
Soorat al-Hajj 34-35 . . . . .	275
Soorat al-Hajj 36-37 . . . . .	277
Soorat al-Hajj 38 . . . . .	279
Soorat al-Hajj 39-41 . . . . .	280
Soorat al-Hajj 42-46 . . . . .	286
Soorat al-Hajj 47-48 . . . . .	288
Soorat al-Hajj 49-51 . . . . .	290
Soorat al-Hajj 52-57 . . . . .	291
Soorat al-Hajj 58-59 . . . . .	295
Soorat al-Hajj 60 . . . . .	297
Soorat al-Hajj 61-62 . . . . .	298

Soorat al-Ḥajj 63-64 . . . . .	300
Soorat al-Ḥajj 65-66 . . . . .	302
Soorat al-Ḥajj 67-70 . . . . .	303
Soorat al-Ḥajj 71-72 . . . . .	307
Soorat al-Ḥajj 73-74 . . . . .	308
Soorat al-Ḥajj 75-76 . . . . .	310
Soorat al-Ḥajj 77-78 . . . . .	311

23.

Soorat al-Mu'minoon

*Muḥḥij*

Soorat al-Mu'minoon 1-11 . . . . .	315
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 12-16 . . . . .	320
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 17-20 . . . . .	322
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 21-22 . . . . .	325
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 23-30 . . . . .	326
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 31-41 . . . . .	331
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 42-44 . . . . .	336
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 45-49 . . . . .	337
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 50 . . . . .	341
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 51-56 . . . . .	342
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 57-62 . . . . .	345
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 63-67 . . . . .	347
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 68 . . . . .	350
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 69 . . . . .	351
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 70 . . . . .	352
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 71 . . . . .	353
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 72 . . . . .	354

Soorat al-Mu'minoon 73-74 . . . . .	355
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 75-77 . . . . .	356
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 78-80 . . . . .	358
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 81-83 . . . . .	360
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 84-89 . . . . .	361
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 90-92 . . . . .	364
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 93-95 . . . . .	366
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 96-98 . . . . .	366
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 99-100 . . . . .	368
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 101-114 . . . . .	369
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 115-116 . . . . .	375
Soorat al-Mu'minoon 117-118 . . . . .	376

## 24.

Soorat an-Noor  
(Madani)

Soorat an-Noor 1 . . . . .	378
Soorat an-Noor 2 . . . . .	379
Soorat an-Noor 3 . . . . .	380
Soorat an-Noor 4-5 . . . . .	381
Soorat an-Noor 6-10 . . . . .	383
Soorat an-Noor 11-26 . . . . .	386
Soorat an-Noor 27-29 . . . . .	398
Soorat an-Noor 30 . . . . .	401
Soorat an-Noor 31 . . . . .	402
Soorat an-Noor 32-33 . . . . .	405
Soorat an-Noor 34 . . . . .	410
Soorat an-Noor 35 . . . . .	411

Soorat an-Noor 36-38 .....	414
Soorat an-Noor 39-40 .....	417
Soorat an-Noor 41-42 .....	419
Soorat an-Noor 43-44 .....	421
Soorat an-Noor 45 .....	422
Soorat an-Noor 46 .....	423
Soorat an-Noor 47-50 .....	424
Soorat an-Noor 51-52 .....	427
Soorat an-Noor 53-54 .....	429
Soorat an-Noor 55 .....	431
Soorat an-Noor 56-57 .....	433
Soorat an-Noor 58-59 .....	434
Soorat an-Noor 60 .....	438
Soorat an-Noor 61 .....	440
Soorat an-Noor 62-64 .....	444

25.

Soorat al-Furqân

(Makki, according to the majority of scholars)

Soorat al-Furqân 1-2 .....	449
Soorat al-Furqân 3 .....	451
Soorat al-Furqân 4-6 .....	452
Soorat al-Furqân 7-14 .....	455
Soorat al-Furqân 15-16 .....	460
Soorat al-Furqân 17-20 .....	461
Glossary of Islamic Terms .....	467
Index .....	474







# Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart



Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated form
أ	short 'a', as in <i>cat</i>	a
آ — آى	longer 'a', as in <i>cab</i> (not as in <i>cake</i> )	â
ب	/b/ as in <i>bell</i> , <i>rubber</i> and <i>tab</i>	b
ت	/t/ as in <i>tap</i> , <i>mustard</i> and <i>sit</i>	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when uninterrupted	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in <i>thing</i> , <i>maths</i> and <i>wealth</i>	th
ج	/j/ as in <i>jam</i> , <i>ajar</i> and <i>age</i>	j
ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	ħ
خ	as in <i>Bach</i> (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh
د	/d/ as in <i>do</i> , <i>muddy</i> and <i>red</i>	d
ذ	as in <i>this</i> , <i>father</i> and <i>smooth</i>	dh

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
ر	/r/ as in <i>raw</i> , <i>arid</i> and <i>war</i> ; may also be a rolled 'r', as pronounced in Spanish	r
ز	/z/ as in <i>zoo</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>gaze</i>	z
س	/s/ as in <i>so</i> , <i>messy</i> and <i>grass</i>	s
ش	as in <i>ship</i> , <i>ashes</i> and <i>rush</i>	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ṣ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /d/ farther back in the mouth	ḍ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /t/ farther back in the mouth	ṭ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth	<u>dh</u>
ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	‘
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /r/ in 'rouge'	gh
ف	/f/ as in <i>fill</i> , <i>effort</i> and <i>muff</i>	f

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated form
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in <i>king</i> , <i>buckle</i> and <i>tack</i>	k
ل	/l/ as in <i>lap</i> , <i>halo</i> ; in the word Allah, it becomes velarized as in <i>ball</i>	l
م	/m/ as in <i>men</i> , <i>simple</i> and <i>ram</i>	m
ن	/n/ as in <i>net</i> , <i>ant</i> and <i>can</i>	n
هـ - ه - ا	/h/ as in <i>hat</i> ; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in <i>wet</i> and <i>away</i>	w
و	long 'u', as in <i>boot</i> and <i>too</i>	oo
ي	as in <i>yard</i> and <i>mayo</i>	y
ي	long 'e', as in <i>eat</i> , <i>beef</i> and <i>see</i>	ee
ء	glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of <i>butter</i> : <i>bu'er</i> , or the stop sound in <i>uh-oh!</i>	(omitted in initial position)

## Diphthongs

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
أَوْ، وَاوْ	long 'o', as in <i>owe</i> , <i>boat</i> and <i>go</i>	au, aw
أَيَّ، يَايَ	long 'a', as in <i>aid</i> , <i>rain</i> and <i>say</i>	ay, ai, ei

## Diacritical marks (tashkeel)

Name of mark	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
فَـ fathah	very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel)	a
كَـ kasrah	shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel)	i
دَمَمَـ dammah	shorter version of oo	u
شَدَدَـ shaddah	a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled	double letter
سُكُونُ sukoon	no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word	absence of vowel



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## Arabic honorific symbols

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(ﷲ)	<i>Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ</i>	The Exalted
(ﷺ)	<i>şalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam</i>	Blessings and peace be upon him
(ﷺ)	<i>'alayhi as-salâm</i>	May peace be upon him
(ﷺ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhu</i>	May Allah be pleased with him
(ﷺ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhâ</i>	May Allah be pleased with her
(ﷺ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhumâ</i>	May Allah be pleased with both of them
(ﷺ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhum</i>	May Allah be pleased with all of them
(ﷺ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhunna</i>	May Allah be pleased with all of them (females only)



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# Hadith grade terms

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Sound: *ṣaḥeeḥ*

Reliable: *ḥasan*

Weak: *ḍa'eef*

Odd: *ghareeb*

Authentic: includes sound, reliable, or any grade in between

Acceptable: *sakat 'anhu*; the grader of the hadith did not comment on it, meaning that he found nothing unacceptable in it



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## 18. Soorat al-Kahf

(continued)

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﴿ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ لَكَ إِنَّا لَن نَسْتَطِيعُ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَدُنِّي عُذْرًا ﴿٧٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٧٥-٧٦)

18:75. The man said: Did I not say to you: You will never be able to have patience with me?<sup>1</sup>

18:76. Moosâ said: If I ever ask you about anything after this, do not keep me in your company, for then you will have good reason [to part company].

---

After al-Khidr killed the boy, and Moosâ (‘*alayhi as-salâm* – peace be upon him) had objected vehemently to what appeared to be a heinous act, al-Khidr said to him:

﴿Did I not say to you: You will never be able to have patience with me?﴾

Moosâ said to him: ﴿If I ever ask you about anything after this, do not keep me in your company﴾ that is, you will be justified for not keeping me in your company

﴿for then you will have good reason [to part company]﴾ and you will have done your best to keep me in your company.

---

<sup>1</sup> The meanings of the verses of the Qur’an in this book (with some minor changes to the punctuation) have been translated by the translator. (Editor)



﴿فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَنَّىٰ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطَعَمَا أَهْلَهَا فَأَبْوَأَ أَن يُضَيِّقُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقُضَ فَأَقَامَهُ، قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ﴿٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف:

(٧٧)

18:77. So they set out until, when they came to the people of a town, they asked its people for food, but they refused to offer them hospitality. They found there a wall that was about to fall down, but he repaired it. Moosâ said: If you wished, you could have obtained some payment for it!

That is, they requested hospitality but the people did not welcome them.

﴿They found there a wall that was about to fall down﴾ that is, it was in poor repair and was about to collapse

﴿but he﴾ namely al-Khidr

﴿repaired it﴾ that is, he fixed it and restored it. Moosâ said to him:

﴿If you wished, you could have obtained some payment for it!﴾

That is, the people of this town did not give us any hospitality, even though that was required of them, but you restored this wall without any payment, when you were able to take payment for it! On this occasion Moosâ did not fulfil the promise he had made, so al-Khidr had good reason to part ways with him.



﴿قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ ۖ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِمَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٨﴾﴾ أَمَا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسْكِينٍ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا ﴿٧٩﴾﴾ وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا



وَكُفْرًا ﴿٨٢﴾ فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِمَّا كَفَرُوا وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ  
فَكَانَ لِغُلَّامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ  
رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ، عَن أَمْرِي  
ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلٌ مَّا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٨٢﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٧٨-٨٢)

- 18:78. The man said: This is the parting of the ways between me and you. Now I will explain to you the significance of that which you were unable to bear with patience.
- 18:79. As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people who made their living on the sea; I wanted to damage it because [I knew that] there was a king ahead of them who was seizing every [sound] boat by force.
- 18:80. As for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared that he would grieve them with his rebellion and ingratitude.
- 18:81. So we desired that their Lord should grant them another in his place, [a child] more righteous and more tender-hearted.
- 18:82. As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them. Their father had been a righteous man, so your Lord willed that they should come of age and then extract their treasure – as a mercy from your Lord; I did not do it of my own accord. This is the significance of that which you were unable to bear with patience.

Al-Khiḍr said to Moosâ: ﴿This is the parting of the ways between me and you﴾ for you had committed yourself to that, and now you have no excuse left and there is no way that you can continue to keep company with me.

﴿Now I will explain to you the significance of that which you were unable to bear with patience﴾ that is, I shall tell you about those things that you objected to me doing, and I will inform you of the reasons I had for what I did, for I have knowledge of how matters will unfold.

«As for the boat» that I scuttled, «it belonged to some poor people who made their living on the sea» which would prompt one to show kindness and compassion towards them.

«I wanted to damage it because [I knew that] there was a king ahead of them who was seizing every [sound] boat by force» that is, their route would take them past that unjust king, and he would seize unlawfully any sound boat, free of defect, that passed by him. So I wanted to scuttle it in order to make it defective, so that they would be safe from that wrongdoer.

«As for the boy» whom I killed, «his parents were believers, and we feared that he would grieve them with his rebellion and ingratitude». It had been decreed that if that boy had grown up, he would have grieved his parents with his rebellion and ingratitude; that is, he would have put pressure on them which could have led them to transgress and disbelieve, either because of their love for him, or because of their need for him, or because he would force them to do that. But I killed him, because I had knowledge of that, so as to protect the religious commitment of his believing parents. What benefit can be greater than this? Although it was hard for them to be deprived of their offspring, Allah (*Subhānahu wa Ta'ālā* – Glorified and Exalted is He) would give them other offspring who would be better than him. Hence he said:

«So we desired that their Lord should grant them another in his place, [a child] more righteous and more tender-hearted» that is, a righteous child who would uphold ties of kinship, for if the boy who was killed had grown up, he would have been very disobedient and cruel to them, and he would have forced them to disbelieve and transgress.

«As for the wall» that I repaired, «it belonged to two orphan boys in the town, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them. Their father had been a righteous man» that is, the situation required that I show kindness and compassion towards them, because they were so young and had lost their father. Moreover, Allah protected them because of the righteousness of their father.

«so your Lord willed that they should come of age and then extract their treasure» that is, therefore I demolished the wall, took out their treasure that was beneath it, then I rebuilt it for them for free.

«as a mercy from your Lord» that is, what I did was a mercy from Allah, that Allah bestowed upon His slave al-Khidr.

«I did not do it of my own accord» that is, I did not do anything on my own initiative or just because I wanted to do it; rather that was by the mercy of Allah and at His command.

«This» that I have explained to you «is the significance of that which you were unable to bear with patience».

From this amazing story we learn a number of lessons, rulings and principles, some of which we will note here:

- The virtue of knowledge and travelling to seek it. This is the most important thing, for Moosâ (ﷺ) travelled a great distance and went through hardship to seek it. He gave up his stay with the Children of Israel, whom he was teaching and guiding, and chose to travel in order to increase his knowledge.
- One should prioritise, starting with the most important matters, for increasing knowledge – for an individual – is more important than neglecting that and being preoccupied with teaching others, without increasing one’s own knowledge. But combining the two matters is better.
- It is permissible to hire a servant whether one is at home or travelling, so that the servant may take care of one’s needs and one may have time to rest and relax, as Moosâ did.
- With regard to the one who travels in pursuit of knowledge or for the purpose of jihad and the like, if there is a purpose to be served by telling about his aim and destination, telling about it is more appropriate than concealing it, because disclosing it brings benefits such as making full preparation for the journey, engaging in matters with proper understanding of what is involved, and manifesting the virtue of this great act

of worship, as Moosâ said: «I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas, even if it takes me years [of travel]» (18: 60). Similarly, the Prophet (ṣalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam – blessings and peace be upon him) informed his Companions – when he went on the campaign to Tabook – where he was headed, even though his usual habit was to conceal his campaign plans. This is a matter that is to be done as dictated by interests.

- Evil and its causes may be ascribed to the Shayṭân, because of his temptation and making evil fair-seeming, although all things happen by the will and decree of Allah, because the servant of Moosâ said: «it was none but the Shayṭân who caused me to forget» (18: 63).
- It is permissible for a person to express what he feels as a result of human nature, such as exhaustion, hunger or thirst, so long as that is not by way of discontent, if it is true, because Moosâ said: «truly this journey of ours has exhausted us» (18: 62).
- It is recommended for a person's servant to be smart, alert and versatile, so that he may help him to achieve what he wants to do.
- It is recommended for a person to feed his servant the food that he himself eats, and for them to eat together, because the apparent meaning of Moosâ's words, «Bring us our morning meal» (18: 62), refers to both of them and suggests that they would eat together.
- Divine help may be granted to a person commensurate with the extent to which he is doing what is enjoined upon him, and the one who is doing something in accordance with the command of Allah will receive help in a way that others do not, because of the words: «truly this journey of ours has exhausted us» (18: 62). This refers to the journey beyond the junction of the two seas. Before that, he did not complain of exhaustion, even though he had travelled a long way, because that was travel in

a true sense. As for the subsequent travel, what appears to be the case is that it was part of a day, because they lost the fish when they got to the rock. It seems that they spent the night at the rock, then they set off the next day, until the time for the morning meal came, when Moosâ said to his servant: ﴿Bring us our morning meal﴾ (18: 62). At that point he remembered that he had forgotten the fish in the place that was the destination they had been seeking.

- The person whom they met was not a Prophet; rather he was a righteous slave of Allah, because he is described as being a true slave of Allah. Moreover, he mentioned what Allah had blessed him with of mercy and knowledge, but no mention is made of being a messenger or Prophet. If he had been a Prophet, that would have been mentioned as it was mentioned in the case of others.

With regard to his words at the end of the story, ﴿I did not do it of my own accord﴾ (18: 82), this does not indicate that he was a Prophet; rather it indicates that he was inspired, as may happen in the case of people other than Prophets, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿We inspired the mother of Moosâ, saying: Breastfeed him...﴾  
(*al-Qaşaş* 28: 7)

– and:

﴿And your Lord inspired the bee [saying]: Make your homes in the mountains...﴾ (*an-Nahl* 16: 68)

The knowledge that Allah teaches to His slaves is of two types: knowledge acquired through effort and striving, and knowledge received directly from Allah, without effort, which Allah bestows upon whomever He will of His slaves, because He says: ﴿to whom We had taught knowledge of Our own﴾ (18: 65).

- One should show proper etiquette towards teachers, and the seeker of knowledge should address his teacher in a gentle

manner, because Moosâ (ﷺ) said: ﴿May I follow you so that you may teach me something of that sound knowledge that you have been taught?﴾ (18: 66). He spoke to him in a polite and gentle manner, asking permission, as if he was saying: Will you give me permission to do that or not? And he affirmed that he would learn from him. This is in contrast to those who address their teachers in a rough or arrogant manner, not highlighting their need of the teachers' knowledge; rather they claim to be working together with them. Indeed some may think that they are teaching the teachers, when in fact they are extremely ignorant. Showing humility towards the teacher and expressing one's need of his teaching is one of the most beneficial approaches for the student.

- One who is superior may show humility to learn from one who is of lower status than him. Moosâ (ﷺ) was undoubtedly of higher status than al-Khidr.
- A knowledgeable and virtuous person may learn a branch of knowledge that he does not know from one who does possess that knowledge, even if he is many degrees lower than him in terms of overall knowledge. Moosâ (ﷺ) was one of the Messengers of strong resolve to whom Allah had granted knowledge that He did not grant to others, but with regard to this particular branch of knowledge, al-Khidr possessed knowledge that Moosâ did not; therefore he was very keen to learn from him. Based on that, if a scholar of hadith or *fiqh* is lacking in knowledge of grammar or morphology or some other branch of knowledge, he should not refrain from learning it from one who is skilled therein, even if he is not a scholar of Hadith or *fiqh*.
- One should attribute knowledge and other virtues to Allah (ﷻ), and affirm them, and give thanks to Allah for them, because Moosâ said: ﴿so that you may teach me something of that sound knowledge that you have been taught﴾ (18: 66), that is, that knowledge which Allah (ﷻ) has taught you.

- Beneficial knowledge is that which guides to good. Any knowledge in which there is guidance to the ways of goodness and warning against the ways of evil, or is a means of achieving that, is regarded as beneficial knowledge. All other knowledge is either harmful or of no benefit, because Moosâ said: ﴿so that you may teach me something of that sound knowledge that you have been taught﴾ (18: 66).
- Whoever does not have the patience to accompany a scholar and learn from him, and is not able to be steadfast in that, will miss out, according to the degree of his lack of patience, on a great deal of knowledge. Whoever has no patience will not acquire any knowledge, but the one who resorts to patience and adheres to it will attain all that he strives for, because al-Khidr said – when he explained to Moosâ why he could not learn from him – that he would never be able to have patience with him (18: 67).
- The primary means of attaining patience is having full knowledge and understanding of the matter with which he is instructed to be patient. Otherwise if he is not aware of it or does not realise its purpose and consequences, or its benefit and outcome, he will have no reason to be patient, because al-Khidr said: ﴿for how can you have patience with something that you cannot fully comprehend?﴾ (18: 68). So he stated that the reason for his lack of patience was his lack of understanding of the matter.
- It is enjoined to be deliberate and certain, and not to be hasty in passing judgement concerning any matter until one knows what is the aim behind it and the goal that is sought.
- One should connect matters of the future – that have to do with what a person wants to do – to the divine will, and no one should say about anything, “I am going to do that in the future” without also saying “if Allah wills”.
- Resolving to do a thing is not the same as doing it, because Moosâ (ﷺ) said: ﴿You shall find me, if Allah wills, patient﴾ (18: 69). He prepared himself to be patient, but he did not do it.

- If the teacher sees that there is an interest to be served by instructing the student not to ask questions about some things until the teacher is the one who explains them to him, then there should be a reason for it such as the student not being able to understand it yet, or because he told the student not to ask about minor details when enquiring about matters because other questions may be more important, or because the student is not able to comprehend it, or because he is asking a question that has nothing to do with the topic under discussion.
- It is permissible to travel by sea, so long as there is no fear of drowning.
- The one who forgets is not called to account for his forgetfulness, whether with regard to the rights of Allah or the rights of people, because Moosâ said: ﴿Do not take me to task for what I have forgotten﴾ (18: 73).
- We should accept people as they are with regard to their attitude and behaviour, and accept what they are happy to give when dealing with them. We should not burden them with more than they can cope with, or put undue pressure on them, because that will put them off and make them feel fed up with us. Rather we should accept them as they are, so that dealing with them will be easy.
- People should be judged as they appear to be, and rulings on material matters, such as wealth, life and so on, should be based on what appears to be the case. Moosâ (ﷺ) denounced al-Khiḍr for scuttling the boat and killing the boy because these things appeared to be wrong, so Moosâ (ﷺ) should not have kept quiet about them, except in this case when he was accompanying al-Khiḍr. So he hastened to issue his ruling based on what is usually the case, and he did not pay attention to this extraordinary situation that required him to be patient and not be hasty in denouncing.



- The important and sublime ruling is that the greater evil may be warded off by a lesser evil, and a greater interest may be served by foregoing a lesser interest. Killing the boy was bad, but letting him live until he caused his parents to recant their religion was a greater evil. Letting the boy live and not killing him, and protecting his life, may have been regarded as something good, but what was better was to protect the religious commitment and faith of his parents. Therefore al-Khiḍr killed him. Many guidelines and benefits come under the heading of this general ruling, so when there are conflicting matters, they all come under this ruling.
- Another important principle with regard to one man handling the wealth of another is that if it is done in a manner that serves the latter's interests and wards off harm, it is permissible for him to do that, even without permission and even if that involves causing some damage to the property of the other person, such as when al-Khiḍr scuttled the boat in order to render it defective, so that it would be safe from being seized unlawfully by the unjust king. Based on that, if a fire or flood or the like occurs in the house or property of a man, then it is permissible to damage part of the property or demolish part of the house for the sake of saving the rest. In fact that is prescribed, so as to protect the wealth and property of the other person. Similarly, if a wrongdoer wants to take the property of that other person, so one gives him some of the wealth in order to ransom the rest, that is permissible, even without permission.
- It is permissible to make a living on the sea just as it is permissible on land, because al-Khiḍr said: ﴿who made their living on the sea﴾ (18: 79) and Allah did not denounce what they did.
- A poor person may have wealth that is not sufficient to meet his needs, and that does not cancel out the description of him as poor, because Allah tells us that these poor people had a boat.

- Killing is one of the worst of sins, because Moosâ said with regard to the killing of the boy: ﴿You have done a terrible thing!﴾ (18: 74).
- Killing in legal retribution (*qisâs*)<sup>2</sup> is not an evil deed, because he said: ﴿Have you killed an innocent soul who killed no one?﴾ (18: 74).
- Allah will protect the righteous person himself and will protect his offspring.
- Serving righteous people and anyone who is connected to them is better than serving others, because al-Khiḍr explained the reason why he extracted the treasure of the two boys and rebuilt their wall as being that the father had been a righteous man.
- One should use proper etiquette with Allah (ﷻ) by choosing the proper words. Al-Khiḍr attributed the act of damaging the boat to himself, when he said: ﴿I wanted to damage it﴾ (18: 79). But in the case of good, he attributed it to Allah (ﷻ), because he said: ﴿so your Lord willed that they should come of age and then extract their treasure – as a mercy from your Lord﴾ (18: 82). This is like when Ibrâheem (ﷺ) said:
 

﴿When I am sick He heals me.﴾ (*ash-Shu'arâ*' 26: 80)

– and when the *jinn* said:

﴿We do not know whether ill is intended for those on earth, or their Lord intends good for them.﴾ (*al-Jinn* 72: 10)

– even though everything happens by the will and decree of Allah.
- A person should not leave his companion under any circumstances unless he has made clear to him what he should not do, warns him against doing so and explains what he did wrong, as al-Khiḍr did with Moosâ.

<sup>2</sup> Wherever possible, Arabic terms have been translated into English. In cases where we have chosen to retain the Arabic, the transliterated word or phrase is shown in italics the first time it appears in the text. The term is also defined in the glossary found at the end of this book. (Editor)

- Going along with one's companions with regard to things that are not prohibited is a means of companionship lasting and becoming stronger, just as lack of such harmony leads to the end of companionship.
- These things that al-Khiḍr did were the result of the pure divine decree that Allah caused to occur at the hands of this righteous slave, so that by means of this story people may come to understand the subtlety of the divine decree, and that Allah may decree things that a person dislikes very much but they are good for his religious commitment, as in the case of the boy, or they are good for his worldly interests, as in the case of the boat. Thus He shows examples of His kindness and generosity, so that people may understand and be fully content with the divine decree that may hurt.



﴿وَسْتَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٨٣﴾ إِنَّا مَكِّنَّا لَهُ فِي  
الْأَرْضِ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٤﴾ فَأَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٥﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا  
تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْبٍ حَمِيمٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا قُلْنَا يَبْدَأُ الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَإِنَّمَا أَنْ تُنْخِذَ فِيهِمْ  
حُسْنًا ﴿٨٦﴾ قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نَعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكْرًا ﴿٨٧﴾ وَأَمَّا  
مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءُ الْحَسَنَىٰ وَسَنُقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ﴿٨٨﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف:

(٨٨-٨٣)

- 18:83. They ask you [O Muhammad] about Dhul-Qarnayn. Say: I will tell you something about him.
- 18:84. Verily We established him in the land and gave him the means to achieve all things.
- 18:85. He pursued a certain course
- 18:86. until, when he reached the far west, he found the sun setting in a dark sea, and he found a people nearby. We said: O Dhul-

Qarnayn, [it is up to you] whether you punish them or treat them kindly.

18:87. He said: As for the one who does wrong [and persists therein], we will punish him; then he will be brought back to his Lord, and He will punish him with a terrible punishment.

18:88. But as for the one who believes and does righteous deeds, he will have the best reward, and we will command him to do what is easy for him.

The People of the Book or the polytheists had asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about the story of Dhul-Qarnayn, so Allah instructed him to say:

«I will tell you something about him», some useful information and amazing stories. In other words, I will tell you about him something that will be a reminder and a lesson for you. As for other things about him, he did not tell them that.

«Verily We established him in the land» Allah (ﷻ) gave him dominion and authority in different parts of the land, where people submitted to his leadership.

«and gave him the means to achieve all things. He pursued a certain course» that is, Allah gave him the means of achieving what he achieved, that enabled him to gain dominion in distant lands and enabled him to reach the furthest inhabited regions, and he used the means that Allah had given him in a proper manner. Not everyone who has means available to him uses those means, and not everyone is able to use the means available to him. If a person has the means of achieving something and uses them, he will attain his goal, but if both factors – or one of them – are absent, he will not attain it.

Allah does not tell us what these means that He gave him were, and His Messenger (ﷺ) does not tell us either. There are no reports that could give any information regarding that. Therefore we cannot but keep quiet about them and not pay any attention to what the narrators

of reports from Jewish sources and others mention. But we know in general terms that many strong means and measures were available to him, through which he acquired a great army, with huge numbers of men and equipment, and highly disciplined. By means of that he was able to suppress his enemies and it was made easy for him to reach the east and west of the earth and other regions thereof. Allah gave him the means of reaching the place where the sun sets, until he saw the sun with his own eyes as if it was setting in a dark – that is, black – sea. This is what a person would usually see if what is between him and the sun as it is setting is water; he would see it appearing to set into the water itself, although it is far away from the water. At that place – that is, the place where the sun set – he found a people.

﴿We said: O Dhul-Qarnayn, [it is up to you] whether you punish them or treat them kindly﴾. That is: either you may punish them, by killing them, beating them, taking them captive, and the like; or you may treat them kindly. He was given the choice between these two options, because what appears to be the case is that they were either disbelievers or evildoers, or among them there were some who were like that, because if they had been believers and not evildoers, he would not have been given the option of punishing them. Dhul-Qarnayn knew how to deal with people on the basis of *shar‘i* teachings, for which he deserves praise, because Allah guided him to that. So he said: I shall divide them into two groups:

﴿He said: As for the one who does wrong﴾ by disbelieving, ﴿[and persists therein], we will punish him; then he will be brought back to his Lord, and He will punish him with a terrible punishment﴾ that is, he will have two punishments, one in this world and one in the hereafter.

﴿But as for the one who believes and does righteous deeds, he will have the best reward﴾ that is, paradise will be his and he will be in good standing before Allah, as a reward on the Day of Resurrection.

﴿and we will command him to do what is easy for him﴾ that is, we will treat him kindly, speak gently to him and be easy going with him. This indicates that Dhul-Qarnayn was a righteous, knowledgeable and just king, as he dealt with each person according to his situation, which is in accordance with what is pleasing to Allah.



﴿ثُمَّ أُنْبِئْ سَبِيًّا ﴿٨٩﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجدهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَّمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهَا مِن دُونِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٠﴾ كَذَٰلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خَيْرًا ﴿٩١﴾ ثُمَّ أُنْبِئْ سَبِيًّا ﴿٩٢﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَّا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالُوا يَا بِنَا الْفَرْتَيْنِ إِنَّا يَا جُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ يَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰ أَن يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ ءَأَتُونِي زُبُرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انْفُخُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا قَالَ ءَأَتُونِي أُفْرِغَ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَمَا اسْطَعُوا أَن يَصْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا ﴿٩٧﴾ قَالَ هَٰذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِن رَّبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا ﴿٩٨﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٨٩-٩٨)

18:89. Then he pursued another course

18:90. until, when he reached the far east, he found the sun rising on a people for whom We had provided no shelter from it.

18:91. And so it was; and We had full knowledge of all the means available to him.

18:92. Then he pursued another course

18:93. until, when he arrived between the two mountains, he found beyond them a people who could scarcely understand a word.

18:94. They said: O Dhul-Qarnayn, Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj are spreading mischief in the land. May we give you some payment in return for your constructing a barrier between us and them?

- 18:95. He said: What my Lord has given me is better [than what you would give me]. But help me with manpower and equipment, and I will construct a fortified barrier between you and them.
- 18:96. Bring me blocks of iron. Then when he had filled the gap between the two mountain-sides, [he said]: Blow [with your bellows]. Then when he had made it glow like fire, he said: Bring me molten copper to pour over it.
- 18:97. Thus [Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj] were made powerless to scale it or bore their way through it.
- 18:98. Dhul-Qarnayn said: This is a mercy from my Lord. But when the time appointed by my Lord comes, He will level it. The promise of my Lord is ever true.

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When he reached the setting place of the sun, he turned around and came back, heading towards the place of its rising, using all the means that Allah had made available to him. Then he reached the place where the sun rises, where ﴿he found the sun rising on a people for whom We had provided no shelter from it﴾ that is, he found it rising upon a people who had no shelter from the sun, either because they did not have houses, because they were very primitive and wild, and were not civilised, or because the sun was always above them and never set completely, as happens in some parts of the world. So he arrived at a place of which the people of the earth had no knowledge and had never tried to reach it. All of that happened by the decree and knowledge of Allah. Hence He says:

﴿And so it was; and We had full knowledge of all the means available to him﴾ that is, We had full knowledge of the resources and great means that he had at his disposal, and We were with him by Our knowledge, wherever he went.

﴿Then he pursued another course until, when he arrived between the two mountains﴾. The commentators said that he went from the east, heading north, and he arrived between the two mountains. There

was a chain of mountains that was well known at that time, which formed a barrier between Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj and other people. Beyond the two mountains he found a people who could hardly understand any words because they spoke a foreign language, and because they were foreign in their way of thinking. Allah had given Dhul-Qarnayn knowledge by means of which he could understand the language of those people and they could talk to one another. They complained to him of the harm caused by Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj, who were two great nations among the sons of Adam. Those people said:

«Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj are spreading mischief in the land» by killing, seizing wealth, and so on.

«May we give you some payment» that is, a fee or wages

«in return for your constructing a barrier between us and them?» This indicates that they were not able to build the barrier by themselves, but they realised that Dhul-Qarnayn was able to do it, so they offered him payment to build it, and told him the reason for it, which was that Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj were spreading mischief in the land. Dhul-Qarnayn was not a man who was greedy for money, and he had no desire for worldly gain, nor would he turn away from doing what was in the best interests of his subjects; rather his aim was to do what was right for them. Therefore he responded to their request, because it served the interests of these people, but he did not take any payment from them and he gave thanks to his Lord for enabling him to do it. He said to them:

«He said: What my Lord has given me is better» that is, better than what you are offering and what you would give me; but I ask you to help me with your physical strength and labour

«and I will construct a fortified barrier between you and them» to prevent them from crossing to you.

«Bring me blocks of iron» that is, pieces of iron, which they brought to him



«Then when he had filled the gap between the two mountain-sides» that is, the two mountains between which he built the barrier «[he said]: Blow [with your bellows]» on the fire, to let it reach the greatest intensity of heat. They used the bellows for that, so that the heat would become greater and melt the copper. When the copper had melted, which he wanted to pour between the blocks of iron, «he said: Bring me molten copper to pour over it». He poured the molten copper over it, and the barrier became extremely solid, and the people beyond it were protected by it from the harm of Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj.

«Thus [Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj] were made powerless to scale it or bore their way through it» that is, they were not able and did not have the strength to climb it because it was so high, or to bore through it because it was so solid and strong. When he did this good deed and great favour, he attributed the blessing to the One Who bestowed it, and said:

«This is a mercy from my Lord» that is, it is by His grace and kindness to me.

This is how righteous rulers are: when Allah blesses them with great favours, it increases their gratitude and acknowledgement of the blessings of Allah. Likewise, Sulaymân (ﷺ) said, when the throne of the Queen of Saba' (Sheba) was brought to him despite the great distance:

«...This is a favour from my Lord, to test whether I will be grateful or ungrateful...» (*an-Naml* 27: 40)

This is in contrast to those who are arrogant and proud, and who want to prove themselves in the land; great blessings only increase them in insolence and arrogance, as happened in the case of Qâroon when Allah granted him treasure, the keys of which would weigh down a group of strong men (28: 76); he said:

«...This has been given to me only because of knowledge that I possess...» (*al-Qasas* 28: 78)

«But when the time appointed by my Lord comes» that is, the time for the emergence of Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj,  
 «He will level it» that is, that well-built barrier; He will cause it to collapse and make it level with the earth.  
 «The promise of my Lord is ever true».



﴿وَتَرْكَبُهُمْ بِمَوْجٍ يُمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَيُفِخُ فِي الصُّورِ لَجْمَعَنَّهُمْ جَمْعًا ﴿٩٩﴾ وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ  
 يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرْضًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنِ ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ  
 سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٩٩-١٠١)

- 18:99. On that day We will leave them to surge like waves against one another. The Trumpet will be blown, then We will gather them all together.
- 18:100. On that day We will display hell, plain to see, for the disbelievers,
- 18:101. those whose eyes were blind to My signs and they could not bear to hear [the message of truth].

It may be that the pronoun (them) refers to Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj, and when they emerge against the people – because of their large numbers and their reaching all parts of the earth – they will surge like waves against one another, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«Until, when Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj have been let loose and come rushing from all directions.» (al-Anbiyā' 21: 96)

Or it may be that the pronoun refers to all creatures on the Day of Resurrection, and they will be gathered together in such great numbers that they will surge like waves against one another, because of their terror and the great earthquake, based on the fact that Allah says here:  
 «The Trumpet will be blown, then We will gather them all together. On that day We will display hell, plain to see, for the disbelievers,

those whose eyes were blind to My signs and they could not bear to hear [the message of truth]». That is, when Isrâfeel blows into the Trumpet, Allah will restore souls to bodies, then He will resurrect them and gather them together for the standing of the Day of Resurrection, the first and the last, disbelievers and believers, so that they may be questioned and brought to account, and be requited for their deeds. As for the disbelievers – of all kinds – hell will be their recompense, to abide therein forever.

Hence Allah says: «On that day We will display hell, plain to see, for the disbelievers». This is like the verse in which He says:

«And hell will be placed in full view of those who went astray.»  
(*ash-Shu'arâ* 26: 91)

That is, it will be presented to them, to be their abode, and so that they might taste the pain of its chains, blaze, hot water and bitter cold, and taste the punishment that will stun and overwhelm them, and cause their ears to become deaf. This is the outcome of and requital for their deeds, for in this world their eyes «were blind to My signs» that is, they turned away from the wise reminder and the noble Qur'an, and said:

«...Our hearts are covered [and sealed] against that to which you call us...» (*Fuṣṣilat* 41: 5)

– and over their eyes there were covers which prevented them from seeing the beneficial signs of Allah, as He says elsewhere:

«...and over their eyes is a cover...» (*al-Baqarah* 2: 7)

«and they could not bear to hear» that is, they could not bear to hear the verses of Allah which lead to faith, because of their resentment towards the Qur'an and the Messenger (ﷺ), for the one who is filled with resentment cannot bear to hear the words of the one whom he resents. Once the ways of knowledge and goodness are blocked to them, they have no way to hear or see, and no reasoning that could benefit them. They had disbelieved in Allah, denied His

revelations and rejected His Messengers, so they deserved hell and a hapless journey's end.



﴿أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِنْ دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنَّا أَعَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلًا﴾  
(سورة الكهف: ١٠٢)

18:102. Do the disbelievers think that they can take My slaves [whom they worship]<sup>3</sup> as allies instead of Me? Verily We have prepared hell as a dwelling place for the disbelievers.

This is proof and evidence of the falseness of the claim made by the disbelieving polytheists who regarded some of the Prophets and close friends of Allah as so-called partners of Allah whom they worshipped, and claimed that they were their allies who would save them from the punishment of Allah and enable them to attain His reward, when they had disbelieved in Allah and His Messengers.

Allah says to them, in the form of a question by way of denunciation, highlighting the falseness of their view on a rational basis:

﴿Do the disbelievers think that they can take My slaves [whom they worship] as allies instead of Me?﴾ That is, that cannot happen, for no close friend of Allah could ever take an enemy of Allah as an ally, for the close friends of Allah are in agreement with Allah, with regard to what He loves and is pleased with, and what He hates and is angered by. According to this meaning, this verse is akin to the passage in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿On the day when He gathers them all together He will say to the angels: Was it you that these people used to worship? They will say:

<sup>3</sup> It is not possible for one who opposes Allah to take as an ally any of His close friends whom they worship, such as 'Eesâ (Jesus), the angels or the righteous.

Glory be to You! You are our Close Friend, not they... ﴿Saba' 34: 40-41﴾

Whoever claims that he is taking a close friend of Allah as his friend and ally, when he is an enemy to Allah, is lying.

Or it may be – and this is more correct – that what is meant is: do those who disbelieve in Allah and oppose His Messengers think that they can take, instead of Allah, allies who will support them and benefit them instead of Allah, and ward off harm from them? This is wrong thinking, for no created being has any power to bring benefit or cause harm. This is like the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: Call on those whom you claim [to be gods]<sup>4</sup> besides Him; they have no power to relieve you of harm or divert it from you.﴾ (al-Isrâ' 17: 56)

– and:

﴿Those on whom they call besides Allah have no power of intercession...﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 86)

And there are similar verses in which it says that the one who takes any ally other than Him for support and protection is misguided and hopeless, and he will not attain any of that for which he hopes.

﴿Verily We have prepared hell as a dwelling place for the disbelievers﴾ – what a bad place of dwelling.



﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا ﴿١٢٣﴾ الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ. فَحَبَّطْتَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَلَا نَقِيمَ﴾

<sup>4</sup> 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.

﴿لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزْنًا﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَرُسُلِي هُزُوًا ﴿١٠٦﴾  
 (سورة الكهف: ١٠٣-١٠٦)

- 18:103. Say: Shall we tell you who will be the greatest losers in terms of deeds,  
 18:104. those whose efforts in the life of this world are wasted, while they think that what they do is right?  
 18:105. They are the ones who reject the signs of their Lord and deny the Meeting with Him. Their deeds will come to nothing and on the Day of Resurrection, We will not give them any weight.<sup>5</sup>  
 18:106. That will be their recompense, hell, because they disbelieved and made a mockery of My signs and My Messengers.

That is: say, O Muhammad (ﷺ), to the people, by way of warning: shall I tell you who will be the greatest losers in terms of deeds?

«those whose efforts in the life of this world are wasted» that is, all the deeds that they did, thinking that they were doing good, will become worthless and be rendered invalid. So how about the deeds that they do, knowing that they are wrong, and that they are deeds of opposition and enmity towards Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ)? Who are these people whose deeds will come to nothing?

«...who lose their own souls and their families on the Day of Resurrection. That is indeed manifest loss.» (az-Zumar 39: 15)

«They are the ones who reject the signs of their Lord and deny the Meeting with Him» that is, they deny the Qur'anic verses and visible signs that point to the necessity of believing in Him, His angels, His Messengers, His Books and the Last Day.

«Their deeds will come to nothing» because of that

<sup>5</sup> That is, they will be of no significance and the Balance will not be set up for them because they will have no good deeds to be weighed. (al-Bayḍāwi)

﴿and on the Day of Resurrection, We will not give them any weight﴾ because the benefit of them having weight becomes apparent when good deeds are weighed against bad deeds to see which will outweigh the other. These people will have no good deeds to their credit, because they did not fulfil the necessary condition, which is having faith, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿But whoever does righteous deeds and is a believer need have no fear of being wronged or deprived [of his just recompense].﴾ (Tā Hā 20: 112)

But their deeds will be counted and they will be made to admit to them, and they will be disgraced because of them before all the people, then they will be punished for them. Hence Allah says:

﴿That will be their recompense﴾ that is, their deeds will come to nothing and will not be given any weight on the Day of Resurrection, because they are insignificant and worthless as a result of their disbelief in the revelations of Allah, and because of their mockery and ridicule thereof, when what is required with regard to the revelations and Messengers of Allah is to believe in them completely, venerate them and act in accordance with them. But these people turned everything upside down, therefore they will find themselves in trouble, in a wretched position and subjected to punishment.

Having described the fate and deeds of the disbelievers, Allah now tells us of the deeds of the believers and their ultimate destination:



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٠٧-١٠٨)

18:107. But those who believe and do righteous deeds will have gardens of paradise as a dwelling place,

18:108. to abide therein forever, with no desire to leave.

That is, those who believe in their hearts and do righteous deeds with their physical faculties. This includes all of the religion, beliefs, actions, basic principles and minor issues, both outward and inward. These people, regardless of their varying levels of faith and righteous deeds, will have *Jannât al-Firdaws* (translated here as «gardens of paradise»).

It may be that what is meant by *Jannât al-Firdaws* is the highest part of paradise, the middle and best part, and that this reward is for those who perfected their faith and righteous deeds. They are the Prophets and those who are close to Allah.

Or it may be that what is meant is all the levels of paradise, so this reward includes people of faith of all levels, those who are close to Allah, the righteous, and the ordinary believers, each according to his status. This is the more likely of the two meanings to be correct, because the wording is general in meaning, and the word *jannât* (translated here as «gardens») appears in the plural, connected to *al-firdaws*, which refers to a garden containing grapevines or trees with many long, twisted branches, and this is applicable to all of paradise.

*Jannât al-Firdaws* (the gardens of paradise) are the dwelling places of those who believed and did righteous deeds, and what dwelling place could be better or greater than these dwellings which include everything that brings joy to hearts and souls, and physical pleasures? In it is that which will delight hearts and eyes, of elegant dwellings, verdant gardens, fruitful trees, singing birds, delicious food, refreshing drinks, beautiful women, plentiful servants, flowing rivers, splendid scenery, beauty of all types and eternal bliss.

The best and greatest of that, which will bring the greatest joy, is nearness to the Most Gracious and attaining His pleasure, which is the greatest of the delights of paradise, and the sublime joy of seeing His noble Countenance and hearing the words of the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.



How beautiful, perfect and everlasting those dwellings will be, that are too great to be described by man and are more splendid than anything that could cross his mind. If people really knew even a little of these delights, they would be filled with longing, and their souls would feel the pain of homesickness for that place, and they would have rushed towards it in groups and singly; they would not have preferred to it this transient world with its tarnished, diminishing joys, and they would not have allowed any moment to be wasted and lost, when any moment of joy there is equal to millennia of joy in this world. But heedlessness prevailed, faith was weak, knowledge was lacking and willpower was absent, which is the reason for the status quo. There is no power and no strength except with Allah, the Most High, the Almighty.

﴿to abide therein forever﴾ this is the ultimate blessing, that joy and delight therein are perfect, and part of that perfection is that they will never cease.

﴿with no desire to leave﴾ that is, they will never want to depart or move from there, because they do not see anything but that which amazes and delights them, and gives them joy and happiness, and they cannot imagine any bliss greater than that in which they are.



﴿قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مَدَادًا لَكَلِمَتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنفَدَ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا﴾

(سورة الكهف: ١٠٩) ﴿١٨﴾

18:109. Say [O Muhammad]: If the sea were ink for writing the words of my Lord, it would dry up before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought another sea like it to replenish it.

That is, tell them about the greatness of the Creator and the vastness and encompassing nature of His attributes, and that people can never fully comprehend any of them.

﴿If the sea﴾ in this world  
 ﴿were ink for writing the words of my Lord﴾ that is, and the trees of this world, from the first to the last of them, all the trees in the cities and in the wilderness, were pens  
 ﴿it would dry up﴾ and the pens would break  
 ﴿before the words of my Lord were exhausted﴾. This is a great thing that no one can fully comprehend.

Elsewhere, Allah says:

﴿If all the trees on earth were pens, and the sea [was ink], replenished by seven more seas, the words of Allah would still not be exhausted. Verily, Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.﴾ (*Luqmân* 31: 27)

This is by way of making the matter easier to understand, because these things are created and all created things will cease to be. As for the words of Allah, they are among His attributes, and His attributes are not created, and they have no limit and no end. Whatever greatness and vastness people can imagine, Allah is above that, and the same applies to all the attributes of Allah (ﷻ), such as His knowledge, His wisdom, His power and His mercy. If all the knowledge of created beings, from the first to the last, the inhabitants of the heavens and the inhabitants of earth, were put together, in comparison to the knowledge of the Almighty it would be less than the amount of water picked up by a bird that came to the shore and dipped its beak in the ocean, in comparison to the amount of water contained in that ocean. Allah is possessed of great and perfect attributes:

﴿That the final destination is with your Lord.﴾ (*an-Najm* 53: 42)



﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُ الْوَاحِدُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ ۚ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ ۚ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١١٠)

18:110. Say [O Muhammad]: I am but a human being like yourselves, [except that] it has been revealed to me that your God is One God. So whoever hopes to meet his Lord, let him do righteous deeds and include no one else in the worship due to his Lord.

﴿Say﴾ O Muhammad (ﷺ), to the disbelievers and others ﴿I am but a human being like yourselves﴾ that is, I am not divine and I have no share in dominion, or any knowledge of the unseen, nor do I possess the treasuries of Allah (cf. 11: 31).

﴿I am but a human being like yourselves﴾, one of the slaves of my Lord

﴿[except that] it has been revealed to me that your God is One God﴾ that is, I have been favoured over you by means of the revelation that Allah has bestowed upon me, the main message of which is to tell you that your God is One God, with no partner or associate, and no one deserves an atom's worth of worship but He. And I call you to do deeds that will bring you closer to Him, earn you His reward and ward off His punishment from you. Hence Allah says:

﴿So whoever hopes to meet his Lord, let him do righteous deeds﴾ that are in accordance with the laws of Allah, both obligatory and recommended deeds.

﴿and include no one else in the worship due to his Lord﴾ that is, he should not show off in his deeds; rather he should do deeds sincerely for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). This refers to one who combines sincerity with following Islamic teachings; he is the one who will attain that which he hopes for and seeks. As for others, they will be losers in

this world and the hereafter, and they will miss out on drawing close to their Lord and attaining His pleasure.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Kahf.  
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.



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# 19. Soorat Maryam

(Madrani)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



﴿كَيْعَصَ ﴿١﴾ ذَكَرْ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ، زَكَرِيَّا ﴿٢﴾﴾ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ، نِدَاءً  
خَفِيًّا ﴿٣﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَأَسْتَعْلُ الرَّأْسَ سَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ  
يَدْعَايَكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا ﴿٤﴾ وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا  
فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ﴿٥﴾ يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ عَالِ يَعْقُوبَ وَأَجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا  
﴿٦﴾ (سورة مريم: ١-٦)

19:1. Kâf. Hâ'. Yâ'. 'Ayn. Şâd.<sup>6</sup>

19:2. This is an account of the mercy of your Lord to His slave  
Zakariyâ,

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<sup>6</sup> Groups of letters (*al-huroof al-muqatta'ah*) appear at the beginning of several soorahs. The most correct scholarly view states that we are required to believe in them as they appear to be, without delving into their meaning, knowledge of which we should leave to Allah. We believe that they were not revealed in vain, and that there is wisdom behind them of which we are not aware.

- 19:3. When he called upon his Lord privately.
- 19:4. He said: My Lord, my bones have grown weak and my head glows silver with age, but never, my Lord, has my prayer to You remained unanswered.
- 19:5. Verily I fear [what] my kinsmen [will do] after I am gone, for my wife is barren.<sup>7</sup> Grant unto me by Your grace an heir,
- 19:6. who will inherit from me and from the family of Ya'qoob, and make him, my Lord, one with whom You are pleased.

﴿This is an account of the mercy of your Lord to His slave Zakariyâ﴾ which We will tell to you and explain in detail, and through it will become known the story of His Prophet Zakariyâ, and his righteous deeds and beautiful trials. In this story there is a lesson for those who are willing to learn and an example for those who wish to follow it. Highlighting the details of Allah's mercy to His close friends, and the means by which they attained His mercy, prompts the reader to love Allah (ﷻ) and remember Him a great deal, and to know the means of reaching Him. Allah (ﷻ) chose and selected Zakariyâ (ﷺ) to be His Messenger and He singled him out to receive His revelation, and he undertook that mission as other Messengers did, calling people to his Lord, teaching them that which Allah had taught him, and sincerely advising them, as his fellow Messengers and their followers did. When he saw that he was growing weak and he feared that he would die, and he had no one to take over from him in calling people to their Lord and advising them, he complained to his Lord of his weakness, both outward and inward; he called upon Him in private, so that his supplication would be more perfect, better and more sincere.

<sup>7</sup> His kinsmen did not care about religion, and he was afraid that after he died, religion would be neglected. So he asked for an heir who would uphold religion after he was gone. Therefore he asked for someone who would inherit knowledge and prophethood, not wealth, from him. (al-Qurtubi)

﴿He said: My Lord, my bones have grown weak﴾. If the bones, which are the pillars of the body, have grown weak, then the rest of the body will also grow weak.

﴿and my head glows silver with age﴾ because grey hair is a sign of weakness and old age, and is the harbinger of death. So he prayed to Allah (ﷻ), expressing his weakness and incapability, and this is one of the dearest means of approaching Allah, because it is declaring one's lack of power and strength, and relying on the power and strength of Allah.

﴿but never, my Lord, has my prayer to You remained unanswered﴾ that is, You have never turned me away empty-handed; rather You have always cared for me and answered my prayers, and Your blessings keep coming down to me and Your kindness constantly reaches me. This is seeking the help of Allah by virtue of His blessings and previous response to supplications, so he asked the One Who had previously shown kindness to complete His kindness in the future.

﴿Verily I fear [what] my kinsmen [will do] after I am gone﴾ that is, I am afraid that whoever the Children of Israel appoint to succeed me as a leader after I am gone will not establish Your religion properly or call Your slaves to You. The apparent meaning of these words indicates that he had not seen anyone among them who was fit for leadership in religious matters. In this we see the compassion and sincerity of Zakariyâ (ﷺ), because his request for a son was not like that of anyone else, whose aim is merely worldly interests; rather his aim was the interests of the religion and the fear that it would be lost, as he thought that no one was fit for that.

His family was one of the families that were known for religious commitment; there were many Messengers among them and they were thought highly of. So he called upon Allah, asking Him to bless him with a son who would establish the religion after him, and he complained of his wife's barrenness, for she had never borne a child

and he had grown quite decrepit from old age and had reached an age at which it is very rare to feel physical desire or produce a child. ﴿Grant unto me by Your grace an heir﴾ – this inheritance was to be in terms of religious leadership, prophethood, knowledge and righteous deeds.

Hence he said: ﴿who will inherit from me and from the family of Ya'qoob, and make him, my Lord, one with whom You are pleased﴾ that is, a righteous slave with whom You are pleased, and endear him to Your slaves. To sum up, he asked Allah for a righteous male child who would remain after he died and be his successor, and who would be a Prophet who was pleasing to Allah and to His creation. This is the best that a child could be. By Allah's mercy to His slave, He blessed him with a righteous child who possessed all noble characteristics and sublime attributes. His Lord had mercy on him and answered his supplication, and said:



﴿يٰۤاٰزَكَرِيَّا اِنَّا بُشِّرُكَ بِغُلٰمٍ اَسْمُهُ يٰحْيٰى لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اَنۡىۤ يَكُوۡنُ لِيۡ غُلٰمٌ وَّكَانَتِ اِمْرَاۡتِيۡ عَاقِرًا وَّقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٨﴾ قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلٰى هٰٓىهٖنَّ وَاَقَدَ خَلَقْتٰكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَاَنْتَ تَكُوۡنُ شَيْۡنًا ﴿٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِيۡ اٰيَةً قَالَ اٰيٰتُكَ اِلَّا تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ ثَلٰثَ لَيَالٍ سُوۡيًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلٰى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَاَوْحٰى اِلَيْهِمْ اَنْ سَبِّحُوۡا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿١١﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧-١١)

19:7. [It was said to him:] O Zakariyâ, We give you the glad tidings of a son. His name will be Yahyâ; We have not given such a name to anyone before.

19:8. He said: O my Lord, how can I have a son, when my wife is barren and I have grown quite decrepit from old age?



- 19:9. He said: Thus it will be. Your Lord says: That is easy for Me; indeed I created you before, when you were nothing.
- 19:10. Zakariyâ said: O my Lord, give me a sign. He said: Your sign will be that you will not be able to speak to people for three days, although you are not mute.
- 19:11. So he came out to his people from the chamber, and signalled to them to glorify Allah in the morning and in the evening.

That is, Allah (ﷻ) gave him glad tidings, through the angels, of Yaḥyâ. Allah named him Yaḥyâ and it was a name that suited him, because he lived (the name Yaḥyâ comes from a root meaning live) in a true sense physically, and thus the blessing became perfected through him; he also lived in a metaphorical sense, referring to spiritual life, by means of revelation, knowledge and religious commitment.

﴿We have not given such a name to anyone before﴾ that is, no one was called by this name before him. It may be that what is meant is: We never made anyone equal to him before, like him or better. In this case, the glad tidings were of his perfect nature and praiseworthy attributes, and heralded that he would be superior to those who came before him. But according to this interpretation, there must be some exceptions to this superiority in general terms, because Ibrâheem, Moosâ, Nooḥ (peace be upon them) and similar figures are definitely of higher standing than Yaḥyâ.

Then when the glad tidings of this child for whom he had prayed came to him, Zakariyâ expressed astonishment and amazement, and said:

﴿O my Lord, how can I have a son﴾ when impediments to having a child are present in me and my wife? It was as if, when he offered this supplication, these impediments did not occur to him because his focus was on the idea of having a child. In this case, when his supplication was accepted, he was astounded by that. But Allah responded by saying:

﴿Thus it will be. Your Lord says: That is easy for Me﴾ that is, it is usually something strange, and is counter to Allah's usual way of creation, but the might and power of Allah (ﷻ) is able to create things without the usual means. Hence it is easy for Him, and is not more difficult than creating him before that, when he was nothing.

﴿Zakariyâ said: O my Lord, give me a sign﴾ that is, with which my heart may be reassured. This was not an expression of doubt about what Allah said; rather it was similar to what Ibrâheem al-Khaleel (ﷺ) had said:

﴿...Show me, O Lord, how You will give life to the dead, He replied: Do you not believe then? He said: Yes of course, but just to reassure my heart...﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 260*)

So he asked for more knowledge and the means to reach the utmost certainty after having attained certain knowledge, and Allah responded to his request out of mercy towards him.

﴿He said: Your sign will be that you will not be able to speak to people for three days, although you are not mute﴾. Elsewhere Allah says:

﴿...you will not be able to speak to people for three days except through gestures...﴾ (*Āl 'Imrân 3: 41*)

The meaning is the same. This is one of the wondrous signs, because his being unable to speak for three days, without there being any muteness or impediment – rather he was sound and had no physical defects – was a sign of the extraordinary might and power of Allah. Moreover, he was unable to speak to other people, but he was not prevented from uttering words of praise and glorification of Allah, remembrance of Him, and the like. Hence Allah says elsewhere:

﴿...So remember your Lord often, and glorify Him in the afternoon and in the morning.﴾ (*Āl 'Imrân 3: 41*)

Thus he was reassured and he rejoiced at these great glad tidings. He obeyed the command of Allah to give thanks to Him by worshipping Him and remembering Him, staying in his chamber.

He came out to his people ﴿and signalled to them﴾ by means of gestures

﴿to glorify Allah in the morning and in the evening﴾ because the glad tidings of Yaḥyâ were in the religious interests of all.



﴿يَبِيحَىٰ خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاَتَيْنَهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا ﴿١٢﴾ وَحَنَانًا مِن لَّدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً  
وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٣﴾ وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ﴿١٤﴾ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ  
وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿١٥﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ١٢-١٥)

- 19:12. [Allah said:] O Yaḥyâ, hold fast to the Book [the Torah] with all your strength. And We granted him knowledge and wisdom when he was still a boy.
- 19:13. And by Our grace We made him compassionate and righteous; and he was God-fearing
- 19:14. And dutiful towards his parents, and he was not arrogant or disobedient.
- 19:15. So peace be upon him the day he was born, the day he dies and the day he will be raised up to life again!

These words indicate that Yaḥyâ was born and grew up, and when he reached the stage where he could understand what he was told, Allah instructed him to hold fast to the Book, which means showing serious commitment by striving to memorise its words, understand its meanings and act in accordance with its commands and prohibitions. This is what holding fast to the Book means in a perfect sense. He complied with the command of his Lord and focused on the Book, memorising it and understanding it, and Allah bestowed upon him intelligence and smartness such as was not found in anyone else. Hence He said:

«And We granted him knowledge and wisdom when he was still a boy» that is, knowledge of the rulings of Allah and how to rule in accordance with them, when he was still a small child.

«And by Our grace We made him compassionate» that is, We instilled mercy and kindness in his heart, through which his affairs were made easy, his well-being was sound and his deeds were correct «and righteous» that is, he was pure and free of faults and sins. So his heart was pure and his mind was pure. This implies that he had no blameworthy characteristics or bad manners; he possessed extra good manners and praiseworthy characteristics. Hence Allah says «and he was God-fearing» that is, he did what was enjoined and refrained from what was prohibited. Whoever is a God-fearing believer will be a close friend of Allah and will be one of the people of paradise which has been prepared for those who fear Allah, and he will attain reward in this world and the hereafter that Allah has caused to be the outcome of fearing Him.

«And» he was also «dutiful towards his parents» he did not disobey them or mistreat them; rather he was kind towards them in word and deed.

«and he was not arrogant or disobedient» that is, he was not too arrogant to worship Allah, and he did not look down on the slaves of Allah or on his parents; rather he was humble and obedient, always turning to Allah. Thus he combined fulfilling the rights of Allah with fulfilling the rights of people. Hence he was granted well-being by Allah in all his affairs, from start to finish.

Hence Allah says: «So peace be upon him the day he was born, the day he dies and the day he will be raised up to life again!» That implies that he will be safe from the Shayṭān, and from evil and punishment, in these three situations and in the times in between them; he will be safe from the fire and other terrors, and he is one of the people of paradise. Blessings and peace of Allah be upon him, upon his father

and upon all the Messengers, and may Allah make us among their followers, for He is most generous and kind.



﴿وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَتْ إِنَّيَأَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَى هَيْنٌ وَلَنَجْعَلَنَّهُ ءَايَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ١٦-٢١)

- 19:16. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Maryam, when she withdrew from her family in a place towards the east.
- 19:17. She screened herself from them, then We sent to her Our Angel [Jibreel], and he appeared before her in the form of a perfect human being.
- 19:18. She said: I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you; [do not come near me] if you fear Him!
- 19:19. He said: I am only a Messenger from your Lord, [to announce] to you the gift of a righteous son.
- 19:20. She said: How will I have a son when no man has touched me, and I have never been unchaste?
- 19:21. He said: Thus it will be. Your Lord says: That is easy for Me; We will make him a sign to humankind, and a mercy from Us. It is a matter already decreed.

Having mentioned the story of Zakariyâ and Yaḥyâ, and its wondrous signs, Allah now tells us a story that is even more wondrous, moving from that which is lesser to that which is more sublime:

«Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Maryam» – peace be upon her. This is one of her greatest virtues, that she is mentioned in the holy Book which the Muslims, from the east to the west, recite, and she is mentioned therein in the best terms and spoken of highly, as a reward for her noble deeds and perfect efforts. In other words: mention in the Book Maryam, and her good conduct when she «withdrew» that is, moved away, from her family «in a place towards the east» that is, to the east of where they were.

«She screened herself from them» that is, she put a barrier between her and them. The reason why she went away from them and screened herself from them was in order to withdraw and be alone to worship her Lord with humility and sincerity towards Him. That was in obedience to His words:

«And [remember] when the angels said: O Maryam! Allah has chosen you and purified you – chosen you above the women of all nations [of her own time]. O Maryam, worship your Lord devoutly; prostrate and bow [in prayer] with those who bow.» (*Al 'Imrân* 3: 42-43)

«then We sent to her Our Angel» namely Jibreel (جبرئيل) «and he appeared before her in the form of a perfect human being» that is, in the perfect figure of a man, handsome and good-looking, with no defects or shortcomings, because she would not have been able to bear seeing him in his real form. When she saw him in this form, when she had withdrawn from her family and isolated herself from people, and had screened herself away from the dearest of people to her, namely her family, she was afraid that he was a man who intended ill towards her, so she sought the protection of her Lord and sought refuge with Him, saying:

«I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you» that is, I turn to Him and seek protection in His mercy, lest you do me harm «[do not come near me] if you fear Him!» That is, if you fear Allah and you act as a pious man should, then refrain from harming me. Thus she combined seeking the protection of her Lord with warning

and scaring him, and instructing him to fear Allah when she was in that situation, on her own with this young man, far away from people, and he was so stunningly handsome and an apparently perfect human being. He had not said anything bad or made any move towards her; rather that was fear on her part; this was indicative of the utmost chastity and keenness to avoid evil and that which may lead to it.

This chastity – especially when there is a motive to fall into sin and there is nothing to prevent it, is one of the best of deeds. Therefore Allah praised her and said:

﴿And [there is another example] in Maryam, the daughter of ‘Imrân, who guarded her chastity. We blew into her [garment] through Our angel [Jibreel]...﴾ (at-Tahreem 66: 12)

-- and:

﴿And [remember] the one who guarded her chastity: We blew into her [garment] through Our angel [Jibreel], and We made her and her son a sign for all people.﴾ (al-Anbiyâ’ 21: 91)

Allah rewarded her for her chastity with a child who was one of the signs of Allah and one of His Messengers.

When Jibreel saw her fear, he said: ﴿I am only a Messenger from your Lord﴾ that is, my only role is to carry out the mission of my Lord concerning you

﴿[to announce] to you the gift of a righteous son﴾. This was great glad tidings of a righteous son, for righteousness implies that he would be free of blameworthy characteristics and would have praiseworthy characteristics. She was amazed at the idea of having a child without a father, so she said:

﴿How will I have a son when no man has touched me, and I have never been unchaste?﴾ For a child cannot come into being otherwise.

﴿He said: Thus it will be. Your Lord says: That is easy for Me; We will make him a sign to humankind﴾ that will point to the perfect might of Allah (ﷻ) and highlight the fact that no cause can lead to

its effect independently of Allah; rather the effect comes about by the decree of Allah.

Hence Allah shows His slaves extraordinary events concerning some ordinary causes or means, so that they will not become attached to these means and ignore the One Who controls and decrees them.

﴿and a mercy from Us﴾ that is, so that We might make him a mercy from Us, for him, for his mother and for all the people.

As for the mercy of Allah towards him, that is because of what He singled him out for of His revelation and what He blessed him with of the blessings that He bestowed upon all the Messengers of strong resolve. As for His mercy towards his mother, it is because of the high esteem in which she was held, and the words of commendation and great reward that she attained. As for His mercy towards the people, that is because of the great blessings that He bestowed upon them by sending among them a Messenger who recited His revelations to them, to purify them and teach them the Book and wisdom, so that they would believe in him and obey him, and thus attain happiness in this world and in the hereafter.

﴿It﴾ namely the creation of 'Eesâ (ﷺ) in this manner ﴿is a matter already decreed﴾ so it will inevitably come to pass. So Jibreel (ﷺ) breathed into her garment.



﴿ فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَذَتْ بِهِ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَا لَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَنَادَاهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَهَزَيْتُ إِلَيْكِ الْجِذْعَ النَّخْلَةَ تُسْقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ فَكَلِمَىٰ وَأُشْرِي وَقَرِي عَيْنًا فِيمَا تَرَيْنَ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقَوْلِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٢٢-٢٦)



- 19:22. So she conceived him and withdrew with him to a remote place.
- 19:23. The pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said: Would that I had died before this and had been overlooked and forgotten!
- 19:24. But he<sup>8</sup> called to her from below her: Do not worry, for your Lord has provided a stream close at hand.
- 19:25. Shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you; it will drop fresh ripe dates upon you.
- 19:26. Eat and drink, and be content. And if you see any human being, say: I have made a vow of silence to the Most Gracious, and today I will not speak to any person.

When she became pregnant with 'Eesâ (ﷺ), she feared scandal, so she stayed away from people, withdrawing ﴿to a remote place﴾. When the time of his birth approached, the labour pains drove her to the trunk of a palm tree, and when the labour pains, the pain of keeping away from food and drink, and the pain of her fear of what people would say grew intense, and she feared that she would not have the patience to withstand all these trials, she wished that she had died before this happened and had been forgotten and not remembered.

This wish resulted from the troubles that she faced, but there was nothing good for her in this wish and it did not serve any interest. Rather what was good for her and what was in her best interests was what was already decreed to happen. At that point the angel calmed her fears, made her steadfast and called to her from below her. It may be that he was in a place lower down than the place where she was, and he said to her: Do not worry; in other words, do not panic or be distressed, ﴿for your Lord has provided a stream close at hand﴾ that is, a river from which you can drink.

<sup>8</sup> The speaker may be 'Eesâ or Jibreel. (aṭ-Ṭabari; al-Qurṭubi)

«Shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you; it will drop fresh ripe dates upon you. Eat» from the dates «and drink» from the stream «and be content» with 'Eesâ. This was reassurance with regard to being safe from the pains of childbirth and obtaining enjoyable and nourishing food and drink.

With regard to what people would say, he (the angel) instructed her, if she saw anyone, to say by way of gestures: «I have made a vow of silence to the Most Gracious, and today I will not speak to any person» that is, I will not speak to them. This was so that she might have respite from having to speak to them and peace of mind regarding what they might say. It was well known among them that silence was an act of worship that was prescribed at that time. She was not instructed to speak to them and say that she had done nothing wrong or defend herself, because the people would not believe her and there was no benefit in doing that. The declaration of her innocence was to come from the words of 'Eesâ when he spoke in the cradle, which would be a more effective testimony of her innocence.

For a woman to produce a child without a husband and claim that he had no father would be a most serious claim, and even if there were many witnesses it would not be believed. Therefore the proof of this extraordinary event was made to be of the same nature as the event itself, which was the speaking of 'Eesâ (ﷺ) when he was very small. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:



﴿فَأْتَتْ بِهِ، قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ، قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ يَتَّخِذَ هَرُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكَ أَمْرًا سَوْءًا وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمَّكَ بَعِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ءَاتَنِي الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدِي

وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ أُمُوتٍ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٤﴾ (سورة مريم: ٢٧-٣٣)

- 19:27. She came to her people, carrying the infant. They said: O Maryam, indeed you have done something unthinkable!
- 19:28. O sister of Hâroon,<sup>9</sup> your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother unchaste!
- 19:29. Thereupon she pointed to the infant. They said: How can we talk to one who is an infant in the cradle?
- 19:30. 'Eesâ said: Verily I am a slave of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet.
- 19:31. He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and has enjoined on me prayer and *zakâh* as long as I live.
- 19:32. And He has made me dutiful towards my mother, and not arrogant or unblessed.
- 19:33. So peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I will be raised up to life again!

When Maryam had recovered from giving birth, she brought 'Eesâ to her people, carrying him in her arms. She knew that she was innocent, so she had no worries. They said: ﴿O Maryam, indeed you have done something unthinkable!﴾ That is, something very serious and bad. What they meant by that was fornication, but she was far above doing such a thing.

﴿O sister of Hâroon﴾ – what appears to be the case is that he was her real brother. They attributed her to him, and they used to give their children the names of Prophets; he was not Hâroon ibn 'Imrân, the brother of Moosâ, because there were many centuries between them.

<sup>9</sup> She had a brother called Hâroon who was known for his righteousness.

«your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother unchaste» that is, your parents were nothing but righteous and free of evil, especially this evil to which they were referring. What they meant was: how could you be so different from them and do something that they would never do? That is because the offspring – in most cases – are of the same quality as the parents in terms of righteousness and its opposite. Therefore they were surprised and wondered – on the basis of their suspicion – how she could have done such a thing.

She pointed to the infant, indicating that they should speak to him. She only did that because she had been instructed, when the people spoke to her, to tell them: «I have made a vow of silence to the Most Gracious, and today I will not speak to any person» (19: 26).

When she indicated that they should speak to him, they were astonished by that and said: «How can we talk to one who is an infant in the cradle?» Because this is something that is not ordinary, and it has never happened with one of this age.

At that point, 'Eesâ said, when he was an infant in the cradle: «Verily I am a slave of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet». He addressed them, referring to himself as a slave of Allah and stating that he possessed no attributes for which he might deserve to be taken as a god or as the son of God; exalted be Allah far above what the Christians, who claim to be followers of 'Eesâ but drifted away from his path, say concerning him, which is contrary to what 'Eesâ himself said: «Verily I am a slave of Allah».

«He has given me the Book» that is, He has decreed that He will give me the Book  
 «and made me a Prophet». Thus he informed them that he was a slave of Allah, and that Allah had taught him the Book and made him one of His Prophets. These are attributes of perfection that had to do with 'Eesâ himself.

Then he mentioned other attributes of perfection that made him beneficial for others, as he said:

«He has made me blessed wherever I may be» that is, in any place and at any time. The blessing that Allah bestowed upon him had to do with teaching good and calling people to it, forbidding evil, and calling people to Allah in word and deed. Anyone who sat with him or met him would attain his blessing, and anyone who accompanied him would feel happy.

«and has enjoined on me prayer and zakâh as long as I live» that is, He has enjoined me to fulfil His rights, the most important of which is prayer, and the rights of His slaves, the most important of which is zakâh, for as long as I live, and I am complying with the instructions of my Lord, acting in accordance with them, and putting them into practice.

«And He has made me dutiful towards my mother» that is, He has also enjoined me to honour my mother, treat her with the utmost kindness, and do what I should for her, because of her honour and virtue, and because she is a mother and has rights because she gave birth to me and cared for me thereafter.

«and not arrogant» towards Allah or looking down on His slaves «or unblessed» in this world or the hereafter. He has not made me like that; rather He has made me obedient and humble towards Him and humble towards the slaves of Allah, blessed in this world and the hereafter, I and those who follow me.

As he attained all perfection and good qualities, he said: «So peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I will be raised up to life again» that is, by the great kindness and grace of my Lord, I have attained peace and safety on the day of my birth, the day of my death, and the day I will be resurrected, from evil, the Shayṭān and punishment. This implies that he will be safe from the terrors of the Day of Resurrection and the abode of the evil (hell), and that he will be one of the people of the abode of peace (paradise). This is a

great miracle and amazing proof that he is a Messenger of Allah and a true slave of Allah.



﴿ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٣٤-٣٦)

19:34. Such was 'Eesâ son of Maryam, and this is the truth about him concerning which they are in doubt.

19:35. It is not befitting to Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He decrees a matter, He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is.

19:36. Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path.

That is, the one who is described in this manner is undoubtedly 'Eesâ son of Maryam. Indeed this is the truth and is what Allah says concerning him, and no one could be more truthful or better in speech than Him. This is certain news about 'Eesâ (ﷺ), and whatever is said about him that is contrary to this is definitely false and can be no more than speculation on the part of one who has no knowledge about him. Therefore Allah says:

﴿concerning which they are in doubt﴾ that is, they argue on the basis of doubt and speculation, saying of him that he is God, or the son of God, or the third of three; exalted be Allah far above their fabrication.

﴿It is not befitting to Allah that He should beget a son﴾ that is, it is not appropriate and is not right, because it is something impossible. Allah is independent of means, most praiseworthy, the Sovereign of all realms, so how could He take a son from among His slaves?

«Glory be to Him» that is, exalted be He far above having a child or any other shortcoming or imperfection.

«When He decrees a matter» that is, no matter, minor or major, is too difficult for Him or is beyond Him.

«He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is». As His decree is always done, in both the upper and lower realms, how can he have a son? When He wills something, He says to it «'Be!' and it is», so how could it be regarded as far-fetched for Him to create 'Eesâ without a father?

Hence 'Eesâ (ﷺ) stated that he was a slave who was subject to Allah's Lordship and control like anyone else, as he said:

«Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord» Who created us and fashioned us, to Whose control and decree we are subject.

«so worship Him» that is, devote your worship to Him alone and strive hard to turn to Him. This is affirmation of the oneness of His Lordship and the oneness of His divinity, as he quoted the former as evidence for the latter. Hence he said:

«This is a straight path» that is, a path of moderation that leads to Allah, because it is the path of the Messengers and their followers, and any other paths are the ways of misguidance and error.



﴿فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ قَوْلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ مَّشْهَدٍ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَسْمِعْ يَوْمَ  
وَأَنْصُرْ يَوْمَ يَأْتُونَنَا لَكِنِ الظَّالِمُونَ الْيَوْمَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ (سورة مريم: ٣٧-٣٨)

19:37. But the sects differed among themselves [concerning 'Eesâ]. So woe to the disbelievers from the scene of a momentous day!

19:38. How clearly they will hear and see on the day they come to Us. But today the wrongdoers are clearly misguided.

Having explained the nature of 'Eesâ ibn Maryam, concerning which there can be no doubt, Allah now tells us that the sects – that

is, the misguided groups, namely the Jews, Christians and others of varying levels – differed concerning 'Eesâ (ﷺ), either exaggerating in praise of him or in dismissing and condemning him.

Some of them said that he was God, others said that he was the son of God or the third of three, and others did not regard him as a Messenger at all; rather they accused him of being illegitimate, as the Jews did.

All these views are false and wrong, and were based on speculation, stubbornness, false evidence and flimsy arguments. All of these people are deserving of this stern warning, hence Allah says:

﴿So woe to the disbelievers﴾ who disbelieved in Allah and His Messengers and Books. This includes the Jews and Christians who spoke words of disbelief concerning 'Eesâ,

﴿from the scene of a momentous day﴾ that is, the scene of the Day of Resurrection, which will be witnessed by the first and the last, the inhabitants of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth, the Creator and those whom He created, which will be filled with earthquakes and terrors, and on which there will be the requital of deeds. On that day it will become clear what they used to conceal and disclose, and what they used to hide.

﴿How clearly they will hear and see on the day they come to Us﴾ that is, how clearly they will hear and see on that day; then they will admit their disbelief and ascription of partners to Allah, and will admit what they said, saying:

﴿...Our Lord, We have seen and we have heard. Send us back [to the world]; we will do righteous deeds, for now we believe with certainty.﴾ (*as-Sajdah* 32: 12)

On the Day of Resurrection, they will know for sure the reality of what they followed.

﴿But today the wrongdoers are clearly misguided﴾ and they have no excuse for this misguidance, because they are either stubbornly



and knowingly going astray, aware of the truth but turning away from it, or they are going astray from the path of truth even though they are able to find out what is true and right, but they are content with the misguidance they are following and the evil deeds they are doing, and are not even trying to find out what is true and what is false. Think about how Allah says ﴿So woe to the disbelievers﴾ (19: 37) after having said ﴿But the sects differed among themselves﴾, and He did not say “So woe to them”, with the pronoun referring to the sects, because among the various sects there are some who were right and whose view was in harmony with the truth, so they said concerning ‘Eesā that he was the slave and Messenger of Allah, and they believed in him and followed him. These people are believers and are not included in this warning, therefore Allah addressed the warning only to the disbelievers.



﴿وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ  
الْأَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا وَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٣٩-٤٠)

19:39. Warn them of the day of remorse, when the matter will have been decided,<sup>10</sup> for they are heedless and do not believe.

19:40. Verily, it is We Who will inherit the earth and all who are upon it, and to Us they will be returned.

The warning here is mentioning and describing the thing that is to be feared, by way of alarming. The thing that most deserves to be warned of, thus alarming people about it, is the day of remorse when the matter will be decided; the first and the last will be gathered in

<sup>10</sup> That is, when the judgement is over, and the people of paradise and hell have entered their respective abodes. (al-Qurtubi)

one place and will be questioned about their deeds. Then whoever believed in Allah and followed His Messengers will be blessed with bliss after which there will be no misery, and whoever did not believe in Allah and follow His Messenger will be doomed to misery after which there will be no bliss, and he will lose his own self and his family. At that time he will be filled with remorse and regret that will tear apart his heart. What loss could be greater than missing out on the pleasure and paradise of Allah and incurring His wrath and hell, in such a way that one can never go back and start anew, and has no way of changing his situation by going back to this world? This is what lies ahead of them; but at present in this world, they are heedless of this matter of great significance, which never crosses their minds, and if it does occur to them, it has no impact on them, as they are overwhelmed by heedlessness and distracted by worldly pursuits. That is because they do not believe in Allah and do not follow His Messengers. Their worldly concerns have distracted them and their temporary, fleeting whims and desires have prevented them from believing, but this world and all that is in it, from beginning to end, will be lost to its people and they will depart from it, and Allah will inherit the earth and all who are upon it; they will return to Him and He will requite them for what they did in this world, what they lost and what they gained. Whoever has done good, let him praise Allah, and whoever finds something other than that in his record, let him blame no one but himself.



﴿وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا ۗ يَا أَبَتِ إِنَّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ۗ﴾  
 ﴿٤١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا  
 ﴿٤٢﴾ يَا أَبَتِ إِنَّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا  
 ﴿٤٣﴾ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ

كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾ يَتَّابَتْ إِلَىٰ أَحَافٍ أَنْ يَمْسَكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ  
 لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتُ أَنْتَ عَنِ الْهَيْتِي يَتَابِرْهِمْ لِيْن لَمْ تَنْتَه لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ  
 وَأَهْجُرَنِي مَلِيًّا ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ سَلِّمْ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي حَفِيًّا  
 ﴿٤٧﴾ وَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ  
 رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ﴿٤٨﴾ فَلَمَّا أَعْتَزَلْتَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ  
 وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُم مِّن رَّحْمِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُم لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٠﴾

(سورة مريم: ٤١-٥٠)

- 19:41. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Ibrâheem. Verily he was a man strong and true in faith, a Prophet.
- 19:42. When he said to his father: O my father, why do you worship that which can neither hear nor see, nor benefit you in any way?
- 19:43. O my father, there has come to me some knowledge that did not come to you. So follow me, and I will guide you to a straight path.
- 19:44. O my father, do not worship the Shayṭân, for the Shayṭân has ever been disobedient towards the Most Gracious.
- 19:45. O my father, indeed I fear lest a punishment from the Most Gracious befall you so that you become a companion of the Shayṭân.
- 19:46. His father said: Are you renouncing my gods, O Ibrâheem? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you. Keep away from me for a good long time!
- 19:47. Ibrâheem said: Peace be upon you. I will pray to my Lord to forgive you, for indeed He has always been very kind to me.
- 19:48. I will keep away from [and disavow] you and those on whom you call besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord; perhaps my supplication to my Lord will not remain unanswered.

- 19:49. After he turned away from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed upon him Is-hâq and Ya'qoob, and We made each of them a Prophet.
- 19:50. We bestowed upon them [manifold] gifts by Our mercy, and We granted them a deservedly lofty renown.

The noblest, best and most sublime of books is this clear Book and wise reminder. Whatever stories are mentioned in it are the truest of stories; whatever commands and prohibitions are mentioned in it are the greatest of commands and prohibitions, and the most fair and just; whatever requital, promises and warnings are mentioned in it, they are the truest and most indicative of wisdom, justice and virtue. Whatever Prophets and Messengers are mentioned in it, they are more perfect than others and superior to them. Therefore the stories of the Prophets whom Allah favoured over others and raised them in status are repeated more often, because of what they did of worshipping and loving Allah, turning to Him, fulfilling His rights and those of His slaves, calling people to Allah with patience and steadfastness, and attaining high status and lofty dwellings in paradise.

In this *soorah*, Allah mentions a number of the Prophets and instructs His Messenger (ﷺ) to mention them, because mentioning them is a manifestation of praise to Allah and praise for them, it highlights His favour and kindness towards them, and it encourages others to believe in them, love them and follow their example. Therefore He says:

﴿Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Ibrâheem. Verily he was a man strong and true in faith, a Prophet﴾. Here Allah mentions both his faith that was strong and true and his prophethood.

The *şiddeeq* (translated here as ﴿a man strong and true in faith﴾) is one who constantly speaks the truth. So he is truthful and sincere in word and deed, in all situations, and he believes in everything in which he is commanded to believe. This implies great knowledge

that penetrates the heart, has an impact on it, and leads to certainty of faith and righteous deeds in a comprehensive manner. Ibrâheem (ﷺ) is the best of all the Prophets after Muhammad (ﷺ).

He is the third father of the best group, and he is the one among whose progeny Allah ordained prophethood and the Book. He is the one who called people to Allah and bore patiently the great suffering that he encountered. He called everyone, near and far, and strove hard to call his father as much as he could.

Allah tells us how he debated with his father:

﴿When he said to his father﴾, trying to explain to him how abhorrent it is to worship idols

﴿O my father, why do you worship that which can neither hear nor see, nor benefit you in any way?﴾ That is, why do you worship idols that are lacking in and of themselves and in their actions? For they cannot hear or see, and they cannot benefit or harm those who worship them; rather they cannot even benefit themselves in any way or ward off any harm from themselves. This is clear proof which indicates that worshipping something that is lacking in its essence and deeds is something that is reprehensible according to both rational thinking and Islamic teachings.

This indicates that the One Who should be worshipped, and Whom it is appropriate to worship, is the One Who is perfect, and people cannot attain any blessings except from Him and none can ward off harm from them except Him; that is Allah (ﷻ).

﴿O my father, there has come to me some knowledge that did not come to you﴾ that is, O my father, do not look down on me and say that I am your son, and that you know that which I do not know. Rather Allah has given me knowledge that He did not give to you. What is meant by that is the words:

﴿So follow me, and I will guide you to a straight path﴾ that is, a path that is righteous and moderate, which is worship of Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and obedience to Him in all one's affairs. This

is obviously a gentle approach in speech, as he avoided saying, "O my father, I know and you do not know" or "you do not know anything". Rather he said it in a way that implied we both have knowledge, but that which has reached me has not reached you, so you should accept the proof and submit to it.

«O my father, do not worship the Shayṭān» because whoever worships anything other than Allah has in fact worshipped the Shayṭān, as Allah says elsewhere:

«Did I not instruct you, O children of Adam, that you should not worship the Shayṭān, for he is to you an avowed enemy?» (Yâ Seen 36: 60)

«for the Shayṭān has ever been disobedient towards the Most Gracious», so whoever follows in his footsteps has taken him as an ally, and is disobedient towards Allah just as the Shayṭān is. Connecting disobedience to the divine name the Most Gracious (ar-Raḥmān) is indicative of sins that deprive a person of the mercy (rahmah) of Allah and close the gate of mercy to him, just as obedience is one of the greatest means of attaining His mercy. Hence he said:

«O my father, indeed I fear lest a punishment from the Most Gracious befall you» that is, because of your persisting in disbelief and transgression

«so that you become a companion of the Shayṭān» that is, in this world and the hereafter, so that you will be following in his evil footsteps. Thus Ibrâheem (ع) adopted a gradual approach in calling his father, starting with the easiest thing to accept, then the next easiest. He informed him of his knowledge and told him that this required him to follow him, for if he followed him he would be guided to the straight path. Then he told him not to worship the Shayṭān, and informed him of the harmful outcomes of doing so. Then he warned him of the punishment of Allah, if he carried on as he was, and told him that he would be a companion of the Shayṭān. But this call to that doomed

individual did not succeed, and he responded in ignorant manner, saying:

«Are you renouncing my gods, O Ibrâheem?» Thus he expressed pride in his gods that were made of stone and were idols, and he criticised Ibrâheem for turning away from them. This stemmed from extreme ignorance and the worst type of disbelief, for he boasted of worshipping idols and called people to them.

«If you do not desist» that is, if you do not stop reviling my gods and calling me to worship Allah alone  
 «I will surely stone you» that is, I will stone you to death  
 «Keep away from me for a good long time!» That is, do not speak to me for a good long time.

Ibrâheem responded to him in the manner of the slaves of the Most Gracious when addressing the ignorant. He did not revile him, rather he was patient and did not respond to him in an offensive manner. He said: «Peace be upon you» that is, you will be safe from me speaking to you in an offensive or insulting manner, saying anything that you dislike.

«I will pray to my Lord to forgive you, for indeed He has always been very kind to me» that is, I shall continue to pray to Allah to guide you and forgive you, by guiding you to Islam by means of which you will attain forgiveness.

«for indeed He has always been very kind to me» that is, He has always been merciful and compassionate towards me, caring for me. He continued to pray to Allah to forgive him, hoping that Allah would guide him. But when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, and that nothing was going to work with him, he stopped praying for forgiveness for him and he disavowed him.

Allah has instructed us to follow the path of Ibrâheem, and part of following his path is following his way of calling people to Allah, by means of knowledge and wisdom, being gentle and kind, using a

gradual approach with them, being patient in doing that, not tiring of the people when calling them, bearing with patience whatever one faces of harm in word and deed from people, and responding to that with tolerance and forgiveness, and indeed with kindness in word and deed.

When Ibrâheem despaired of his people and his father, he said: ﴿I will keep away from [and disavow] you and those on whom you call besides Allah﴾ that is, you and your idols ﴿and I will call upon my Lord﴾ – this included both the supplication of worship and the supplication of asking. ﴿perhaps my supplication to my Lord will not remain unanswered﴾ that is, perhaps Allah will grant me the joy of answering my supplication and accepting my deeds. This is what a person should do when he despairs of those whom he is calling to Islam – and they continue to follow their whims and desires, and his exhortation does not succeed with them, so they persist in wandering blindly in their transgression – he should focus on purifying his own soul and hope for acceptance from his Lord, and he should keep away from evil and its people.

Leaving one's homeland and everything one is used to, including one's family and people, is one of the hardest things to bear for many well-known reasons, such as being apart from those who are a source of confidence and assurance. However if a person gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will compensate him with something better than it. Ibrâheem withdrew from his people, and Allah said concerning him:

﴿After he turned away from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed upon him Is-hâq and Ya'qoob, and We made each of them﴾ namely Is-hâq and Ya'qoob ﴿a Prophet﴾. Thus he was given the gift of these two righteous Messengers who were sent to the people; Allah singled them out for His revelation and chose them from among all others for His message.



﴿We bestowed upon them﴾ namely Ibrâheem and his two sons ﴿[manifold] gifts by Our mercy﴾. This includes everything that Allah bestowed upon them by His mercy, such as beneficial knowledge, righteous deeds, and numerous offspring who spread all over, among whom there were many Prophets and righteous people.

﴿and We granted them a deservedly lofty renown﴾ this also is part of the mercy which Allah bestowed upon them, because Allah promises every person who does good, that He will spread sincere praise for him, according to his good deeds. These were the leaders of the doers of good, so Allah spread for them a deservedly lofty renown that was sincere and not false, and was open and not hidden. Thus they became known all over the world, and praise and love for them filled people's hearts, and they were spoken of in the highest terms. They became an example to follow and leaders for those who are guided. They have continued to be held in high esteem throughout the ages. This is the bounty of Allah that He bestows upon whomever He will, and Allah is Possessor of abundant grace.



﴿وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥١﴾ وَنَدْبَيْنَهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ نَجِيًّا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٣﴾﴾ (سورة مريم)

(٥٣-٥١)

- 19:51. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Moosâ. Verily he was chosen, and he was a Messenger and a Prophet.
- 19:52. We called him from the right-hand side of the mountain and We honoured him by conversing with him in private,
- 19:53. And we granted him, by Our mercy, his brother Hâroon, also a Prophet [to assist him].

That is, recount in this Holy Qur'an the story of Moosâ ibn 'Imrân, by way of veneration and respect, acknowledging his noble status and sublime character.

﴿Verily he was chosen﴾ in the sense that Allah (ﷻ) chose him and selected him above all others. The word translated here as ﴿chosen﴾ (*mukhlas*) may also be read as meaning sincere (*mukhlis*), and Moosâ was sincere towards Allah (ﷻ) in all his deeds, words and intentions, so he is described as being sincere in all his affairs. The two meanings are interconnected. Allah chose him because of his sincerity, and his sincerity dictated that he be chosen. The best characteristic that can be ascribed to a person is sincerity towards his Lord and been chosen by his Lord.

﴿and he was a Messenger and a Prophet﴾ Allah bestowed upon him the twin blessings of being both a Messenger and a Prophet. Being a Messenger means conveying the words of the One Who sent him, and conveying all that he brought of issues of religion, both minor and major. Being a Prophet implies that Allah sent revelation to him, and singled him out for receipt of revelation. Being a Prophet has to do with the relationship between him and his Lord, and being a Messenger has to do with the relationship between him and other people. In fact, of all types of revelation, Allah singled him out for the most sublime, which is that He spoke to him directly and brought him close to Him. Thus Moosâ was singled out, from among the other Prophets, to be the one to whom the Most Gracious spoke directly. Therefore Allah says:

﴿We called him from the right-hand side of the mountain﴾ – this may refer to the right-hand side of Moosâ as he was walking, or it may be that the word translated here as ﴿right-hand side﴾ means that which was more blessed, as the root from which the word translated here as ﴿right-hand side﴾ (*ayman*) comes may also refer to blessing. This meaning is suggested by the verse in which Allah says that Moosâ was called, as he approached the burning bush:

﴿...Blessed is the one who is at the fire and blessed are those who are around it<sup>11</sup>...﴾ (an-Naml 27: 8)

﴿and We honoured him by conversing with him in private﴾. The difference between calling and conversing in private is that the call is in a louder voice and the private conversation is in a softer voice than that. This affirms that Allah (ﷻ) possesses the attribute of speech of various kinds, calling and conversing in private, as is the view of *ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamā'ah*, in contrast to those who denied that, such as the Jahamis, Mutazilites and those who followed a similar path.

﴿And we granted him, by Our mercy, his brother Hâroon, also a Prophet [to assist him]﴾. This was one of the greatest virtues of Moosâ, and reflects his love and sincerity towards his brother Hâroon: he asked his Lord to make him take part in his mission and to make him a Messenger like him. Allah answered his prayer and, by His mercy, granted prophethood to his brother Hâroon. So the prophethood of Hâroon was connected to that of Moosâ, and he supported and helped him in his mission.



﴿وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا ﴿٥٥﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٥٤-٥٥)

- 19:54. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Ismâ'eel. Verily he was true to his promise, and he was a Messenger and a Prophet.
- 19:55. He used to enjoin his family [and his people] to establish prayer and give zakâh, and his Lord was well pleased with him.

<sup>11</sup> Moosâ was beside the fire, which was the burning bush, and the angels were surrounding him.

That is, mention in the Holy Qur'an this great Prophet from whom are descended the Arab people, the best and noblest of people, among whom is the leader of the children of Adam.

﴿Verily he was true to his promise﴾ that is, he never made a promise but he kept it. This includes the promises that he made to Allah and to people. Hence when he promised to be patient when his father wanted to sacrifice him, and said:

﴿... You will find me, if Allah so wills, among the steadfast.﴾ (as-Şaffāt 37: 102)

– he fulfilled that promise and allowed his father to sacrifice him, which is the greatest calamity a person could face. Then Allah describes him as a Messenger and Prophet, which are the greatest blessings that Allah may bestow upon His slaves, and people of that status are the elite among humankind.

﴿He used to enjoin his family [and his people] to establish prayer and give zakāh﴾ that is, he adhered to the commands of Allah with regard to his family, so he would enjoin them to pray, which is an action that demonstrates sincere devotion to Allah, and to give zakāh, which is an action that demonstrates kindness towards other people. Thus he strove to perfect himself and to perfect others, especially the dearest of people to him, namely his family, because they were more deserving of his call than others.

﴿and his Lord was well pleased with him﴾ that is, because of his compliance with that which pleased his Lord and his striving to attain His pleasure, Allah was pleased with him and made him one of the elite among His slaves and one of His close friends who are near to Him. So Allah was pleased with him and he was pleased with his Lord.



﴿وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِيقًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة مريم:

19:56. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Idrees. Verily he was a man strong and true in faith, a Prophet.

19:57. And We raised him to a lofty station.

That is, mention in the Book by way of veneration and respect, and attributing the description of perfection to him, «Idrees. Verily he was a man strong and true in faith, a Prophet». In addition to making him a *ṣiddeeq* (one who is strong and true in faith), which includes deep faith, perfect knowledge, complete certainty and righteous deeds, Allah also chose him to receive His revelation and convey His message.

«And We raised him to a lofty station» that is, Allah caused him to be held in high esteem among people, and raised him in status to be among those who are close to Him, so he was of high renown and high status.



﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ آدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْرَائِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا ۝﴾

(سورة مريم: ٥٨) ﴿٥٨﴾

19:58. These are some of the Prophets whom Allah blessed from among the descendants of Adam and of those whom We carried with Nooh [in the ark], and from among the descendants of Ibrâheem and Isrâ'eel, and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Most Gracious were recited to them, they fell down in prostration, weeping.

Having mentioned these noble Prophets and chosen Messengers, Allah now mentions their virtues and their status:

﴿These are some of the Prophets whom Allah blessed﴾ that is, Allah bestowed upon them unsurpassable blessings, namely prophethood and messengership. They are the ones referred to in the command to pray to Allah to guide us to the path of those whom He blessed. Allah also tells us that those who obey Allah will be

﴿...with those whom Allah has blessed of the Prophets, the strong and true in faith, the martyrs and the righteous; what excellent companions these are!﴾ (*an-Nisâ' 4: 69*)

He also tells us that some of them are ﴿from among the descendants of Adam and of those whom We carried with Nooh [in the ark]﴾ that is, they are from among his descendants

﴿and from among the descendants of Ibrâheem and Isrâ'eel﴾ – these are the best families in the world, whom Allah chose and selected, and brought them close to Him. When the revelations of the Most Gracious were recited to them, which spoke of the unseen, the attributes of the Knower of the unseen, information about the Last Day, and promises and warnings,

﴿they fell down in prostration, weeping﴾ that is, they submitted to the revelations of Allah with humility, and the revelations left their impact on their hearts, instilling faith, the desire for paradise and the fear of hell, which prompted them to weep, turn to Allah and prostrate to their Lord. They were not among those who, when they heard the revelations of Allah, turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to them (*cf. 25: 73*).

Attributing the revelations to the divine name ar-Raḥmân (the Most Gracious) indicates that the revelations are part of His mercy and kindness towards His slaves, as He guided them thereby to the truth, made their blind eyes see, saved them from misguidance, and granted them knowledge when they were ignorant.



﴿ خَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ عَذَابًا ﴿٥٩﴾  
 إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٠﴾ جَنَّاتٍ  
 عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ عِبَادَهُ بِالْقَبِيْبِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَأْتِيًا ﴿٦١﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا إِلَّا سَلَامًا  
 وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿٦٢﴾ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾ ﴾

(سورة مريم: ٥٩-٦٣)

- 19:59. But after them came generations who neglected prayer and pursued their desires. So they will meet with perdition.
- 19:60. Except those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds; they will enter paradise and they will not be wronged in the least.
- 19:61. [Theirs will be] gardens of perpetual abode, which the Most Gracious has promised to His slaves without their having seen them. Verily His promise must come to pass.
- 19:62. They will not hear therein any vain talk, but only greetings of peace. And they will have their provision therein in the morning and in the evening.
- 19:63. Such is the garden which We give as an inheritance to those of Our slaves who are God-fearing.

Having mentioned these sincere Prophets who were seeking the pleasure of their Lord, constantly turning to Him, Allah now mentions those who came after them and changed what they were enjoined to do; after them came generations who declined and moved backwards. They neglected the prayer which they had been instructed to establish and offer regularly, and were heedless about it. As they neglected the prayer, which is the foundation of religion and the gauge of faith and sincerity towards the Lord of the worlds, and is the most important of deeds and most virtuous of characteristics, they were even more

negligent with regard to other matters of religion and were more reluctant to do them. The reason for that was that they followed their own whims and desires, so their concern focused on that and gave it precedence over the rights of Allah. As a result of this negligence of Allah's rights and focusing on their own desires, whenever they found an opportunity to indulge them, by any possible means, they would not omit to do so.

﴿So they will meet with perdition﴾ that is, multiple and severe punishment.

Then Allah (ﷻ) makes an exception to that:

﴿Except those who repent﴾ from ascribing partners to Allah, following innovation and committing sin, so they give up these things, regret them and resolve firmly not to do them again

﴿and believe﴾ in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day

﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ – this refers to doing that which Allah has prescribed on the lips of His Messengers, seeking thereby His Countenance.

﴿they﴾ namely those who combine repentance and faith with righteous deeds

﴿will enter paradise﴾ which contains eternal bliss, sound well-being and closeness to the generous Lord

﴿and they will not be wronged in the least﴾ with regard to their deeds; rather they will find the reward thereof in full, multiplied in number.

Then Allah tells us that the garden that He has promised they will enter is not like any other garden; rather it is ﴿gardens of perpetual abode﴾ that they will never leave or depart from, because they are so vast and contain so much goodness, happiness, beauty and joy.

﴿which the Most Gracious has promised to His slaves without their having seen them﴾ that is, when speaking of the reward He has promised to His slaves, Allah refers to Himself as ar-Raḥmān (the Most Gracious), because of what this reward contains of mercy and



generosity such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever crossed the mind of man. Elsewhere, He describes it as His mercy, as He says:

﴿But those whose faces become bright, they will be in Allah's mercy [paradise], to abide therein forever.﴾ (*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 107)

Moreover, attributing it to His mercy is indicative of the abiding nature of its bliss, for it will remain as long as His mercy remains, of which it (paradise) is the outcome and result.

The slaves of Allah mentioned in this verse are those slaves who are devoted to Him, who worshipped Him and adhered to His instructions, so that servitude to Allah became second nature to them. This is like the verse in which He says:

﴿The true slaves of the Most Gracious are those who...﴾ (*al-Furqān* 25: 63)

– and similar verses.

This is in contrast to those who are His slaves in the sense only that they are subject to His control, but who never worship Him. Although they are slaves in the sense that He is their Lord, because He created them, provides for them and controls them, they are not included among His slaves in the sense of devotion and willing servitude to Him, for which the devoted slave is praised; rather their servitude is the servitude of compulsion, which is not subject to praise.

﴿without their having seen them﴾ – it may be that this is connected to the phrase, ﴿which the Most Gracious has promised﴾ in which case, according to this view, Allah has promised paradise to them although they have not seen it, but they believed in it without seeing it and strove hard for it despite not having seen it. So how about if they saw it? They would strive harder and desire it even more. This is praising them for their belief in the unseen, which is beneficial faith.

Or it may be that what is meant is that these gardens which the Most Merciful has promised to His slaves are among the things that

no one can fully comprehend or know its qualities except Allah. This makes people long for it; this concise and general description creates longing and prompts one to seek it. This is like the verse in which Allah says:

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

Both meanings are valid, but the first view is more likely to be correct, because Allah says: ﴿Verily His promise must come to pass﴾; it must inevitably happen, because He does not break His promise and He is the most truthful of speakers.

﴿They will not hear therein any vain talk﴾ that is, empty words that are of no benefit or are sinful. They will not hear any slander, bad words or speech that is disobedient towards Allah, or disturbing or annoying.

﴿but only greetings of peace﴾ that is, they will only hear words that are free of anything wrong, words such as remembrance of Allah, greetings, words of joy, glad tidings, exchange of good words between brothers, hearing the words of the Most Gracious, beautiful voices of the *hoor al-'een*, the angels and the servants, melodious tunes, and soft and gentle words, because it is the abode of peace, in which there is perfect peace in all ways.

﴿And they will have their provision therein in the morning and in the evening﴾ that is, their provision of food and drink, and all kinds of pleasures, will be ongoing, wherever they are and in any place they want. As a sign of the perfection of that pleasure, it will be given at appointed times, ﴿in the morning and in the evening﴾, so that it will bring greater joy and be more beneficial.

This paradise that is described in such terms, ﴿is the garden which We give as an inheritance to those of Our slaves who are God-fearing﴾ that is, We will cause the pious and God-fearing to inherit it and We will make it their eternal abode, which they will never depart from or want to leave. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as vast as the heavens and the earth, which is prepared for the pious.﴾ (Ál 'Imrân 3: 133)



﴿وَمَا نُنزِّلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٦٥﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٦٤-٦٥)

- 19:64. [Jibreel said:] We [angels] do not descend except by the command of your Lord. To Him belongs all that is ahead of us and all that is behind us, and all that is in between. Your Lord is never forgetful,
- 19:65. Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them. So worship Him, and remain steadfast in worshipping Him. Do you know of anyone equal to Him?

On one occasion the Prophet (ﷺ) thought that Jibreel (جبرئيل) was late in coming down to him, and he said to him:

«Why do you not come to us more often?» (Bukhari)<sup>12</sup>

Because he longed to see him and missed him when he was away, and he wanted to feel reassured by his coming down. So Allah (ﷻ)

<sup>12</sup> All hadiths in this text have been checked and verified by IIPH's researchers. It is rare, but it does happen that a hadith is not verifiable within the timeframe of researching and editing the book. In that case, a decision is made by the editorial board as to whether or not to include the hadith. It is IIPH's policy not to include weak hadiths or fabricated (fake) hadiths in our publications. If a weak hadith is included in any text, it is only because the author of the book discusses it as a weak hadith. (Editor)

revealed on the lips of Jibreel: ﴿We [angels] do not descend except by the command of your Lord﴾ that is, we have no say in the matter at all; if we are instructed to do something, we hasten to comply, and we never disobey any of His commands. This is like the verse in which Allah says of the angels that they:

﴿...do not disobey Allah in whatever He commands them, and they do whatever they are commanded to do.﴾ (*at-Tahreem 66: 6*)

For they are slaves under orders.

﴿To Him belongs all that is ahead of us and all that is behind us, and all that is in between﴾ that is, to Him belong all matters of the past, future and present, in terms of both time and place. Once it becomes clear that all things are under the command of Allah and that we are slaves under His control, the matter is connected to divine wisdom, whether to issue a command to Jibreel so that he will carry it out or wisdom dictates not to issue a command, so his coming down will be delayed. Hence he said: ﴿Your Lord is never forgetful﴾ that is, Allah has not forgotten you and is not neglecting you. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor does He hate you.﴾ (*ad-Duḥā 93: 3*)

Rather He will always take care of you and will always deal with you in the best possible manner. In other words, if we (angels) are delayed and do not come down at the usual time, do not be sad and do not worry; remember that Allah is the One Who willed that, on the basis of His wisdom.

Then he explained how Allah's knowledge encompasses all things and He can never forget, for He is ﴿Lord of the heavens and the earth﴾. The fact that he is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and that they are in the best shape and most perfect order, and there is no sign in them of heedlessness, negligence, purposelessness or falsehood, offers definitive proof of His encompassing knowledge. So do not

be distracted by that; rather focus on that which will benefit you and bring you good returns, which is worshipping Him alone with no partner or associate.

﴿and remain steadfast in worshipping Him﴾ that is, be patient and steadfast, strive hard, and carry it out in the most perfect and complete manner, according to your ability. Focusing on worshipping Allah will bring comfort to the individual and shift his focus away from all other attachments and desires, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Do not look longingly at the good things We have given some among them to enjoy, the splendour of the life of this world, so that We may test them thereby. The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting. Enjoin your family [and your people] to establish prayer and remain steadfast therein. We do not ask you for provision; rather it is We Who provide for you. And the best outcome is for those who fear Allah.﴾ (Tâ Hâ 20: 131-132)

﴿Do you know of anyone equal to Him?﴾ That is, do you know of anyone who is equal to Allah, who resembles Him and is like unto Him, from among created beings? This appears in the form of a question, but what is meant is negation. It is something that is known on the basis of rational thinking. In other words: you do not know of any who is equal to Him or like unto Him, because He is the Lord and all others are subject to His Lordship; He is the Creator and all others are created; He is the Self-Sufficient in all aspects, and all others are inherently in need in all aspects; He is absolutely perfect in all aspects, and all others are lacking, possessing no attributes of perfection except that which Allah (ﷻ) bestows upon them. This is definitive proof that Allah is the only One Who alone is deserving of worship, and that worship of Him is true whereas worship of all others besides Him is false. Therefore He enjoined that He alone be worshipped, with steadfastness, and He gave as the reason for that His utter perfection, for He alone is the Almighty, to Whom belong the most beautiful names.



﴿ وَيَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَإِذَا مَاتَ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿٦٦﴾ أَوْلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَا خَلَقْتَهُ  
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَتَرْيَكُنَّ سِنِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٦٦-٦٧)

19:66. Man says: When I am dead, will I then be brought forth alive?

19:67. Does man not call to mind that We created him before, when he was nothing?

What is meant by man here is the one who denies the resurrection and thinks it unlikely that it will happen, so he says – asking a question by way of stubborn denial and disbelief: ﴿When I am dead, will I then be brought forth alive?﴾ that is, how can Allah restore me to life after death and after I have turned to dust? This cannot happen and cannot be imagined. This is according to his corrupt thinking, bad intention and stubborn rejection of the Messengers and Books of Allah. If he were to give it the slightest thought and reflection, he would see that his regarding the resurrection as unlikely is very foolish. Hence Allah mentions definitive proof and clear evidence that everyone knows, to prove that the resurrection is indeed possible:

﴿Does man not call to mind that We created him before, when he was nothing?﴾ That is, does it not occur to him, or does he not remember his former state, and that Allah created him the first time, when he was nothing? Is not the One Who is able to create him from nothing, when he was nothing worth mentioning, able to recreate him after he has disintegrated, and put him back together after he was scattered? This is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿It is He Who originates creation then repeats it, and that is [even] easier for Him...﴾ (ar-Room 30: 27)

The words ﴿Does man not call to mind﴾ invite man, in a gentle manner, to reflect on the basis of rational thinking. It also points out that the denial of the one who denies that is based on his heedlessness

and failure to remember how he was in the beginning; otherwise, if he were to remember it and call it to mind, he would not deny it.



﴿فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ عَيْنًا ﴿٦٩﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِهَا صِلَاتًا ﴿٧٠﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٦٨-٧٠)

19:68. So by your Lord, We will surely gather them and the devils together, then We will surely bring them around hell on their knees.

19:69. Then We will surely bring forth from every sect those of them who were most insolent towards the Most Gracious.

19:70. For indeed We know best who most deserves to be burnt therein.

Here Allah (ﷻ) – Who is the most truthful in speech – swears by His Lordship that He will surely gather these people who denied the resurrection, them and their devils, and He will gather them at an appointed time, on a certain day.

﴿then We will surely bring them around hell on their knees﴾ that is, kneeling in terror at the earthquakes and other terrifying events, awaiting the verdict of the Most Great, Most High. Hence He states what their verdict on them will be:

﴿Then We will surely bring forth from every sect those of them who were most insolent towards the Most Gracious﴾ that is, then We will bring out from each group and sect of the wrongdoers – who share the characteristics of wrongdoing, disbelief and insolence – the worst of them in insolence, wrongdoing and disbelief, and they will go ahead of them to the punishment. Then in like manner, the worst, then the next worst, will go ahead to the punishment. In that

situation they will curse one another, and the last of them will say of the first of them:

﴿...Our Lord, these people led us astray, so give them a double punishment of fire. He will say: [It will be] doubled for all, but you do not know. The first of them will say to the last: You were no better than us...﴾ (al-A'raf: 38-39)

All of that is in accordance with Allah's justice, wisdom and all-encompassing knowledge; therefore He says:

﴿For indeed We know best who most deserves to be burnt therein﴾ that is, We are fully aware of who is most deserving of being burnt in the fire, for We know them and We know their deeds and the extent to which they deserve it and their share of the punishment.



﴿وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا ﴿٧٦﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذُرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا حِثًّا ﴿٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧١-٧٢)

19:71. There is not one of you but he will come to it; a decree from your Lord which must inevitably come to pass.

19:72. Then We will save those who feared Allah, and We will leave the wrongdoers therein on their knees.

This is addressed to all people, righteous and evildoers, believers and disbelievers; there is no one among them but he will come to the fire, a decree that Allah made binding upon Himself and warned His slaves thereof. So it will inevitably come to pass.

There is a scholarly difference of opinion as to what is meant by coming to it. It was suggested that what is meant by coming to it is that all people will be present around it, until they will all be afraid and disturbed, after which Allah will save those who feared Him. It



was also suggested that what is meant by coming to it is entering it and being in it, but for the believers it will be cool and safe. Another suggestion is that what is meant by coming to it is passing over it on the *şirât* (bridge) that crosses over the top of hell, which the people will cross according to their deeds; some of them will pass like a flash of lightning, or like the wind, or like swift horses, or like swift camels, and some of them will run, some will walk, some will crawl and some will be snatched then thrown into the fire, each according to his level of piety and fear of Allah. Hence Allah says:

«Then We will save those who feared Allah» by doing that which He enjoined and refraining from that which He prohibited «and We will leave the wrongdoers» that is, those who wronged themselves by disbelieving and committing sins «therein on their knees». That is because of their wrongdoing and disbelief, for which they deserve to abide therein forever and they deserve the punishment, and all ties between them will be severed. (2: 166).



﴿وَإِذَا نُتِلَّىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا  
وَأَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَثْنَاءَ وَرِيءًا ﴿٧٤﴾﴾ (سورة مريم)

(٧٤-٧٣)

- 19:73. When Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Which of the two groups is better in terms of dwellings and social gatherings?
- 19:74. How many nations We destroyed before them who were better in terms of wealth and outward appearance!

That is, when Our clear revelations – that clearly point to the oneness of Allah and the truthfulness of His Messenger (ﷺ), and

would guide anyone who hears them to believe sincerely and with certainty – are recited to these disbelievers, they respond with the opposite reaction to what is expected of them, and they ridicule the revelations and those who believe in them; they point to their own well-being in this world to prove that they are better than the believers and they say, by way of opposing the truth:

«Which of the two groups», us or the believers,  
«is better in terms of dwellings» that is, in this world, and in terms of large amounts of wealth, large numbers of children and fulfilment of desires

«and social gatherings?» They concluded from this flawed argument that they had more in terms of wealth and children, and had attained most of what they had sought in this world, and that their social gatherings were better and more prestigious, whereas the believers were not like that; therefore they thought that they were better than the believers. But this argument is extremely flawed and is akin to turning facts upside down, because having abundant wealth and children, and looking good, are often means that lead to doom, misery and evil consequences. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

«How many nations We destroyed before them who were better in terms of wealth» that is, material goods such as vessels, furnishings, houses and adornments

«and outward appearance» that is, in looks and outward appearance, because of living a life of luxury and enjoying physical pleasure, and because of the good image that they had. If these doomed people were better off in terms of wealth and appearance, but that did not protect them from the punishment befalling them, then how can these people, who have less and are of lower status, be protected from the punishment?

«Are your disbelievers [O Quraysh] better than those, or have you been promised immunity in the [earlier] scriptures?» (*al-Qamar* 54: 43)

Thus it is known that concluding that one will be in a good situation in the hereafter because one is in a good situation in this world is one of the most flawed arguments, and is the way of thinking of the disbelievers.



﴿ قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدًّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَإِمَّا السَّاعَةَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧٥)

19:75. Say: Whoever is in error, may the Most Gracious grant them respite until, when they see what they were promised – be it punishment [in this world] or [the approach of] the Hour – then they will realise who is in a worse abode and has a smaller following.

Having mentioned the false argument which highlights the severity of their stubbornness and the extent of their misguidance, here Allah tells us that whoever is misguided, accepts that for himself and strives for it, Allah will give him respite and increase him in love for it, as a punishment to him for choosing it over guidance. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿...So when they chose to deviate [from the truth], Allah caused their hearts to deviate [from right guidance]...﴾ (*as-Saff* 61: 5)

– and:

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

﴿until, when they﴾ namely those who said, ﴿Which of the two groups is better in terms of dwellings and social gatherings?﴾ (19: 73) ﴿see what they were promised – be it punishment﴾ by being killed or otherwise

﴿or [the approach of] the Hour﴾ which signals the onset of requital for deeds  
 ﴿then they will realise who is in a worse abode and has a smaller following﴾ that is, and at that time the falseness of their claim will become clear to them, and they will realise that it was a baseless claim; they will realise that they are in a worse situation  
 ﴿and has a smaller following﴾. But this knowledge will not benefit them at all, because it will not enable them to go back to this world and do deeds other than those which they did the first time.



﴿وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى وَالْبَيِّنَاتُ صَوِّبَتْ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَرَدًّا﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧٦)

19:76. Allah increases in guidance those who are guided, and righteous deeds of lasting merit bring a better reward with your Lord and yield a better return.

Having stated that He gives respite to the disbelievers so that they might get carried away in their misguidance, Allah now tells us that He increases in guidance those who are guided, by His grace and mercy towards them. Guidance includes beneficial knowledge and righteous deeds. Whoever follows a path of knowledge, faith and righteous deeds, Allah will increase him in that and will make it easy for him, and He will bestow upon him other things that have nothing to do with his efforts (that is, as gifts). This indicates that faith may increase and decrease, as the righteous early generations said, and as is indicated by the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and those who believe might increase in faith...﴾ (*al-Muddaththir* 74: 31)

– and:

﴿...and when His revelations are recited it increases them in faith...﴾  
(*al-Anfāl* 8: 2)

This is also seen in reality: faith involves belief in the heart, words on the lips, emotions in the heart and physical actions, and the believers vary greatly in terms of these things.

Then Allah says: ﴿and righteous deeds of lasting merit﴾ that is, good deeds that remain and do not cease when others cease, and they do not diminish. This refers to righteous deeds, such as prayer, zakâh, fasting, Hajj, 'umrah, reading Qur'an, recitation of *dhikr* glorifying, magnifying and praising Allah, proclaiming His oneness, treating people kindly, and other spiritual and physical deeds.

These deeds ﴿bring a better reward with your Lord and yield a better return﴾ that is, they are better before Allah in terms of reward.

The reason why Allah mentions righteous deeds of lasting merit – and Allah knows best – is that, having stated that the wrongdoers regarded worldly status in terms of wealth and children, and enjoying a good life, and so on, as a sign of having good status in the hereafter, Allah tells us here that the matter is not as they claim; rather the deeds which are a sign of success are the deeds which Allah loves and is pleased with.



﴿أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتِيَنَّ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ أَمْ  
أَتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٧٨﴾ كَلَّا سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا  
﴿٧٩﴾ وَنُرْسِلُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿٨٠﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧٧-٨٠)

19:77. Have you seen the one who rejects Our signs and says: I will surely be given wealth and children [if I am ever resurrected]?<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This refers to the story of Khabbâb who was a blacksmith; he did some work for al-'Âṣ ibn Wâ'il, who refused to pay him and said: I will never =

- 19:78. Has he gained knowledge of the unseen, or has he taken a promise from the Most Gracious?
- 19:79. No indeed! We will record what he says and We will add to his punishment.
- 19:80. We will take away from him all that he spoke of, and he will come to Us all alone.

That is, do you not wonder at the situation of this disbeliever who combines disbelief in the signs of Allah with his serious claim that he will be granted wealth and children in the hereafter, that is, that he will be one of the people of paradise. This is something very strange. If he were a believer in Allah and made this claim, then the matter would be simple. Although this verse was revealed concerning a specific disbeliever, it includes every disbeliever who claims to be following truth and that he will be one of the people of paradise.

Allah said, rebuking him and showing him to be a liar: ﴿Has he gained knowledge of the unseen﴾ that is, has his knowledge encompassed the unseen, so that he knows what will happen, and that among the things that will happen is that he will be given wealth and children on the Day of Resurrection?

﴿or has he taken a promise from the Most Gracious﴾ that he will attain what he thinks he will attain (on the Day of Resurrection)? For no such thing has happened. Thus it is known that he is making it up and saying something of which he has no knowledge. Refuting the argument in this manner, which is based on two points, is more

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= pay you until you disbelieve in Muhammad. Khabbâb said to him: I will never disbelieve in Muhammad even if you die and are resurrected. Al-'Âş ibn Wâ'il said: Will I be resurrected after I die? I will pay you after I am resurrected, for I will be given wealth and children! (The story is narrated in *Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim*.)

effective in establishing proof against him, because the one who claims that he will attain something good from Allah in the hereafter is one of two things:

Either his words are based on knowledge of future unseen matters, but it is known that such knowledge belongs only to Allah, so no one can know anything of future unseen matters except what the Messengers came to know from Allah;

Or he has taken a promise from Allah, by believing in Him and following His Messengers, which is the covenant of Allah to His obedient slaves, as He has informed them that they are the people of the hereafter who will be saved and victorious. If these two things are not present, then it is known that this claim is false. Therefore Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿No indeed!﴾ That is, it is not as they claim; the one who says that has no knowledge of the unseen, because he is a disbeliever who knows nothing of the Messengers' knowledge, and he has no promise from the Most Gracious, because he is a disbeliever who has no faith. Rather he deserves the opposite of what he falsely claims; his false claim will be recorded against him and he will be requited for it and punished. Hence Allah says:

﴿We will record what he says and We will add to his punishment﴾ that is, We will increase the types of punishments, as he increased in error and misguidance.

﴿We will take away from him all that he spoke of﴾ that is, We will take away his wealth and his children, and he will depart from this world alone, with no wealth, no family, no supporters and no helpers ﴿and he will come to Us all alone﴾ and he will see the terrible and painful punishment that is the recompense of wrongdoers like him.



﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ﴿٨١﴾ كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا ﴿٨٢﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَؤْوُهُمْ أَزًّا ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّمَا نَعِدُّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا ﴿٨٤﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٨١-٨٤)

- 19:81. They have taken other gods besides Allah to help them and protect them [from punishment].
- 19:82. Nay, they will reject their worship of them, and will become their opponents.
- 19:83. Do you not see that We have sent the devils against the disbelievers, to incite them to sin?
- 19:84. So do not be hasty [in calling down Allah's punishment] upon them, for We are keeping full account of their deeds.

This is one of the punishments of the disbelievers: because they did not seek the protection of Allah or hold fast to the Rope of Allah – rather they ascribed partners to Him and took His enemies among the devils as their allies – He gives the devils power over them, and the devils begin to incite them to sin, pushing them towards disbelief, whispering to them and prompting them, making falsehood fair-seeming to them and making the truth appear abhorrent. Thus love of falsehood is instilled in their hearts and becomes deeply entrenched, so they strive for its sake as the one who follows truth strives for the sake of the truth. So they support it with their efforts, fight for it and strive against the people of truth in support of falsehood.

All of this is the requital for taking as allies the enemies of Allah; Allah gives the Shayṭān power over him and lets him control him. Otherwise, if he believed in Allah and put his trust in Him, the Shayṭān would have no power over him, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Verily, he has no power over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord; he has power only over those who take him as an



ally and, under his influence, ascribe partners to Allah.﴾ (an-Nahl 16: 99-100)

﴿So do not be hasty [in calling down Allah's punishment] upon them﴾ that is, do not be hasty in calling down punishment upon these disbelievers who seek to hasten the punishment

﴿for We are keeping full account of their deeds﴾; We give them respite and show forbearance towards them for a while, so that they may rethink their attitude towards the message of Allah. Then if that does not succeed with them, We will seize them with the seizing of One Who is Almighty, Omnipotent.



﴿يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ وَفْدًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَسَوْفَ الْمَجْرِمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَرِدًا ﴿٨٦﴾ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفْعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٨٧﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٨٥-٨٧)

19:85. On the day when We gather the pious before the Most Gracious as an honoured delegation,

19:86. And We drive the evildoers thirsty towards hell,

19:87. No one will have the benefit of intercession, except one who entered into a covenant with the Most Gracious.<sup>14</sup>

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the differences between the two groups, namely the pious and the evildoers. He will gather the pious who fear Him – by avoiding ascription of partners to Him, innovations and sins – to the place of standing (on the Day of Resurrection) honoured, respected and venerated, and their destination will be with the Most Gracious, the Most Bountiful. They will come to Him in delegations as honoured guests, with their hearts filled with great

<sup>14</sup> The covenant referred to is belief in the oneness of Allah (tawḥeed). (at-Ṭabari; Ibn Katheer)

hope and positive thinking of the One to Whom they come, as is well known.

The pious will come to the Most Gracious, hoping for His mercy and abundant grace, and hoping to attain His gifts in His paradise, because of what they sent on ahead of good deeds, fearing Him and seeking His pleasure, for Allah promised them that reward on the lips of His Messengers. So they turned towards their Lord, with reassurance in their hearts, content with Him and trusting His grace.

As for the evildoers, they will be driven towards hell, thirsty – which is the worst state one may be in. They will be driven by way of humiliation and disgrace to the greatest prison and worst punishment, namely hell, in a state of thirst and exhaustion. They will seek help but will not be helped, they will call out but will receive no answer, and they will seek intercession but there will be no intercession for them. Hence Allah says:

﴿no one will have the benefit of intercession﴾ that is, they cannot attain intercession and will have no share of it, because it belongs only to Allah (ﷻ).

﴿Say: All intercession belongs to Allah alone...﴾ (az-Zumar 39: 44)

Allah tells us that the intercession of the intercessors will not benefit them, because they did not enter into any covenant with Him by virtue of believing in Him and His Messenger (ﷺ). Otherwise, whoever entered into a covenant by believing in Him and His Messengers, and following them, he will be among those with whom Allah is pleased, and who will have the benefit of intercession, as Allah says:

﴿...and they cannot intercede except for those with whom He is pleased...﴾ (al-Anbiyá' 21: 28)

Allah describes belief in Him and following His Messengers as a covenant because He has promised in His Books and on the lips of His Messengers an abundant reward for those who follow them.



﴿ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا ﴾ ٨٨ ﴿ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِذَا ﴾ ٨٩ ﴿ تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ  
 يَنْفَطِرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًا ﴾ ٩٠ ﴿ أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا ﴾ ٩١ ﴿ وَمَا  
 يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴾ ٩٢ ﴿ إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ  
 عَبْدًا ﴾ ٩٣ ﴿ لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ﴾ ٩٤ ﴿ وَكُلُّهُمْ آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا ﴾ ٩٥  
 ﴿ (سورة مريم: ٨٨-٩٥) ﴾

19:88. They say: The Most Gracious has begotten a son.

19:89. Indeed you have uttered something atrocious,

19:90. at which the heavens might almost be torn apart, the earth split  
 asunder, and the mountains come tumbling down,

19:91. at their ascription of a son to the Most Gracious,

19:92. For it is not befitting for the Most Gracious to beget a son.

19:93. There is no one in the heavens or on earth but he will come to  
 the Most Gracious as a slave.

19:94. He encompasses them with His knowledge and has counted  
 each one of them.

19:95. And each one of them will come to Him on the Day of  
 Resurrection all alone.

This passage highlights how abhorrent is the view of those who  
 stubbornly rejected the message and claimed that the Most Gracious  
 had a child, as the Christians said:

﴿...that the Messiah is the son of Allah...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 30)

– the Jews said:

﴿...that 'Uzayr is the son of Allah...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 30)

– and the polytheists said that the angels were the daughters of  
 Allah – exalted be Allah far above what they say.

«Indeed you have uttered something atrocious» that is, terrible and monstrous. It is so serious that «the heavens» despite the fact that they are so great and solid «might almost be torn apart» at these words «the earth split asunder» that is, crack open «and the mountains come tumbling down» that is, collapse.

«at their ascription of a son to the Most Gracious» that is, because of this abhorrent claim, the things mentioned might almost happen.

The fact is that «it is not befitting» that is, it is not appropriate and cannot be true «for the Most Gracious to beget a son» that is because begetting a son is indicative of shortcoming and need, but He is the Self-Sufficient, Most Praiseworthy. Moreover a son is of the same nature as his father, but nothing is like unto Allah (ﷻ) and nothing is equal to Him.

«There is no one in the heavens or on earth but he will come to the Most Gracious as a slave» that is, humbled and submitting, not resisting or refusing. The angels, humans, jinn and others are all slaves under control, and they have no share in dominion or control at all. How can Allah have a child, when He is so great and His dominion is so mighty?

«He encompasses them with His knowledge and has counted each one of them» that is, His knowledge encompasses all of His creation, the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth; He has counted them and has counted their deeds, so nothing can be lost or forgotten, and nothing is hidden from Him.

«And each one of them will come to Him on the Day of Resurrection all alone» that is, with no children, no wealth and no supporters; he will have nothing with him except his deeds. Then Allah will requite him and settle his account in full; if it is good, then the outcome will be good and if it is bad, then the outcome will be bad, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«Now you have come to Us alone, as We created you the first time...»  
(*al-An'am* 6: 94)



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾﴾

(سورة مريم: ٩٦)

19:96. Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, the Most Gracious will endear them [to His creation].

This is one of Allah's blessings to His slaves who combine faith and righteous deeds: He has promised that He will endear them and make them beloved to His close friends and to the inhabitants of heaven and earth, and, once people have love for them, many things will become easy for them and they will attain good things, people will pray for them, they will be guided, they will be well accepted among people and may attain positions of leadership. Therefore in the *ṣaḥeeh* hadith it says:

«Verily when Allah loves a person, He calls out to Jibreel: Verily I love So-and-so, so love him. So Jibreel loves him, then he calls out to the inhabitants of heaven: Verily Allah loves So-and-so, so love him. So the inhabitants of heaven love him, and he will be accepted on earth.» (Bukhari)

Allah only endears them to His creation because they loved Him, so He endears them to His close friends and loved ones.



﴿فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا لُدًّا ﴿٩٧﴾﴾  
﴿وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّن قَرْنٍ هَلْ يُحِسُّ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ﴿٩٨﴾﴾

(سورة مريم: ٩٧-٩٨)

- 19:97. We have made this [Qur'an] easy, in your own language, only so that you [O Muhammad] may give glad tidings to those who fear Allah, and warn thereby contentious people.
- 19:98. How many nations We destroyed before them! Do you see any one of them or hear even a whisper of them?

Here Allah tells us of His blessing and that He has made this Holy Qur'an easy on the lips of the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ). He has made its words easy and its meanings easy to understand, so as to achieve the purpose behind it and so that people may benefit from it.

«only so that you [O Muhammad] may give glad tidings to those who fear Allah» by mentioning the reward in this world and the hereafter by way of encouragement, and mentioning the means that lead to attaining these glad tidings.

«and warn thereby contentious people» that is, those who are extreme in their support of falsehood and are stubborn in their disbelief. So you are to warn them so that proof will be established against them and the right way will become clear to them, so that those who choose to perish (by choosing disbelief) might do so after seeing clear evidence, and those who choose to live (by choosing faith) might do so after seeing clear evidence (*cf.* 8: 42). Then Allah warns them by mentioning the destruction of the disbelievers who came before them, as He says:

«How many nations We destroyed before them!» namely the people of Nooh, 'Âd, Thamood, Pharaoh and other stubborn disbelievers. Because they persisted in their transgression, Allah destroyed them and left no trace of them.

«Do you see any one of them or hear even a whisper of them?» A whisper is a soft voice. In other words, no trace is left of them; rather all that is left is their stories, as a lesson to those who will pay heed.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat Maryam.  
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.



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20.  
Soorat Ṭâ Hâ

(Makki)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



﴿طه﴾ ١ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى ٢ إِلَّا نَذِيرًا لِمَنْ يَخْشَى ٣ تَزِيلًا ٤  
مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ وَالسَّمَوَاتِ الْعُلَى ٥ الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى ٦ لَهُ مَا فِي  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى ٧ وَإِنْ يُجْهَرُ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ  
السِّرَ وَأَخْفَى ٨ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى ٩ ﴿سورة طه: ١-٨﴾

20:1. Ṭâ'-Hâ'.<sup>15</sup>

20:2. We have not sent down the Qur'an to cause you distress,

20:3. But only as a reminder for those who fear Allah,

20:4. A revelation from the One Who created the earth and the heavens  
on high.

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<sup>15</sup> Groups of letters (al-ḥuroof al-muqatta'ah) appear at the beginning of several soorahs. The most correct scholarly view states that we are required to believe in them as they appear to be, without delving into their meaning, knowledge of which we should leave to Allah. We believe that they were not revealed in vain, and that there is wisdom behind them of which we are not aware.



- 20:5. The Most Gracious rose over the Throne [in a manner that befits His Majesty].
- 20:6. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and all that is between them, and all that lies beneath the soil.
- 20:7. If you raise your voice [in supplication – there is no need for that], for He knows what is said privately and that which is yet more hidden [of unspoken thoughts].
- 20:8. Allah: there is no god but He; to Him belong the most beautiful names.

«Tâ'-Hâ'» these are among the groups of letters with which many chapters begin; it is not one of the names of the Prophet (ﷺ).

«We have not sent down the Qur'an to cause you distress» that is, the purpose behind the revelation, the sending down of the Qur'an to you and the prescription of laws is not to cause you distress, or to cause undue hardship, or to make it too difficult for people to comply with the laws and teachings. Rather the revelation, the Qur'an and the laws have all been prescribed by the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious, and He has made them a means of attaining happiness, prosperity and success. He has made it very easy and has caused it to offer nourishment for hearts and souls and to be a source of physical well-being. Thus people who are possessed of sound reasoning and sound human nature accept it and submit, because they know what it contains of goodness in this world and the hereafter. Hence Allah says:

«But only as a reminder for those who fear Allah» so that the one who fears Allah (ﷻ) will be admonished by it, so he will be reminded by what it contains of encouragement and inspiration to pursue the most sublime of aims, and he will strive to attain that, and by what it contains of warnings against the path of misery and loss, so he will take precautions against it. He will also come to know in detail the beauty of some shar'i rulings, of which he was aware in general terms, and the explanation and details in the Qur'an will be in harmony with

what he finds in his own sound nature and rational thinking. Hence Allah calls it ﴿a reminder﴾.

The reminder points to something that is already there, but one is not paying attention to it and is not aware of its details. The Qur'an is a reminder exclusively for ﴿those who fear Allah﴾, because others do not benefit from it. How can someone benefit from it who does not believe in paradise or hell, and in whose heart there is not even an atom's weight of fear of Allah? That is not possible.

﴿The one who fears Allah will pay heed while the wretched one will avoid it, the one who will enter the great fire.﴾ (al-A'la 87: 10-12)

Then Allah mentions the greatness of this magnificent Qur'an and tells us that it is a revelation from the Creator of the earth and the heavens, the One Who is in control of all created things, so accept His revelation with the utmost submission, love and surrender, and venerate it and show it the utmost respect.

﴿The Most Gracious rose over the Throne [in a manner that befits His Majesty]﴾ which is the most sublime, greatest and vastest of all created things. He (rose over) it in a manner that befits His Majesty and is appropriate to His greatness and beauty. He rose over the Throne, and everything is subject to His dominion.

﴿To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and all that is between them﴾ such as angels, humans, jinn, animals, inanimate objects and plants.

﴿and all that lies beneath the soil﴾ that is, beneath the ground. Everything belongs to Allah (ﷻ) and is under His control, subject to His decree. They have no share in dominion, and they do not possess the power to benefit themselves or ward off harm, and they have no power to give life, cause death or bring about resurrection.

﴿If you raise your voice [in supplication – there is no need for that], for He knows what is said privately﴾ that is, secret words ﴿and that which is yet more hidden [of unspoken thoughts]﴾ that is, secrets in the heart, of which one has not spoken. Or this verse may

refer to the secrets of that which crosses one's mind (and that which is yet more hidden) of thoughts that have not yet crossed the mind; Allah (ﷻ) knows when and how they will do so.

What is meant is that His knowledge encompasses all things, minor and major, hidden and obvious, whether they are spoken out loud or not. They are all the same in terms of His knowledge.

Having confirmed His absolute perfection on the basis that He is the Creator of all things, to Him belong the power of command and prohibition, His mercy encompasses all, His might is immense, He is above His Throne, His dominion is all-encompassing and His knowledge encompasses all things, the conclusion of all that is that He alone is deserving of worship and that worship of Him is the truth that is dictated by religious teaching, rational thinking and sound human nature, and the worship of anything other than Him is false. Hence He says:

«Allah: there is no god but He» that is, there is none deserving of worship, devotion, love, humility, fear, hope and supplication except Him.

«to Him belong the most beautiful names» that is, to Him belong many perfect and beautiful names. Part of their beauty is that they are names that inspire praise; there is no name among them that is not indicative of praise. Another aspect of their beauty is that they are not mere names; rather they are names and attributes. Moreover, they point to the perfect attributes of Allah, and indicate that to Him belong all attributes of perfection, in the most comprehensive and sublime sense. Allah has enjoined His slaves to call upon Him by these beautiful names, because they are means of drawing close to Him that He loves, and He loves those who love these names; He loves those who memorise them, look for their meanings and worship Him through these names. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«To Allah belong the most beautiful names, so call on Him by them...» (*al-A'râf* 7: 180)



﴿وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ إِذْ رَأَىٰ نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّي آتِيكُم مِّنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدٌ عَلَىٰ النَّارِ هُدًى ﴿١٠﴾ فَلَمَّا أَنهَا نُودِيَ بِمُوسَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٢﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٩-١٢)

20:9. Has there come to you the story of Moosâ?

20:10. He saw a fire, so he said to his family: Wait here, for I can see a fire. Perhaps I can bring you a burning brand from it, or find some guidance<sup>16</sup> at the fire.

20:11. When he came to it, he was called: O Moosâ!

20:12. Verily I am your Lord. So take off your sandals, for you are in the sacred valley of Tuwâ.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says to His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ): ﴿Has there come to you the story of Moosâ?﴾ This appears in the form of a question, by way of highlighting the significance of the story. This passage tells of the beginning of Moosâ's blessed prophethood. He saw a fire from afar, when he had lost his way and was very cold, and had no means of warming himself as he travelled.

﴿so he said to his family: Wait here, for I can see a fire﴾. That was on the right-hand side of the mountain.

﴿Perhaps I can bring you a burning brand from it﴾ so that you can warm yourselves with it

﴿or find some guidance at the fire﴾ that is, someone who can show me the way. What he was looking for was physical fire and guidance in the sense of directions, but he found spiritual light there, the light of revelation that illuminates hearts and souls, and he found true guidance, guidance to the straight path that leads to paradise. What

<sup>16</sup> This refers to help and directions, because they had lost their way.

happened to him there was something that he did not expect and that had never crossed his mind.

«When he came to it» that is, to the fire that he had seen from afar. It was in fact light, which is fire that burns and shines. This is indicated by the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«His (Allah's) veil is light or fire; if it were lifted, the light of His Countenance would burn everything as far as He sees.» (Muslim)

When Moosâ reached the fire, he was called from it; that is, Allah called him, as He says elsewhere:

«We called him from the right-hand side of the mountain and We honoured him by conversing with him in private.» (Maryam 19: 52)

«Verily I am your Lord. So take off your sandals, for you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwâ». And He instructed him to prepare himself to speak with Him, to pay attention to that preparation, and to take off his sandals, for he was in the venerated and sacred valley. The fact that Allah had chosen to speak to Moosâ in that place is sufficient for it to be regarded as sacred.

Many of the commentators said that Allah instructed him to take off his sandals because they were made from donkey skin. Allah knows best about that.



﴿وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ فَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٣-١٦)

20:13. I have chosen you, so listen to what will be revealed.

20:14. Verily, I am Allah; there is no god but Me. So worship Me [alone] and establish prayer to remember Me.

20:15. For verily the Hour is coming, but My will is to keep it hidden so that every soul will be required for its endeavours.

20:16. So do not let anyone distract you from it who does not believe in it and follows his own desires, lest you perish.

That is, I have chosen you and selected you from among the people. This was the greatest blessing and favour that Allah bestowed upon him, which required appropriate gratitude. Hence Allah said: ﴿so listen to what will be revealed﴾ that is, listen attentively to what I shall reveal to you, for it is deserving of that, as it is fundamental to the religion and is the starting point thereof, and it is the foundation of the Islamic message.

Then He began that revelation by saying: ﴿Verily, I am Allah; there is no god but Me﴾ that is, Allah alone is deserving of the quality of divinity, because He is perfect in His names and attributes, and His deeds are done by Him alone; He has no partner, no equal, no peer and none is like unto Him.

﴿So worship Me [alone]﴾ – this refers to all kinds of worship, both apparent and hidden, obligatory and supererogatory. Then He singles out prayer for mention – although it is included under the heading of worship – because of its virtue and high status, and because it is an act of worship that involves the heart, tongue and physical faculties. ﴿to remember Me﴾ that is, establish prayer so that you may remember Me, because remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) is one of the most sublime of aims, for it is the worship of the heart through which the heart attains tranquillity. The heart that is devoid of remembrance of Allah is devoid of all good, and is utterly ruined. Allah prescribed for His slaves types of worship, the main aim of which is to remember Him, especially prayer.

Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Recite what has been revealed to you [O Muhammad] of the Book, and establish prayer, for verily prayer keeps [one] away from obscurity

and wickedness. And indeed your remembering Allah [in prayer] is of greater merit...» (al-'Ankaboot 29: 45)

That is, what the prayer contains of remembrance of Allah is greater than what it restrains one from of shameful and evil acts. This is called oneness of divinity (*tawhêed al-uloohiyah*) and oneness of worship (*tawhêed al-'ibâdah*); divinity is the attribute of Allah (ﷻ) and servitude is the attribute of His slave.

«For verily the Hour is coming» that is, it will inevitably come to pass

«but My will is to keep it hidden». Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«The people ask you about the Hour. Say: The knowledge thereof is with Allah [alone]...» (al-Ahẓâb 33: 63)

– and:

«...He alone has knowledge of the Hour...» (az-Zukhruf 43: 85)

He has concealed knowledge of it from all of His creation, so no angel who is close to Him and no Prophet who was sent has any knowledge of it.

The wisdom behind the Hour is «so that every soul will be requited for its endeavours», be they good or evil; the Hour is the gateway to the realm of requital.

«...so He will requite those who do evil for their deeds, and He will reward those who do good with the best reward.» (an-Najm 53: 31)

«So do not let anyone distract you from it who does not believe in it and follows his own desires, lest you perish» that is, do not let anyone bar you or distract you from believing in the Hour and the recompense, and striving for that. Whoever does not believe in it and does not believe that it will come to pass, and he strives to create doubts about it and make others doubt, arguing about it on the basis of falsehood and doing his best to come up with specious arguments to prove that it will not happen, following his whims and desires, his aim is not to find out the truth; rather all he wants to do is follow

his whims and desires. So beware of listening to anyone who is like that, or accepting anything he says or does that distracts one from believing in it and striving for it.

Allah (ﷻ) only warned against people who are like this because their influence and misleading thoughts represent the thing that may most be feared for the believer, for people are naturally inclined to follow their peers. This highlights the warning against every caller to falsehood who bars the way to obligatory belief or perfection thereof, or creates doubts in the heart. It is also a warning against reading books that may contain such specious arguments. Allah mentions in this context belief in Him, worshipping Him and believing in the Last Day, because these three matters are the fundamentals of faith and the foundation of the religion. If they are complete, one's religious commitment will be complete, and any shortcoming or absence of religious commitment is due to the lack of these things in part or in whole. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the criterion that shows us who is blessed and who is doomed:

«Those who believe [in the Prophet], and those who are Jews, and the Sabians and the Christians, whoever [among them] believed in Allah and the Last Day, and did righteous deeds, will have no fear, nor will they grieve.» (al-Mā'idah 5: 69)

«lest you perish» that is, be doomed and wretched, if you follow the path of those who distract you (from the path of truth).



﴿وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَمْوَسَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّأُ عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا عَلَىٰ غَنَمِي وَلِيَ فِيهَا مَنَازِبُ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ أَلْقَهَا يَمْوَسَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ فَأَلْقَهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَبِطَةٌ تَسْعَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ وَاضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَىٰ جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجَ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ آيَةٌ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾ لِنُرِيكَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا الْكُبْرَىٰ

﴿سورة طه: ١٧-٢٣﴾



- 20:17. And what is that in your right hand, O Moosâ?
- 20:18. He said: It is my staff; I lean on it, and with it I beat down leaves to feed my sheep, and I have other uses for it.
- 20:19. Allah said: Throw it down, O Moosâ.
- 20:20. So he threw it down, and thereupon it became a fast-moving snake.
- 20:21. Allah said: Pick it up, and do not be afraid. We will restore it to its former state.
- 20:22. Put your hand under your arm; it will come forth shining white, without harm, as another sign,
- 20:23. So that We may show you some of Our greatest signs.

Having explained the fundamentals of faith Allah then wanted to show him some of His signs, so as to give him a sense of reassurance and ease, and so as to strengthen his faith in the support of Allah against his enemy. So He said:

﴿And what is that in your right hand, O Moosâ?﴾ Although He knew it, He said this in this situation to make him more alert and focused. This is why these words came in the form of a question.

Moosâ said: ﴿It is my staff; I lean on it, and with it I beat down leaves to feed my sheep﴾. He mentioned these two uses for it, one of which is beneficial to humans, as he leaned on it when he was standing and walking, thus it was a kind of help to him. The second use was beneficial to animals, as he used to tend sheep, and when he tended them among the trees, he would use the staff to strike the trees and make the leaves fall, so that the sheep could eat them.

This was a good attitude on the part of Moosâ (ﷺ); his good care for and kindness towards animals were indicative of Allah's care for him and choosing him. This was a sign of Allah's mercy and wisdom.

﴿and I have other uses for it﴾ besides these two.

Another aspect of the etiquette of Moosâ (ﷺ) is that when Allah asked him about what he had in his right hand, the question could have been about what it was or what it was for, and he gave answers for both.

Then Allah said to him: ﴿Throw it down, O Moosâ. So he threw it down, and thereupon it became a fast-moving snake﴾. By Allah's leave, it turned into a big snake, so Moosâ turned and fled in fear, without a backward glance. The description of it as a fast-moving snake serves to remove any thought that one may have of it being a mere illusion that was not real. The fact that it was fast-moving dispels this notion.

Then Allah said to Moosâ: ﴿Pick it up, and do not be afraid﴾ that is, no harm will come to you from it.

﴿We will restore it to its former state﴾ that is, as it was when it was a staff. Moosâ obeyed the command of Allah, out of faith and submission. So he picked it up and it turned back into his staff as he knew it. This was one sign, then Allah mentioned the other sign; He said:

﴿Put your hand under your arm﴾ that is, put your hand into your garment, then press your arm against it.

﴿it will come forth shining white, without harm﴾ that is, it will come out shining white, with no disease or leprosy, ﴿as another sign﴾. Allah says elsewhere:

﴿...These are two proofs from your Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs, for they are indeed a rebellious and wicked people.﴾ (*al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 32)

﴿So that We may show you some of Our greatest signs﴾ that is, We did what We mentioned, of turning the staff into a fast-moving snake and bringing forth the hand shining white for the onlookers, so that We might show you some of Our greatest signs that point to the veracity of your message and the reality of that which you have brought, so that you might be reassured and increase in knowledge, and so that you might trust the promise of Allah to protect and support

you, and so that you might be proof and evidence for those to whom you are sent.



﴿أَذْهَبَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي ﴿٢٥﴾ وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي ﴿٢٦﴾  
وَأَحْلِلْ عُقْدَةَ مِنِّ لِسَانِي ﴿٢٧﴾ يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي ﴿٢٨﴾ وَاجْعَل لِّي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي ﴿٢٩﴾ هَارُونَ أَخِي ﴿٣٠﴾  
أَشَدُّ دَرَجَةً مِنِّي ﴿٣١﴾ وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي ﴿٣٢﴾ كَيْ نَسِيحَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَتَذَكَّرَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾  
إِنَّكَ كُنتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾﴾ قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَا مُوسَىٰ ﴿٣٦﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٢٤-٣٦)

20:24. Go to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds.

20:25. Moosâ said: My Lord, fill my heart with courage and steadfastness,

20:26. and make my task easy for me,

20:27. And remove the impediment from my speech,

20:28. so that they will understand what I say.

20:29. And appoint for me a helper from my family,

20:30. Hâroon, my brother.

20:31. Strengthen me through him,

20:32. and let him share in my task,

20:33. So that we may glorify You much

20:34. And remember You much.

20:35. For verily You are well aware of our situation.

20:36. Allah said: You are granted your request, O Moosâ.

When Allah had sent revelation to Moosâ, appointed him as a Prophet and showed him clear signs, He sent him to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, saying:

﴿Go to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds﴾ that is, he has rebelled and gone too far in disbelief, mischief, arrogance in

the land and suppressing the weak, to the point that he claimed to be divine – may Allah curse him. In other words, his transgression was the cause of his doom. But by His mercy and wisdom, Allah does not punish anyone until after He has established proof by sending His Messenger. At that point Moosâ (ﷺ) realised that he had been given a heavy burden of responsibility, as he was being sent to this stubborn tyrant who had no one to contest his power in Egypt. Moosâ was just one man, and he had previously committed that offence of killing the Egyptian. He obeyed the command of his Lord and accepted it wholeheartedly, but he asked for help and for the means that were necessary for fulfilment of his mission to be made easily available to him. So he said:

﴿My Lord, fill my heart with courage and steadfastness﴾ so that I may bear with patience any offence in word and deed, and I will not be distressed by that or feel anxious. For if a person feels distressed and anxious, he will not be fit to call people to guidance. Allah said to His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿It is by the mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. If you had been harsh or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you...﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 159)

People may be more receptive to the truth if the caller has a kind attitude, is steadfast and has an easy manner with people.

﴿and make my task easy for me﴾ that is, make easy for me every path I take and every aim I pursue for Your sake, and make bearable for me all the hardships that lie ahead of me. Part of making his task easy is guiding the caller to handle matters in an appropriate manner and to speak to each person in the way that is appropriate for him, using the approach that will make the message more easily accepted.

﴿And remove the impediment from my speech, so that they will understand what I say﴾. He had a speech impediment which made his words barely comprehensible, as the commentators said, and as Allah tells us elsewhere that he said:

﴿My brother Hâroon is clearer in speech than I...﴾ (al-Qaşaş 28: 34)

So he asked Allah to remove the impediment so that they would understand what he said, and so as to achieve more fully the purpose of speaking, talking, discussing and explaining meanings.

﴿And appoint for me a helper from my family﴾ that is, someone to aid me, support me and help me with the people to whom You have sent me. He asked for this helper to be from his family, by way of being kind; those who are more deserving of a person's kindness are his relatives. Then he specified the person for whom he was asking, as he said: ﴿Hâroon, my brother. Strengthen me through him﴾ that is, make me stronger and support me through him. Allah said:

﴿...We will strengthen you through your brother, and give you both power...﴾ (al-Qaşaş 28: 35)

﴿and let him share in my task﴾ that is, in prophethood, by making him a Prophet and a Messenger, as You did for me.

Then he mentioned the benefit of that: ﴿So that we may glorify You much and remember You much﴾. Moosâ (ﷺ) understood that the aim of all acts of worship and the foundation of religion is to remember Allah, so he asked Allah to make his brother join him, so that they could help one another and cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety, and thus be able to remember Allah a great deal, by glorifying Him, proclaiming His oneness and doing other kinds of acts of worship.

﴿For verily You are well aware of our situation﴾ that is, You know our situation, our weakness, our helplessness and our need for You in all our affairs; You know us better than we know ourselves and You are more merciful towards us, so bless us with what we have asked for and answer our prayer.

Allah said: ﴿You are granted your request, O Moosâ﴾ that is, you are given all that you asked for, so We will fill your heart with courage and steadfastness, and We will make your task easy for you,

and We will remove the impediment from your speech so that they will understand what you say, and We will strengthen you through your brother Hâroon, and We will:

﴿...give you both power, so that they will not be able to harm you. By virtue of Our signs, you two and those who follow you will be triumphant.﴾ (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 35)

This request of Moosâ (ﷺ) is indicative of his perfect knowledge of Allah, his smartness and understanding of how things work, and his complete sincerity. That is because the one who seeks to guide people to Allah, especially if the one he is calling is a stubborn and arrogant transgressor, needs patience and perfect forbearance so that he will bear with steadfastness the offences with which he will be faced; it also requires eloquence so that he will be able to express clearly what he wants and is aiming for.

Indeed, the ability to speak clearly and eloquently is one of the most important requirements for someone in this position, because there will be a lot of talk and discussions. Moreover, he needs to be able to present the truth in the most attractive way he can, so as to endear the truth to people, and to present falsehood as repulsive and vile, so that people will be put off by it.

In addition to that, he also needs his task to be made easy for him, so that he will be able to have the right approach and call people to the path of Allah with wisdom and beautiful preaching, debating with them in a way that is better and dealing with each person according to his situation. In order to perfect his efforts, the one who undertakes this task needs helpers and advisers to help him to achieve his aims, because when more than one voice is calling, that will inevitably have a greater impact. Therefore Moosâ (ﷺ) asked for these things, and they were granted to him.

If you look at the stories of the Prophets who were sent to people, you will see that they were all like this, each according to his situation,

especially the final and best of the Messengers, namely Muhammad (ﷺ). He attained the best of every quality of perfection: he was patient and steadfast, his task was made easy for him, he was eloquent and well spoken, and he had Companions who helped him in support of the truth, such as no other Prophet had.



﴿وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَنْ اقْذِيبِي فِي التَّابُوتِ فَاقْذِيبِي فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيَلْقِهِ الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوْلَهُ، وَالْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ حَبَّةً مِّنِّي وَلِنُصْنَعَ عَلَىٰ عَيْنِي ﴿٣٩﴾ إِذْ تَمْشِي أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن يَكْفُلُهُ، فَرَجَعْنَاكَ إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ۚ وَقَلَّتَ نَفْسًا فَجَنَيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَفَنَّاكَ فُتُونًا فَلَمَّسْتَ سَيْنِينَ فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ يَا مُوسَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَأَصْطَفَيْنَاكَ لِنَفْسِي ﴿٤١﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٣٧-٤١)

20:37. And indeed We bestowed Our favour upon you previously

20:38. When We inspired your mother, saying:

20:39. Place him [the infant Moosâ] in the box, and throw it into the river; the river will cast him up onto the bank, and one who is an enemy to Me and an enemy to him will pick him up. I bestowed on you love from Me [and endeared you to people], so that you might be raised under My watchful eye.

20:40. Then your sister went out [looking for you] and said [to Pharaoh's people]: Shall I show you someone who can take care of him [the child]? Thus We returned you to your mother, so that she might be comforted and not grieve. Then you killed a man, but We saved you from distress and fear, and We tested you with various trials. You stayed among the people of Madyan for many years, then you came here at the time ordained, O Moosâ.

20:41. I have chosen you for Myself [to convey My message].

Having mentioned His blessings to His slave and Messenger Moosâ ibn 'Imrân, whereby He endowed him with religious commitment, revelation and the message, and answered his request, Allah now tells us of the blessings that He bestowed upon him during his childhood and the different stages he went through.

﴿And indeed We bestowed Our favour upon you previously﴾ when We inspired your mother to put you in the box, when you were an infant, out of fear of Pharaoh, because he had issued orders to slaughter the sons of the Israelites. So his mother hid him and feared greatly for him. She placed him in the box, then threw it into the river – namely the Nile in Egypt. Allah commanded the river to cast him up onto the bank, and decreed that he should be taken by the most hostile of the enemies of Allah and of Moosâ, and be brought up among his children and be endeared to everyone who saw him.

Hence Allah says: ﴿I bestowed on you love from Me﴾ therefore everyone who saw him loved him ﴿so that you might be raised under My watchful eye﴾ and grow up under My care and protection. What care could be greater and more perfect than the care of the Beneficent, Most Merciful, Who is able to care for His slave in all aspects and ward off all harm from him? He did not move from one stage to another but it was Allah (ﷻ) Who arranged that in the best interests of Moosâ.

One aspect of His good care was that when Moosâ fell into the clutches of his enemy, his mother became very anxious and was so distressed that she almost spoke up about him, except that Allah made her steadfast and strengthened her heart.

In this situation, Allah caused Moosâ to refuse all wet-nurses, and he refused to breastfeed from any woman, so that he would end up with his mother, who would breastfeed him, and she would be reassured and comforted. They brought various wet-nurses to him, but he did not accept any of them. Then the sister of Moosâ came and said:



﴿...Shall I direct you to a household who will bring him up for you and take good care of him?﴾ (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 12)

﴿Thus We returned you to your mother, so that she might be comforted and not grieve. Then you killed a man﴾ who was the Egyptian. When Moosâ entered the city at a time when he would not be noticed by its people, he found two men fighting, one from his own people and the other from among his enemies, an Egyptian.

﴿...The man from among his own people called him to help him against his enemy, so Moosâ struck him with his fist and killed him...﴾ (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 15)

Moosâ prayed to Allah and asked Him for forgiveness, and He forgave him. Then he fled, when he heard that the chiefs were seeking him and wanted to kill him.

But Allah saved him ﴿from distress and fear﴾ of punishment for the offence, and He saved him from being killed.

﴿and We tested you with various trials﴾ that is, We tested and tried you, and We found you steadfast in all situations; or (it may mean that) We caused you to go from one stage to another, until We caused you to attain what you attained.

﴿You stayed among the people of Madyan for many years﴾ – when he fled from Pharaoh and his chiefs, at the time when they wanted to kill him, he headed towards Madyan. He got married there, and stayed there for ten or eight years,

﴿then you came here at the time ordained, O Moosâ﴾ that is, your coming was already decreed; Allah knew of it and wanted it to happen at this time and in this place. Your coming was not coincidental, without being intended on Our part; in fact it is in accordance with Our decree and is because We care for you. This is indicative of Allah's perfect care for Moosâ (ﷺ), hence He said:

﴿I have chosen you for Myself [to convey My message]﴾ and bestowed all kinds of favours and care upon you, so that you would be My beloved and reach a level that no one else reached except very few.

If a lover wants to choose a beloved from among other people and cause him to reach a level of perfection that he could reach, he strives very hard and does all he can to help him reach that level. So what do you think about the Lord Who is powerful and most generous, and what do you think He will do for the one whom He chose for Himself from among His creation?



﴿ أَذْهَبَ أَنْتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَاتِي وَلَا نَبِيًّا فِي ذِكْرِي ﴾ ﴿٤٢﴾ أَذْهَبًا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى ﴿٤٣﴾  
 فَقَوْلًا لَهُ، قَوْلًا لَيْسَ أَعْلَهُ، بِتَذَكُّرٍ أَوْ يَحْشَى ﴿٤٤﴾ قَالَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا نَخَافُ أَنْ يُفْرِطَ عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ  
 يَطْغَى ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَى ﴿٤٦﴾ (سورة طه: ٤٢-٤٦)

- 20:42. Go, you and your brother, with My signs, and do not be negligent in remembering Me.
- 20:43. Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds.
- 20:44. But speak to him gently, so that perhaps he may pay heed or fear Allah.
- 20:45. They [Moosâ and Hâroon] said: Our Lord, we fear that he may hasten to punish us or transgress all bounds.
- 20:46. Allah said: Fear not; verily I am with you both. I hear and see [everything].

When Allah bestowed blessings, both spiritual and worldly, upon Moosâ, He said to him:

﴿Go, you and your brother﴾ Hâroon ﴿with My signs﴾ that is, with the signs that are from Me, which point to the truth and the beauty thereof, and the abhorrent nature of falsehood, such as the hand, the staff and so on, nine signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs.

﴿and do not be negligent in remembering Me﴾ that is, do not falter or be weary of constantly remembering Me, and adhere to it as you

promised, ﴿So that we may glorify You much and remember You much﴾ (20: 33-34), for remembering Allah helps in all things and makes them easier and lighter to bear.

﴿Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds﴾ that is, he has overstepped the mark in his disbelief, transgression, wrongdoing and enmity.

﴿But speak to him gently﴾ that is, kindly and politely, with nice words, without being coarse or harsh in speech, or behaving in a rough manner

﴿so that perhaps﴾, because of your gentle speech, ﴿he may pay heed﴾ to that which will benefit him, and so do it ﴿or fear Allah﴾ and avoid that which may harm him. For gentle speech calls to that, whereas harsh speech puts people off. Allah has explained gentle speech elsewhere, where He says:

﴿And say: Are you willing to be purified and for me to guide you to your Lord, so that you may come to fear Him?﴾ (*an-Nāzi'āt* 79: 18-19)

In such talk there is gentleness, ease and avoidance of harsh and ugly language, as is very clear. The fact that this is presented in the form of a question is suggestive of making an offer and discussing the matter in such a way that no one would be offended by it. It is inviting a person to purify himself and cleanse himself from impurity, which means ridding oneself of the ascription of partners to Allah, which anyone who is of sound mind would willingly accept. It does not say “I will purify you”; rather it says “Are you willing to be purified?”

This is followed by a call to the path of his Lord Who cares for him and bestows blessings upon him both visible and hidden, to which he should respond by giving thanks and mentioning them. Hence it says: ﴿and that I should guide you to your Lord, so that you fear [Him]?﴾. If he does not accept this gentle speech that is very beautiful and should have a great impact on his heart, then it is clear that no reminder will work with him, and he will be seized with the seizing of One Who is Almighty, Omnipotent.

«They [Moosâ and Hâroon] said: Our Lord, we fear that he may hasten to punish us» that is, he may hasten to punish us and hurt us before we can convey Your message to him and establish proof against him

«or transgress all bounds» that is, rebel against the truth and transgress all bounds, because of what he has of dominion, power, troops and helpers.

«Allah said: Fear not» that he will hasten to punish you «verily I am with you both. I hear and see [everything]» that is, you are under My protection and care; I hear all that you say and I see you in all situations, so do not be afraid of him. Thus that fear dissipated and their hearts were reassured by the promise of their Lord.



﴿ فَأَنبِأَهُمْ فَقَوْلَا إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا تَعْزِزْ لَهُمْ قَدْ جِئْنَاكَ  
بِآيَاتٍ مِّنْ رَبِّكَ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَىٰ ﴿٤٧﴾ إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْنَا أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ عَلَىٰ  
مَنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿٤٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ٤٧-٤٨)

20:47. So go, both of you, to him and say: We are both Messengers from your Lord. Let the Children of Israel go with us, and do not oppress them anymore. We have indeed brought you a sign from your Lord. Peace and safety will be the lot of those who follow true guidance.

20:48. Verily it has been revealed to us that the punishment will befall those who disbelieve and turn away.

That is, take these two matters, calling him to Islam and telling him to release these noble people, the Israelites, from oppression and enslavement, so that they may be free and have control over their own affairs, and Moosâ could rule them in accordance with the laws and religion of Allah.

«We have indeed brought you a sign from your Lord» that is indicative of our truthfulness.

«So Moosâ threw down his staff, and suddenly it was a serpent, plain for all to see And he drew forth his hand, and it appeared shining white to all beholders.» (al-A'raf 7: 107-108)

– and they brought other signs, which Allah has described in His Book.

«Peace and safety will be the lot of those who follow true guidance» that is, those who follow the straight path and the clear teachings will attain safety and well-being in this world and the hereafter.

«Verily it has been revealed to us» that is, it is news from Allah, not from ourselves

«that the punishment will befall those who disbelieve and turn away» that is, those who reject what Allah says and what His Messengers say, and turn away from following them. This was encouraging Pharaoh to believe, accept and follow, and it was a warning against doing the opposite of that. But this exhortation and reminder was to no avail; Pharaoh denied his Lord and disbelieved, and he argued about that wrongfully and stubbornly.



﴿ قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٥١﴾ قَالَ عَلِمَهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنسَى ﴿٥٢﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَوَسَّلَكَ لَكُم فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّن نَّبَاتٍ شَتَّىٰ ﴿٥٣﴾ كُلُوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَمَكُمُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي النُّهَىٰ ﴿٥٤﴾ ﴿سورة طه: ٤٩-٥٥﴾

20:49. Pharaoh said: So who is the Lord of you two, O Moosâ?

- 20:50. Moosâ said: Our Lord is He Who gave all things their form and nature, then guided them [as to how to function and yield the benefits for which they were created].
- 20:51. Pharaoh said: Then what about the previous nations [who worshipped idols]?
- 20:52. Moosâ said: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in a Record; my Lord never errs, nor forgets.
- 20:53. It is He Who has spread out the earth for you, traced out paths for you therein, and sent down water from the sky. By means of it We bring forth various different types of vegetation.
- 20:54. So eat, and graze your livestock. Surely in that there are signs for people of sound intellect.
- 20:55. From it [the earth] We created you, to it We will return you, and from it We will bring you forth once again.

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Pharaoh said to Moosâ by way of denial: ﴿So who is the Lord of you two, O Moosâ?﴾. Moosâ gave a clear and full answer, saying: ﴿Our Lord is He Who gave all things their form and nature, then guided them [as to how to function and yield the benefits for which they were created]﴾ that is, our Lord is the One Who created all things, and gave each created thing its form and nature that befits it and is indicative of His perfect artistry in His creation, such as the size of its body, whether it is great or small or in between, and all its other attributes.

﴿then guided﴾ every created being to the purpose for which He created it. This guidance in general terms can be seen in all created things; hence you see every creature striving for the purpose for which it was created of attaining benefits and warding off harm, to the extent that Allah (ﷻ) has even given animals sufficient intelligence to be able to achieve that.

This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Who created all things well...﴾ (*as-Sajdah* 32: 7)

The One Who has created all things, and created them well, such that no one with any reason could think that there could be anything better than them in design, and He guided them to that which is in their best interests, is indeed the true Lord. Denying Him is denying the greatest of all that exists; in fact it is arrogance and a blatant lie. If man were to deny any known thing, whatever it may be, denial of the Lord of the worlds is far worse than that.

Therefore, when Pharaoh was not able to reject this definitive proof, he changed the topic in an attempt to distract from the issue. So he said to Moosâ:

«Then what about the previous nations [who worshipped idols]?» That is, what happened to them and what is their news? What was their fate? They preceded us in denial, disbelief, wrongdoing and stubbornness, and we have an example in them.

Moosâ said: «The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in a Record; my Lord never errs, nor forgets» that is, He has counted their deeds, both good and bad, and written them in a record, namely *al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh*. He has encompassed all that with His knowledge, and nothing of it will be lost, for He will not forget what He knows of that.

What this implies is that they have already passed away and seen the consequences of their deeds, and they will be requited for them, so there is no point in your asking about them, O Pharaoh. That is a nation which has (already) passed away; they will have what they earned and you will have what you earn. If the evidence that we have quoted to you and the signs that we have shown you are proven to be true and certain, which is indeed the case, then submit to the truth and give up disbelief, wrongdoing and excessive arguing on the basis of falsehood. If you are uncertain about it and you do not think that it is sound and correct, then the door is still open to debate it, so refute evidence with evidence, and proof with proof; but you will never be able to do so

How could he do that, especially as Allah has told us about him and how he rejected it even though he was convinced of it, as He said: ﴿They rejected the signs, although in their hearts they were certain that they were true, out of wickedness and arrogance...﴾ (*an-Naml* 27: 14)

And 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...﴾ (*al-Isrâ' 17: 102*)

Thus we know that he was stubborn in his argument and his aim was to exalt himself in the land.

Then Moosâ elaborated on this definitive evidence by mentioning many of Allah's blessings and clear favours:

﴿It is He Who has spread out the earth for you﴾ that is, in such a way that you are able to dwell therein, settle, build, plant and till for agricultural purposes, and so on. Allah has prepared the earth so that it is possible to achieve all that, and He did not make it unsuitable for you in any way.

﴿traced out paths for you therein﴾ that is, He has laid down for you routes that lead you from one land to another, from one country to another, so that humans are able to reach anywhere on earth in the easiest way, and they benefit from travelling more than if they did not travel.

﴿and sent down water from the sky. By means of it We bring forth various different types of vegetation﴾ that is, He sends down the rain:

﴿... whereby He gives life to the earth after its death...﴾ (*an-Nahl* 16: 65)

– and brings forth thereby all kinds of plants with different qualities. He has made them all available to us, decreed that for us and made it easy for us, as provision for us and our livestock. Were it not for that, all who are on earth of humans and animals would die. Hence Allah says:

﴿So eat, and graze your livestock﴾ this is said in the context of Allah reminding people of His blessings. It may indicate that in principle



all that grows from the ground is permissible, and nothing of that is prohibited except that which is proven to be harmful, such as poison and the like.

«Surely in that there are signs for people of sound intellect» that is, people with sound reasoning and right thinking, who contemplate Allah's blessings, kindness, mercy, immense generosity and perfect care; these signs indicate that He is the Lord Who is deserving of worship, the Sovereign Who is worthy of all praise; there is no one who deserves worship or praise except Him, the One Who bestows these blessings. He is able to do all things: just as He gives life to the earth after it was dead, He will also give life to the dead.

Allah singles out people of sound intellect here, because they are the ones who benefit from the signs and reflect on them. As for others, they are more akin to grazing animals, for they do not look at the signs and reflect upon them, and they do not think deeply in order to find the purpose behind them. Rather their share is that of animals that eat and drink whilst living a life of heedlessness, and they turn away from truth.

«How many are the signs in the heavens and the earth which they pass by without paying them any heed!» (Yoosuf 12: 105)

Having mentioned how generous the earth is, and how grateful it is for that which Allah sends down to it of rain, and that by its Lord's leave it produces plants of various kinds, Allah tells us here that He created us from it, and we will return to it when we die and are buried in it, and we will emerge from it once more. Just as He created us from it, when we had been nothing, and we know that and are certain of it, He will recreate us from it when He resurrects us from it after we have died, in order to requite us for the deeds that we did on it.

These two proofs for recreation are rational and clear: the bringing forth of plants from the earth after it was dead and the bringing forth of accountable people from it when they are recreated.



﴿وَلَقَدْ آرَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَى ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ أَجِئْتَنَا لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ  
يَمُوسَى ﴿٥٧﴾ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِثْلِهِ ۖ فَاجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَا نُخْلَفُهُ، نَحْنُ وَلَا  
أَنْتَ مَكَانًا سُوًى ﴿٥٨﴾ قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمَ الزَّيْنَةِ وَأَنْ يُحْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضُحًى ﴿٥٩﴾ فَتَوَلَّى  
فِرْعَوْنُ فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُ، ثُمَّ أَتَى ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالَ لَهُمُ مُوسَى وَيْلَكُمْ لَا تَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ  
كَذِبًا فَيَسْحِتَكُمْ بِعَذَابٍ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ افْتَرَى ﴿٦١﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٥٦-٦١)

- 20:56. We showed Pharaoh all Our signs, but he rejected them and refused to believe in them.
- 20:57. He said: Have you come to drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moosâ?
- 20:58. Then we will surely produce for you magic to match it. So appoint a day when we and you may meet in a convenient place, an appointment which neither we nor you will fail to keep.
- 20:59. Moosâ said: Your appointment will be on the day of the festival; let the people assemble in the forenoon.
- 20:60. So Pharaoh withdrew and gathered his resources, then he came [for the appointment].
- 20:61. Moosâ said to them: Woe to you! Do not fabricate lies against Allah, lest He annihilate you with His punishment. Those who fabricate such lies are surely lost and doomed.

Here Allah tells (ﷻ) us that He showed Pharaoh signs, lessons and definitive proofs of all kinds, in the visible universe and in himself, but he did not pay heed or give up his evil ways; rather he rejected them and refused to believe.

He rejected what Moosâ told him, turned away from the commands and prohibitions, regarded truth as falsehood and falsehood as truth, and argued on the basis of falsehood so as to mislead people. He said:

«Have you come to drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moosâ?» He claimed that these signs that Moosâ showed him were no more than magic and illusions, the purpose of which was to drive them from their land, and take it over, so that his (Pharaoh's) words would have some impact on his people, for people are naturally inclined towards their homelands and it is difficult for them to leave them.

Pharaoh told them that this was Moosâ's aim so that they would hate him and strive to oppose him. It was as if he was saying to Moosâ: so we will bring you magic like your magic; give us some time, and «appoint a day when we and you may meet in a convenient place, an appointment which neither we nor you will fail to keep» that is, one that is convenient for us and for you. It may be that what is meant is: let us meet in a level place where everyone may see what is going on.

Moosâ said: «Your appointment will be on the day of the festival» which was a holiday on which they had no other business to attend to. «let the people assemble in the forenoon» that is, let them all gather in the forenoon. Moosâ requested that because the day of the festival and the forenoon of that day was a time when people usually gathered in large numbers and would be able to see things as they really were, in a manner that was not possible at other times.

«So Pharaoh withdrew and gathered his resources» that is, he gathered all that he was able to for this contest against Moosâ. He sent envoys to the cities to gather all the skilled magicians. Magic was widespread at that time, and knowledge thereof was something that was highly sought. So he gathered a large number of magicians, then both of them went to the appointed place at the appointed time, and the people also gathered for that occasion.

It was a huge gathering, attended by men and women, chiefs, nobles and commoners, young and old. The people were urged to attend, and it was said to the people:

«... Will you also gather, so that we may follow the magicians [in their religion], if they are the victors?» (*ash-Shu'arâ'* 26: 39-40)

When they had gathered from all cities, Moosâ (ﷺ) admonished them and said to them: ﴿Woe to you! Do not fabricate lies against Allah, lest He annihilate you with His punishment﴾ that is, do not support the falsehood that you follow by means of your magic and seek to defeat the truth, fabricating lies against Allah, lest He annihilate you with a punishment from Him, and your efforts and fabrications fail, then you will not attain what you seek of victory and high status with Pharaoh and his chiefs, nor will you be safe from the punishment of Allah.

Words of truth inevitably have an impact on people's hearts. It is no wonder that the disputes and arguments among the magicians stopped when they heard the words of Moosâ and felt alarmed. Perhaps some of what they argued about was their doubt concerning Moosâ: was he really following the truth or not? But until this point they had not reached an agreement, so that Allah might bring about what was already decreed, and:

﴿...so that those who chose to perish [by choosing disbelief] might do so after seeing clear evidence, and those who chose to live [by choosing faith] might do so after seeing clear evidence...﴾ (al-Anfâl 8: 42)

Then they conversed privately, and agreed on one view, so that they might succeed and so that the people would adhere to their religion.

Allah describes the private conversation that they had:



﴿فَنَنْزَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ وَأَسْرُوا النَّجْوَى ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالُوا إِنْ هَذَا لَسِحْرَانِ يُرِيدَانِ أَنْ يُخْرِجَاكُم مِّنْ أَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا بِطَرِيقَتِكُمُ الْمُثَلَّى ﴿٦٣﴾ فَأَجْمَعُوا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ أَتَوُوا صَفًّا وَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْيَوْمَ مَنِ اسْتَعْلَى ﴿٦٤﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٦٢-٦٤)

- 20:62. So they argued among themselves as to what they should do, and conferred in secret.
- 20:63. They said: Verily these two are magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic and put an end to your ideal way.
- 20:64. So consolidate your plan, then come forth in ranks. Whoever prevails today will indeed prosper.

﴿They said: Verily these two are magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic﴾ – this is like what Pharaoh had said previously. Either it was a coincidence that Pharaoh and the magicians agreed on this view, without intending to, or he had dictated to them what he had made his mind up about and had announced to the people. Then they added to what Pharaoh had said by saying:

﴿and put an end to your ideal way﴾ that is, the path of magic for which he envies you, and he wants to prevail over you so that he may attain pride, renown and fame, and so that he may be the one whom people seek in order to learn from him this knowledge to which you have devoted all your time, and take away from you the livelihood that you have because of it and the leadership that you have attained by means of it. Thus they encouraged one another to strive hard in order to defeat him. Therefore they said:

﴿So consolidate your plan﴾ and demonstrate what you can do in one go, supporting and helping one another, in harmony with one another and united.

﴿then come forth in ranks﴾ because that is more convenient for your performance and will create greater awe in people's hearts, and so that none of you will do less than he is able to do. You should know that whoever succeeds today and defeats the other will be the victor, triumphant, for this day will decide your future.

It is amazing how strong and tough they were in supporting falsehood, as they did not spare any effort or means, and they used

every kind of plot and scheme against the truth. But Allah insisted that His light would be perfected and the truth would prevail. When their plans were complete and they had decided the goal they wanted to achieve, there was nothing left but to take action.



﴿قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ أَوْلَ مَنْ أَلْقَىٰ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوا فَإِذَا جِآهُمْ وَعَصِيَّتُهُمْ مَخِيلٌ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ لَنَسَعَىٰ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُوسَىٰ ﴿٦٧﴾ قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفَ مَا صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدٌ سِحْرٍ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَىٰ ﴿٦٩﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٦٥-٦٩)

- 20:65. They said: O Moosâ, either you throw or we will be the first to throw!
- 20:66. He said: No; you throw first. Thereupon their ropes and sticks appeared to him, by their magic, to be moving about.
- 20:67. Then Moosâ sensed fear in himself.
- 20:68. We said: Fear not, for verily it is you who will prevail.
- 20:69. Throw that which is in your right hand; it will swallow up what they have wrought. What they have wrought is no more than a magician's trick, and the magician will never prosper, no matter where he may be.

﴿They said: O Moosâ, either you throw﴾ your staff ﴿or we will be the first to throw﴾. They gave him the choice, so as to give the impression that they were certain they would prevail over him, whatever the case.

Moosâ said: ﴿No; you throw first﴾. So they threw their ropes and sticks, and ﴿Thereupon their ropes and sticks appeared to him﴾ that is, to Moosâ ﴿by their magic﴾ which was very skilful

«to be moving about» that is, they appeared to be fast-moving snakes. When it appeared thus to Moosâ, he «sensed fear in himself», as is human nature; otherwise he was certain of the promise and support of Allah.

«We said», so as to reassure him and make him steadfast: «Fear not, for verily it is you who will prevail» over them; that is, you will defeat them and subdue them, and they will humble themselves and submit to you.

«Throw that which is in your right hand» namely, your staff «it will swallow up what they have wrought. What they have wrought is no more than a magician's trick, and the magician will never prosper, no matter where he may be» that is, their plots and schemes will not yield any results for them and will not succeed. This was part of the scheme of the magicians, who trick people, present falsehood as right and try to give the false impression that they are following the truth. Moosâ threw down his staff, and it swallowed up all that they had wrought and devoured it, whilst the people were looking on, watching this performance.

The magicians realised with certainty that this was not magic, and that it was from Allah, so they hastened to believe.



﴿فَأَلْقَى السِّحْرَ سُجَّدًا قَالُوا أَمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَى ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالُوا آمَنَّا لَهُ، قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ لَكُمْ  
إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرِكُمْ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَا قَطْعَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ مِنْ خَلْفِ  
وَأَصْلَيْتِكُمْ فِي جُدُوعِ النَّخْلِ وَلَنَعْلَمَنَّ إِنَّا أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَأَبْقَى ﴿٧١﴾ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْتِيَكَ عَلَى  
مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْيَقِينِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا  
﴿٧٢﴾ إِنَّا أَمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطِيئَتَنَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ وَأَبْقَى ﴿٧٣﴾﴾

- 20:70. So the magicians fell down in prostration; they said: We believe in the Lord of Moosâ and Hâroon.
- 20:71. Pharaoh said: How dare you believe him before I give you permission! He must be your master, who taught you magic! I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees, and you will surely come to know which of us can give the more severe and longer-lasting punishment!
- 20:72. They said: We will never choose you over the clear signs that have come to us, or over the One Who created us. So decide whatever you will; you can only decide matters pertaining to the life of this world.
- 20:73. Verily we have believed in our Lord so that He may forgive us our sins and what you compelled us to do of magic, for Allah is better [in reward] and more lasting [in punishment].

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﴿So the magicians fell down in prostration; they said: We believe in the Lord of Moosâ and Hâroon﴾. Thus the truth became manifestly clear, and magic and the plots and schemes of the magicians were proven to be false in that great gathering.

The defeat of the magicians became proof and mercy for the believers, and proof against the stubborn. Pharaoh said to the magicians: ﴿How dare you believe him before I give you permission﴾ that is, how dare you go ahead and believe without consulting me or seeking my permission!

He found their actions strange, because they had been very polite and humble towards him, and had submitted fully to him in all their affairs, so he expected them to behave in a similar manner in this matter too. Then Pharaoh persisted in his disbelief and transgression, after this proof had been established, and he treated his people as fools by telling them that the reason why Moosâ had gained the upper hand over the magicians was not because what he followed was true; rather



it was because he and the magicians had conspired and plotted to drive Pharaoh and his people out of their land. The people accepted this lie from Pharaoh and thought that he was telling the truth.

﴿Thus he made fools of his people and they obeyed him. They were indeed a rebellious and wicked people.﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 54)

Even though what he suggested to them could not be accepted by anyone who has the slightest common sense, awareness or understanding of reality – for Moosâ had come from Madyan on his own, and had not met any of the magicians or anyone else; rather he had hastened to deliver the call to Pharaoh and his people, and show them the signs – Pharaoh nevertheless wanted to oppose what Moosâ had brought, so he did his utmost, sending someone to the cities to gather every learned magician. They came to him and he promised them a reward and high status if they won the contest. And they were keen to do their utmost and they tried very hard to defeat Moosâ, but this was the result they got. Can it be imagined in this case that they and Moosâ had plotted and agreed on this outcome? This is completely impossible.

Then Pharaoh threatened the magicians and said: ﴿I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides﴾ as is done to the bandit who spreads mischief; his right hand and left foot are cut off.

﴿and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees﴾ that is, so that you will become a lesson to others and will be humiliated.

﴿and you will surely come to know which of us can give the more severe and longer-lasting punishment﴾. What he meant, according to his claim, was himself or Allah, and that he was able to give a more severe and longer-lasting punishment than Allah, turning facts on their heads in order to scare the foolish.

Hence when the magicians realised the truth and Allah granted them rational thinking by means of which they could verify facts, they responded by saying:

﴿We will never choose you over the clear signs that have come to us﴾ that is, we will never choose you and what you promised us of reward and being close to you over what Allah has shown us of clear signs which prove that Allah is the only Lord Who is worthy of worship and veneration, and everything other than Him is false, and we will not give you precedence over the One Who originated us and created us; that can never happen.

﴿So decide whatever you will﴾ and choose whatever you will of that with which you threatened us, be it cutting off our limbs, crucifying us or punishing us.

﴿you can only decide matters pertaining to the life of this world﴾ that is, what you are threatening us with is only in this life, which will come to an end and vanish, and will not harm us, unlike the punishment of Allah for the one who persists in his disbelief, for it is eternal and severe.

It is as if this is a response from them to Pharaoh's words: ﴿and you will surely come to know which of us can give the more severe and longer-lasting punishment﴾ (20: 71). These words of the magicians indicate that the wise person should weigh up between the pleasures of this world and the pleasures of the hereafter, and between punishment in this world and punishment in the hereafter.

﴿Verily we have believed in our Lord so that He may forgive us our sins﴾ that is, our disbelief and disobedience, for faith expiates evil deeds and repentance erases that which came before it.

﴿and what you compelled us to do of magic﴾ by means of which we opposed the truth. This indicates that they had no choice with regard to their previous deeds; rather Pharaoh had forced them to do that.

What appears to be the case – and Allah knows best – is that when Moosâ exhorted them, as we have seen above (in 20: 61), ﴿Woe to you! Do not fabricate lies against Allah, lest He annihilate you with His punishment﴾, that had a great impact on them and affected them deeply, so they disputed after hearing these words and exhortation.

But Pharaoh forced them to do that and compelled them to make the plans that they did, so they reiterated what Pharaoh had said, when they said: «Verily these two are magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic» (20: 63). So they did what he wanted them to do and forced them to do.

Perhaps these feelings that developed in their hearts of reluctance to oppose truth with falsehood and to do what they were compelled to do is what affected them, and Allah had mercy on them because of it and enabled them to believe and repent.

«for Allah is better [in reward]» than what you have promised us of reward and high status  
 «and more lasting» in punishment than what Pharaoh promised when he said «and you will surely come to know which of us can give the more severe and longer-lasting punishment» (20: 71).

Wherever the story of Moosā and Pharaoh is mentioned, Allah states, when referring to the story of the magicians, that Pharaoh threatened them with cutting off of limbs and crucifixion, but He does not say that he actually did that, and there is no ṣaḥeeḥ hadith which says that. But to affirm whether it occurred or not requires proof, and Allah knows best about that and other matters. However, the fact that he threatened them with that and was able to carry out his threat indicates that it did happen, because if it had not taken place Allah would have said so, and because the transmitters are agreed that it happened.



﴿إِنَّهُم مِّن يَّاتِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّجْرِمَاتٍ فَإِنَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ﴾ (٧٦) وَمِن يَّاتِيهِمْ مُّؤْمِنَاتٌ قَدْ  
 عَمِلَ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجَاتُ الْعُلَىٰ ﴿٧٥﴾ حَنَّتْ عَدْنُ بَجْرِيٍّ مِّن تَحْتِهَا الْآبَاهِرُ  
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ مَن تَزَكَّىٰ ﴿٧٦﴾ (سورة طه: ٧٤-٧٦)

- 20:74. Verily whoever comes to his Lord as an evildoer, for him is hell, in which he will neither die nor live.
- 20:75. But whoever comes to Him as a believer, having done righteous deeds, for such will be high ranks,
- 20:76. gardens of perpetual abode, through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. Such is the reward of those who purify themselves.

Here Allah tells us that whoever comes to Him as an evildoer – that is, he is evil in all ways, which implies that he is a disbeliever – and persists in that until he dies, then for him is hell, wherein is severe punishment, huge chains, bottomless depths and agonising heat and cold, the torments of which will destroy one utterly. The severity of the punishment is reflected in the fact that the one who is punished there will neither die nor live; he will not die so as to find relief and he will not live any kind of life in which he could find pleasure. Rather his life will be filled with suffering of the heart, soul and body, the severity of which no one can comprehend, and that suffering will not be alleviated even for a moment. He will cry out for help but will not be helped, and he will call out but will not be answered. If they cry for help, they will be given water like boiling oil that will scald their faces (*cf.* 18: 29) and if they call out, the response will be:

﴿...Be humiliated therein and do not speak to Me.﴾ (*al-Mu'minoon* 23: 108)

But whoever comes to his Lord believing in Him and in His Messengers, following His Books, ﴿having done righteous deeds﴾, both obligatory and recommended, ﴿for such will be high ranks﴾ that is, lofty dwellings, adorned rooms, never-ending delights, rivers flowing in all directions, eternal life and great joy such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and it has never crossed the mind of any man.

«Such» recompense «is the reward of those who purify themselves» that is, those who purify themselves from polytheism, disbelief, evildoing and sin, either by not doing these things at all or repenting from what they have done of such things, and also purifying themselves by developing their faith and righteous deeds, because purification is twofold, cleansing and removing dirt, and increasing in doing good. Zakāh (which comes from a root meaning purity) reflects these two meanings.



﴿وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي فَاصْرَبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي الْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا لَا تَخَفْ دَرَكًا وَلَا تَخْشَى ۚ فَاَتَّبَعَهُمْ فَرَعُونُ يَعْجُوذُ بِمَنْ آوَىٰ مِنْ آيِهِمْ مَا عَشِيَهُمْ ۗ وَأَضَلَّ فَرَعُونُ قَوْمَهُ وَمَا هَدَىٰ﴾ (سورة طه: ٧٧-٧٩)

- 20:77. We inspired Moosā: Travel by night with My slaves, and strike a dry path for them in the sea. Have no fear of being overtaken and do not be afraid [of drowning in the sea].
- 20:78. Then Pharaoh pursued them with his troops, but they were completely overwhelmed by the power of the sea.
- 20:79. Thus Pharaoh led his people astray, and he did not guide them.

When Moosā prevailed over Pharaoh and his people by means of proof and evidence, he remained in Egypt, calling them to Islam and striving to save the Children of Israel from Pharaoh and his persecution. But Pharaoh persisted in his arrogance and aversion to the truth, and continued to treat the Israelites harshly, and Allah continued to show him the signs and lessons of which He tells us in the Qur'an.

The Children of Israel were not able to practise their faith openly, so they took their houses as places of worship and put up with Pharaoh and his persecution. But Allah (ﷻ) wanted to save them from their

enemy and establish them in the land so that they could worship Him openly and establish His laws.

So He inspired His Prophet Moosâ to travel with them by night, and He told him that Pharaoh and his people would pursue them. So they set out at the beginning of the night, all of the Israelites, with their womenfolk and children. Then when morning came, the Egyptians found that none of them were left, so their enemy Pharaoh became very angry with them. He sent envoys to the cities to rally the people and urge them to go out in pursuit of the Children of Israel, so that he could capture them and punish them. But Allah decreed that they should be saved. When all the troops of Pharaoh had gathered, he set out with them in pursuit of the Israelites.

﴿Then [the Egyptians] caught up with them at sunrise. When the two groups came within sight of one another, the companions of Moosâ said: We are sure to be overtaken.﴾ (*ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 60-61*)

– and they were anxious and scared, because the sea was in front of them and Pharaoh was behind them, his heart filled with rage and fury. But Moosâ was calm and reassured, for he trusted the promise of his Lord, so he said:

﴿...No indeed! Verily, my Lord is with me and He will guide me.﴾ (*ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 62*)

Allah inspired him to strike the sea with his staff, so he struck it and twelve pathways opened up, with the water rising up like high mountains to the right and left of those pathways. Allah made the pathways which appeared when the waters split dry, and instructed them not to be afraid of Pharaoh catching up with them or to be afraid of drowning in the sea. So they followed those pathways, then Pharaoh and his troops came in pursuit of them until, when all of Moosâ's people had emerged (on the other side) and the people of Pharaoh had all entered, Allah commanded the sea to close over them, and: ﴿they were completely overwhelmed by the power of the sea﴾ (*20: 78*). They

all drowned and not one of them was saved, as the Israelites were looking on and watching the enemy. Allah gave them the satisfaction of witnessing Pharaoh's destruction.

This was the result of disbelief and misguidance, and not following the guidance of Allah. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Thus Pharaoh led his people astray﴾ by making disbelief fair-seeming to them and tarnishing the image of that which Moosā brought. Thus he fooled them and never guided them at any time; he led them in the path of error and misguidance, then he led them on a path that brought them to punishment and doom.



﴿يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ قَدْ أَجْبَيْتُمْ مِّنْ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَوَعَدْنَاكُمْ جَانِبَ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّٰ وَالسَّلَوى (٨٠) كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي ۗ وَمَن يَحِلَّ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَد هَوَى (٨١) وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ أَهْتَدَى (٨٢)﴾ (سورة طه: ٨٠-٨٢)

- 20:80. O Children of Israel, verily We delivered you from your enemy, We made an appointment with you on the right-hand side of the mountain, and We sent down to you the manna and quails.
- 20:81. Eat of the good things We have provided for you, but do not exceed the bounds therein, lest you incur My wrath, for whoever incurs My wrath is indeed ruined.
- 20:82. Verily I am Oft-Forgiving to those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds, then remain steadfast.

Here Allah reminds the Children of Israel of the great blessings that He bestowed upon them by destroying their enemy and making an appointment with Moosā (ﷺ) on the right-hand side of the mountain to send down to him the Book that contained sublime rulings and

beautiful stories. Thus spiritual blessings were perfected for them after worldly blessings. Allah also reminds them of how He blessed them in the wilderness, by sending down the manna and quails, and delicious and easily available provision that they could obtain without much effort. He said to them:

﴿Eat of the good things We have provided for you﴾ that is, and give thanks for what He has bestowed upon you of blessings ﴿but do not exceed the bounds therein﴾ that is, with regard to His provision, so do not use it to disobey Him or become arrogant because of the blessings, for if you do that, you will incur My wrath, that is, I will be angry with you then I will punish you.

﴿for whoever incurs My wrath is indeed ruined﴾ that is, he is destroyed and doomed, and is utterly lost, because that proves that he is discontent and is not a doer of good, therefore wrath and loss are his lot.

Nevertheless, repentance is always available, no matter what sins a person has committed. Hence Allah says:

﴿Verily I am Oft-Forgiving﴾ that is, I offer abundant forgiveness and mercy to anyone who repents from disbelief, innovation and evildoing, and believes in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, and does righteous deeds in terms of beliefs, physical actions and words.

﴿then remains steadfast﴾ that is, he follows the straight path and follows the noble Messenger, and adheres to true religion. Allah will forgive such a person for his sins and pardon his previous errors in which he had persisted, because he has taken the best measures that may lead to forgiveness and mercy; indeed all measures are limited to these things, for repentance erases that which came before it, and faith and Islam cancel out that which came before them, and righteous deeds erase bad deeds. Being steadfast in following the path of guidance in all ways, such as acquiring knowledge and reflecting upon a verse or hadith, so that one may understand the meaning that will help him to be steadfast and call others to the true religion,



and refute innovation or disbelief or misguidance, as well as jihad, migration and other aspects of steadfastness in Islam, all expiate sins and fulfil the purpose.



﴿ وَمَا أَعْجَلَكَ عَنْ قَوْمِكَ يَا مُوسَى ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ هُمْ أَوْلَاءٌ عَلَيَّ أَتْرَى وَعَجَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَى ﴿٨٤﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ وَأَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَرَجَعَ مُوسَى إِلَى قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ يَقُولُونَ لِمَ بَعَدَكُمُ رَبُّكُمْ وَعَدَّا حَسَنًا أَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ أَمْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُم مَّوعِدِي ﴿٨٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ٨٣-٨٦)

- 20:83. What made you hasten and leave your people behind, O Moosâ?
- 20:84. Moosâ said: They are close behind me; I hastened to You, my Lord, so that You may be pleased.
- 20:85. Allah said: Verily We have put your people to the test in your absence and as-Sâmiri has led them astray.
- 20:86. So Moosâ returned to his people, angry and filled with sorrow. He said: O my people, did not your Lord give you a goodly promise? Did the time seem too long for you, or did you want the wrath of your Lord to fall upon you, when you broke your promise to me?

Allah (ﷻ) had made an appointment with Moosâ, for him to come to Him so that He might send down the Torah to him, a period of thirty nights, then He completed it with ten more. When the appointed time came, Moosâ (ﷺ) hastened to attend the appointment, longing and eager to keep the appointment. Allah said to him:

﴿What made you hasten and leave your people behind, O Moosâ?﴾  
That is, what brought you here before them? Why could you not wait until you came with them? He said:

﴿They are close behind me﴾ that is, they are nearby and will come soon after me; what made me hasten to You, O Lord, was my desire to be near You and seek Your pleasure, and longing for You.

Allah said to him: ﴿Verily We have put your people to the test in your absence﴾ that is, with the worship of the calf; We tested and tried them, but they were not patient, and when that test came to them, they disbelieved  
﴿and as-Sâmiri has led them astray﴾.

He ﴿produced for them a calf, an effigy﴾ (20: 88) which he fashioned, then it ﴿made a lowing sound, and they said: This is your god, and the god of Moosâ﴾ (20: 88), but Moosâ has forgotten it. The Children of Israel were confused by it, so they worshipped it; Hâroon called them not to do that, but they paid no heed.

When Moosâ returned to his people, he was very angry and upset; in other words, he was filled with rage, anger and distress. He said to them, rebuking them for what they had done: ﴿O my people, did not your Lord give you a goodly promise?﴾ Which was His promise to send down the Torah.

﴿Did the time seem too long for you﴾ that is, did you think that I was away for too long, although it was only a short time?

This is the view of many commentators, but it may be that what is meant is: has it been so long since a Prophet or Messenger came to you, so that you did not have any knowledge of prophethood and the teachings of the Prophets had vanished, so that nothing of their teachings was left with you, and therefore you worshipped something other than Allah because of your ignorance and lack of knowledge of the teachings of prophethood? In other words, that is not so; rather there is prophethood among you, and knowledge is available, so your excuse is not acceptable. Or did you intend by your deed to bring upon yourselves the wrath of your Lord? For you have committed that which justifies His wrath and you have done that which makes His punishment inevitable. This is the reality.

﴿when you broke your promise to me﴾, as I instructed you to adhere to the path of truth, and I left Hâroon in charge of you, but you did not pay any attention to what I said or show any respect to him.



﴿قَالُوا مَا أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلِكِنَا وَلٰكِنَّا حَمَلْنَا أَوْزَارًا مِّن زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنَاهَا فَكَذٰلِكَ أَلْقَى السَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُوَارٌّ فَقَالُوا هٰذَا إِلٰهُكُمْ وَإِلٰهُ مُوسَىٰ فَنَسِيَ ﴿٨٨﴾ أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَلَّا يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا

(سورة طه: ٨٧-٨٩) ﴿٨٨﴾

- 20:87. They said: We did not break our promise to you of our own accord. But we were loaded with the [sinful] burdens of the [Egyptian] people's jewellery, so we threw them into the fire, and as-Sâmiri also threw likewise.
- 20:88. Then as-Sâmiri produced for them a calf, an effigy that made a lowing sound, and they said: This is your god, and the god of Moosâ, but he has forgotten!
- 20:89. Could they not see that it could not give them any response and that it had no power either to cause harm or bring benefit to them?

That is, they said to him: We did not do what we did deliberately or on our own initiative; rather the reason for that was that we felt the sin of keeping the people's jewellery that was in our possession. They had, according to what they said, borrowed a lot of jewellery from the Egyptians, and when they left Egypt they had it with them. They gathered it together when Moosâ went away, so that they could consult him about it when he returned.

On the day when Pharaoh was drowned, as-Sâmiri had spotted the hoof print of the messenger Jibreel's horse, and his soul prompted him

to take a handful of it. He thought that if he threw it onto something it would come to life, and that was a test and trial for them. He threw it onto that image that he had made in the shape of a calf, and it moved and made a lowing sound, and the people said: Moosâ has gone to seek his Lord but (his Lord) is here; Moosâ has forgotten. This was a sign of their foolishness and lack of intellect; when they saw this strange thing that began to make a lowing sound after having been inanimate, they thought that it was the God of the heavens and the earth!

«Could they not see» that the calf «could not give them any response» that is, it could not speak or talk to them, or give them any response, and it could not ward off any harm from them or bring them any benefit. One who is lacking in perfection and unable to speak or do anything does not deserve to be worshipped. It is more lacking than its worshippers, for they are able to speak and do some things, and to bring some benefits and ward off some harm, by Allah's decree.



﴿وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هَارُونُ مِنْ قَبْلُ يَقَوْمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِيَ ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالُوا لَنْ نَبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفِينَ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَى ﴿٩١﴾ قَالَ يَهتَدُونَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا ﴿٩٢﴾ أَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ أَفَعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِي ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمْ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلَا بِرَأْسِي ﴿٩٤﴾ إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي ﴿٩٥﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٩٠-٩٤)

- 20:90. Hâroon had earlier said to them: O my people, you are being tested with it. Verily your Lord is the Most Gracious, so follow me and obey my command.
- 20:91. They said: We will not stop worshipping it until Moosâ comes back to us.
- 20:92. Moosâ said: O Hâroon, what prevented you, when you saw that they had gone astray,

20:93. from following me? Did you then disobey my command?

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

They had no excuse for taking the calf for worship. Even though they developed some confusion about worshipping it, Hâroon had forbidden them to do that and had told them that it was a test, and that the true Lord was the Most Gracious, from Whom come all blessings both visible and invisible, and Who wards off harm. He had commanded them to follow him and reject the calf, but they refused and said: ﴿We will not stop worshipping it until Moosâ comes back to us﴾.

Moosâ came to his brother and blamed him, saying: ﴿O Hâroon, what prevented you, when you saw that they had gone astray, from following me﴾ that is, coming after me and telling me so that I could hasten to come back to them?

﴿Did you then disobey my command?﴾ when I said:

﴿...Take my place amongst my people in my absence, do what is right, and do not follow the way of those who spread mischief.﴾

(*al-A râf* 7: 142)

Moosâ took hold of Hâroon by the head and beard, pulling him out of anger and rebuking him. But Hâroon said: ﴿O son of my mother﴾ to soften his heart; otherwise they were full brothers.

﴿do not seize me by my beard, or by my head! Verily I was afraid that you would say: You have caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not pay heed to my words﴾ – you instructed me to take your place among them in your absence, and if I had followed you (and come after you to tell you what was happening), I would have been neglecting what you had instructed me to adhere to, and I was afraid that you would rebuke me and say: ﴿You have caused

division among the Children of Israel» by leaving them. They had no one to look after them, and that would have divided them and caused them to split into groups. So do not count me among the people who are given to wrongdoing and do not give our enemies cause to rejoice in our misfortune (cf. 7: 150).

Moosâ regretted what he had done to his brother when he did not deserve that, so he said:

﴿...O my Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us to Your mercy, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.﴾  
(al-A'raf 7: 151)

Then he turned his attention to as-Sâmiri.



﴿قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَا سَمِيرِيُّ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ أَنْ تَقُولَ لَا مِسَاسَ وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّنْ تَخْلَفَنَّهُ، وَأَنْظُرْ إِلَى إِلٰهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا لَّنُحَرِّقَنَّهُ ثُمَّ لَنَنْبِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفًا ﴿٩٧﴾﴾

(سورة طه: ٩٥-٩٧)

20:95. Moosâ said: And what is the matter with you, O Sâmiri?

20:96. He said: I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful [of dust] from the hoof print of the messenger Jibreel's horse, and threw it [into the calf]. Thus my soul prompted me.

20:97. Moosâ said: Begone then! Verily, your [punishment] in this life will be that you will say: Touch me not [and you will be an outcast]. And there awaits an appointed time for your reckoning that you cannot miss. Now look at your god, that you were worshipping. We will surely burn it then scatter its remains in the sea.

﴿Moosā said: And what is the matter with you, O Sāmiri?﴾ that is, why did you do what you did?

As-Sāmiri said: ﴿I saw what they did not see﴾ that is, he saw Jibreel (جبرئيل) on a horse when they came out of the sea, and Pharaoh and his troops drowned – this is according to what the commentators said. So I took a handful from the hoof print of his horse, and I threw it into the calf.

﴿Thus my soul prompted me﴾ to take that handful and then throw it, then what happened happened.

Moosā said to him: ﴿Begone then!﴾ that is, go far away from me and keep your distance

﴿Begone then! Verily, your [punishment] in this life will be that you will say: Touch me not﴾ that is, the punishment in this life is that no one will come near you and no one will touch you; even if someone wants to come near you, you will say to him: Do not touch me and do not come near me – as a punishment for what you did, for you touched something that no one else touched, and you did something that no one else did.

﴿And there awaits an appointed time for your reckoning that you cannot miss﴾ and you will be requited for your deeds, both good and bad.

﴿Now look at your god, that you were worshipping﴾ namely the calf

﴿We will surely burn it then scatter its remains in the sea﴾. Moosā did that, and if it had been a god it would have protected itself from the one who intended to harm it and wanted to destroy it. The hearts of the Israelites had been filled with love for the calf, so Moosā (موسى) wanted to destroy it as they were looking on, in such a way that it could not be restored, by burning it, crushing it and scattering its remains in the sea, so as to remove love for it from their hearts, just as the thing itself was to be removed; moreover, leaving it alone would

have been a trial and temptation, because of the strong inclination towards falsehood in people's hearts and minds.

Once it had become clear to them that it was false, he then told them Who alone is deserving of worship with no partner or associate, as he said:



﴿ إِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَسِعَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴾ (سورة طه: ٩٨)

20:98. Your only god is Allah, besides Whom there is no other god; He encompasses all things in His knowledge.

That is, there is none deserving of worship except Him, so there should be no devotion, love, hope or fear except for Him, and none is to be called upon except Him, because He is the perfect One Who is possessed of the most beautiful names and sublime attributes, Whose knowledge encompasses all things; there is no blessing that comes to people but it is from Him, and no one wards off harm except Him. So there is no god but He and none deserving of worship but He.



﴿ كَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ وَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ مِنْ لَدُنَّا ذِكْرًا مَن أَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَحْمِلُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وِزْرًا ﴾ ﴿ ١٠٠ ﴾ خَلِيدِينَ فِيهِ وَسَاءَ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حِمْلًا ﴿ ١٠١ ﴾

(سورة طه: ٩٩-١٠١)

20:99. Thus We recount to you [O Muhammad] some of the stories of previous nations; indeed We have given you from Us a Reminder [the Qur'an].

20:100. Whoever turns away from it will surely bear a heavy burden [of sin] on the Day of Resurrection,



20:101. abiding therein [in the punishment for that sin] forever. What a miserable burden it will be for them on the Day of Resurrection,

Here Allah (ﷻ) reminds His Prophet (ﷺ) of His blessing, as He told him of the stories of previous nations and those who had come before him, such as this great story and what it contains of rulings and other things, which none of the People of the Book deny. You (O Muhammad [ﷺ]) did not study the stories of previous nations, and you did not learn from those who have knowledge thereof, so the fact that you narrate their stories truly and correctly is proof that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ) and what you have brought is true.

Hence Allah says: ﴿indeed We have given you from Us﴾ that is, We have given you a precious gift from Us ﴿a Reminder﴾ namely this Holy Qur'an, which is a reminder of stories of the past and future, and a reminder that makes one reflect on what Allah (ﷻ) possesses of perfect names and attributes, through which one may be reminded of rulings, commands, prohibitions and requital.

This indicates that the Qur'an contains the best rulings and guidelines, of which common sense testifies to their beauty and perfection.

If the Qur'an is a reminder to the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Ummah, one should respond to it by accepting it willingly, surrendering to it, following it and venerating it, and by following its light that leads to the straight path, and by focusing on learning and teaching it.

As for the one who responds by turning away from it or, what is worse, by denying it, he is showing ingratitude for this blessing, and the one who does that is deserving of punishment. Hence Allah says: ﴿Whoever turns away from it﴾ and does not believe in it, or takes its commands and prohibitions lightly, or neglects to learn what he must learn of its meanings,

﴿will surely bear a heavy burden [of sin] on the Day of Resurrection﴾ because of which he turned away from the Qur'an, and doing so led him to disbelief and negligence.

﴿abiding therein [in the punishment for that sin] forever﴾ that is, they will abide in that burden of sin forever; the sin itself will turn into punishment, according to how small or great it is.

﴿What a miserable burden it will be for them on the Day of Resurrection﴾ that is, what a wretched burden it is that they carry and what a wretched punishment they will be punished with on the Day of Resurrection.

Then Allah goes on to mention the state of affairs on the Day of Resurrection and the horrors thereof:



﴿يَوْمَ يُفْعُ فِي الصُّورِ وَتَحْشُرُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ زُرْقًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ يَتَخَفَتُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا عَشْرًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذْ يَقُولُ أَمْثَلُهُمْ طَرِيقَةً إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا يَوْمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾﴾

(سورة طه: ١٠٢-١٠٤)

20:102. the day when the Trumpet will be blown; on that day the evildoers will be gathered together, their eyes blind.

20:103. They will whisper to one another: You stayed only for ten [days in the world].

20:104. We know best what they will say, but the most perceptive of them will say: You stayed only one day.

That is, when the Trumpet is blown and the people emerge from their graves, each according to his situation. So those who were pious and feared Allah will be gathered before the Most Gracious as an honoured delegation (cf. 19: 85), and the evildoers will be gathered together, their eyes blind. They will converse with one another,

whispering to one another about how brief their stay in this world was and how swiftly the hereafter has come. Some will say that they stayed only for ten days in this world, and others will say something else. Allah knows of their whispering and hears what they say.

﴿but the most perceptive of them﴾ that is, the one who is closest in his estimate to the facts

﴿will say: You stayed only one day﴾. What this signifies is great regret at how they wasted that short time and spent it careless and negligent, turning away from that which would have benefitted them and turning towards that which harmed them, and now requital has come and the warning of punishment will inevitably be fulfilled. So there is nothing left but regret and calls for doom and destruction.

This is like the passage in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah will say: How many years did you remain on earth? They will say: We remained there for a day, or part of a day. But ask those who keep count. Allah will say: You only remained there for a short while, if you had but known.﴾ (al-Mu'minoon 23: 112-114)



﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ، وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا نَنْفَعُ الشَّفِيعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ أِذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ، قَوْلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ، عِلْمًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَعَنْتِ الْأَوْجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقِيُومِ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَافُ ظُلْمًا وَلَا هَضْمًا ﴿١١٢﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٠٥-١١٢)

20:105. They ask you [O Muhammad] about the mountains. Say: My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust,

20:106. and He will leave the earth as a smooth, levelled plain,

- 20:107. In which you will see no depression or elevation.
- 20:108. On that day, they will follow the caller, without any deviation. All voices will be stilled before the Most Gracious, and you will not hear anything but a faint sound.
- 20:109. On that day, no intercession will be of any benefit except from one to whom the Most Gracious has given permission and with whose word He is pleased.
- 20:110. He knows what was before them and what will be after them, but they do not encompass it with their knowledge.
- 20:111. All faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining, and the one who carries a burden of wrongdoing will surely be lost and doomed.
- 20:112. But whoever does righteous deeds and is a believer need have no fear of being wronged or deprived [of his just recompense].

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and what will occur then of earthquakes and upheaval.

﴿They ask you [O Muhammad] about the mountains﴾ that is, what will happen to them on the Day of Resurrection, and will they remain as they are or not?

﴿Say: My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust﴾ that is, He will remove them from their places and they will become like carded wool, or like sand. Then He will crush them and make them scattered dust, so they will diminish and vanish. He will make them level with the earth, and He will make the earth a smooth levelled plain, which will be so flat that the onlooker will see no depression or elevation, no valleys or high ground. The earth will be made smooth and flat, and will be expanded to accommodate all creatures. Allah will spread it out like a leather mat, so they will all be standing in one place, they will all be able to hear the caller and they will all be seen at one time. Hence Allah says:

﴿On that day, they will follow the caller﴾ that is when they are resurrected and rise from their graves. The caller will call them to attend and gather in the gathering place. So they will follow him, hastening towards him, not turning away from him and not deviating to the right or left.

﴿without any deviation﴾ that is, they will not deviate from his call; rather the caller will call all the people and make them all hear, so they will all come to the place of standing with their voices stilled before the Most Gracious.

﴿and you will not hear anything but a faint sound﴾ that is, the sound of their footsteps or the sound of whispering which is moving the lips only. They will be overwhelmed by fear, quiet and attentive, awaiting the judgement of the Most Gracious, utterly humbled. In that great place of standing, you will see rich and poor, men and women, free and slave, kings and commoners, silent and attentive, their gazes lowered, their necks bent in submission, kneeling in humility, not knowing what the fate of each will be or what will be done to him. Each person will be preoccupied with himself and his own situation, and he will be heedless of his father, brother, friends and loved ones. ﴿Every one of them, on that day, will have too many concerns of his own to care about anyone else.﴾ ('Abasa 80: 37)

At that time the Just Judge will pass judgement on them and will requite the doer of good for his good deeds and the doer of evil by depriving him of reward.

The hope that we have in the generous Lord, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful, is that He will show people grace, kindness, pardon and forgiveness such as cannot be described or imagined.

At that time all people will hope for His mercy because of what they see, but those who believed in Him and His Messengers will be singled out for mercy. If it is asked: on what basis do you have this hope? Or if you wish, you may say: how do you know what is

mentioned above? Our response is: it is because of what we know about His mercy prevailing over His wrath, and what we know of His vast generosity which encompasses all of creation, and because of what we see in ourselves and others of abundant blessings in this realm, and especially what we know about His mercy on the Day of Resurrection, for Allah says: «All voices will be stilled before the Most Gracious» (20: 108) and «except from one to whom the Most Gracious has given permission», and He says elsewhere:

«On that day true dominion will belong to the Most Gracious...»  
(*al-Furqân* 25: 26)

Moreover, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah has one hundred parts of mercy, and He sent down to His slaves one part thereof, by virtue of which they show mercy and compassion to one another, and even the animal lifts its foot for fear of stepping on its offspring, because of the mercy instilled in its heart. Then when the Day of Resurrection comes, this part of mercy will be put back together with the other ninety-nine parts of mercy, whereby mercy will be shown to all people.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

– and he said:

«Allah is more merciful towards His slaves than a mother towards her child.» (Muslim)

So say whatever you wish about His mercy; it is more than what you say. Imagine whatever you wish; it is far above that. So glory be to the One Who showed mercy in His justice and punishment, just as He showed mercy in His grace, kindness and reward.

Exalted be the One Whose mercy encompasses all things, Whose generosity encompasses all living beings. Glorified be the One Who has no need of His slaves and is merciful towards them, whilst they are in need of Him constantly, in all their affairs, so they cannot do without Him even for the blink of an eye.

﴿On that day, no intercession will be of any benefit except from one to whom the Most Gracious has given permission and with whose word He is pleased﴾ that is, no one among humankind can intercede with Him unless He has given permission for him to intercede, and He does not give permission to anyone except one with whose word – that is, his intercession – He is pleased, among the Prophets, Messengers and His slaves who are close to Him, for those with whose words and deeds He is pleased, namely the sincere believers. If any one of these conditions is not met, there is no way anyone can benefit from the intercession of anyone else.

In that place of standing, people will be divided into two groups, the first of which will be those who did wrong by disbelieving and committing evil deeds. These people will attain nothing but frustration, deprivation, the painful punishment in hell and the wrath of the Almighty Judge.

The second group is those who believed as enjoined and did righteous deeds, both obligatory and sunnah. They ﴿need have no fear of being wronged﴾ that is, of anything being added to their bad deeds ﴿or deprived﴾ that is, of anything being detracted from their good deeds. Rather their sins will be forgiven, they will be cleansed of their faults and the reward for their good deeds will be multiplied.

﴿...And if there is a good deed Allah will multiply it, and give an immense reward of His own.﴾ (an-Nisā' 4: 40)



﴿وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحَدِّثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا

(سورة طه: ١١٣) ﴿

20:113. Thus We have sent it down, the Qur'an in Arabic, and given all kinds of warnings in it, so that they may fear Allah or pay heed.

That is, thus We have sent down this Book, in the noble Arabic language which you understand and comprehend, and none of its wordings or meanings are hidden from you.

﴿and given all kinds of warnings in it﴾ that is, We have given many various kinds of warnings, sometimes by mentioning divine names that are indicative of justice and vengeance, sometimes by giving examples of the punishments of previous nations and instructing later nations to learn from them, sometimes by mentioning the consequences of sin and how it makes a person look bad, sometimes by mentioning the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and what it involves of events that cause distress and anxiety, sometimes by mentioning hell and what it contains of all types of punishment and suffering. All of that is out of mercy towards people, so that they may fear Allah and give up evil and sin that bring them harm.

﴿or pay heed﴾ and thus start doing acts of obedience and good deeds that will benefit them. The fact that it is Arabic and that it gives all kinds of warnings is the greatest reason and greatest motive to follow the path of piety and righteous deeds, for if it was not Arabic or did not give all kinds of warnings, it would not have that impact.



﴿فَنَعَلَى اللَّهِ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ  
 وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا﴾ (سورة طه: ١١٤)

20:114. So exalted be Allah, the True Sovereign. Do not hasten to repeat [the newly-revealed verses of] the Qur'an before its revelation to you is completed, and say: O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.

Having mentioned His decree concerning requital of His slaves and His decree concerning religious instructions that He revealed in His Book, which is a sign of His dominion, Allah (ﷻ) now says:



«So exalted be Allah» that is, He is most high and sublime, above having any defects or shortcomings.

«the True Sovereign» Whose attribute is dominion and all creatures are His subjects, for the decree of the Sovereign with regard to universal or religious decrees is inevitable and binding. His existence, dominion and perfection are true; attributes of perfection cannot rightfully be attributed to any but the Owner of Majesty, which includes the attribute of sovereignty. Even if created beings may possess some sort of sovereignty at some times, over some things, this is sovereignty that is limited, imperfect and temporary. As for the Lord, He never ceases to be the Sovereign, Ever-Living, Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining, and Majestic.

«Do not hasten to repeat [the newly-revealed verses of] the Qur'an before its revelation to you is completed» that is, do not hasten (O Muhammad ﷺ) to repeat the verses of the Qur'an whilst Jibreel is still reciting them to you; be patient until he has finished, and when he has finished, then recite it, for Allah has guaranteed that you will be able to memorise it and recite it, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«Do not move your tongue [O Prophet] in haste to repeat and memorize this revelation. Verily, it is incumbent upon Us to enable you to memorize it and enable you to recite it. So when We recite it [through Jibreel], follow its recitation attentively. Then it is incumbent upon Us to make its meanings clear.» (*al-Qiyâmah* 75: 16-19)

Because the Prophet's hastening to repeat the Revelation was indicative of his perfect love for knowledge and his eagerness to acquire it, Allah (ﷻ) instructed him to ask Him for more knowledge, for knowledge is good and to have a great deal of goodness is something that is required. It is from Allah, and the way to attain it is by striving, longing for knowledge, asking Allah for it, seeking His help and acknowledging one's need for Him at all times.

From this verse we learn the etiquette of receiving knowledge, and that the one who listens to knowledge must be patient and wait

until the teacher has finished speaking, because what he wants to say is interconnected. Then when he has finished, the one who has questions may ask him. He should not hasten to ask questions and interrupt the teacher when he is speaking, because that is a cause of being deprived of knowledge. At the same time, the one who is asked a question should try to understand what the questioner is asking and find out what he really wants to know before answering, because that will help him to give the right answer.



﴿وَلَقَدْ عَاهَدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلِ فَنَسَىٰ وَلَمْ يُخَذِّ لَهُ عَزْمًا﴾ (سورة طه: ١١٥)

20:115. Indeed We gave a command to Adam before, but he forgot, and We found him lacking in firm resolve.

That is, We instructed Adam and made a covenant with him so that he would adhere to it, and he did adhere to it, submit to it and comply with it, and he resolved to carry it out. Yet despite that, he forgot what he had been instructed to do and his strong resolve wavered. Therefore what happened to him happened. He became a lesson for his offspring, and their nature became like his. Adam forgot so his offspring forget; he did wrong so they do wrong. He could not adhere to what he firmly resolved to do, and they are the same. But he hastened to repent from his error, and he admitted and acknowledged it, so he was forgiven, and whoever does as his father (Adam) did will not go wrong.

Then Allah discusses in detail that which He spoke of in general terms:



﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَىٰ إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا

مَجْمُوعٍ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَى ﴿١١٨﴾ وَأَنْتَ لَا تَنْظُمُونَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَضْحَى ﴿١١٩﴾ فَوَسَّوَسَ إِلَيْهِ  
 الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَتَّكِدُمْ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلَى ﴿١٢٠﴾ فَأَكَلَا  
 مِنْهَا فَبَدَّتْ لُهُمَا سَوْءٌ تَهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَى آدَمُ رَبَّهُ  
 فَغَوَى ﴿١٢١﴾ ثُمَّ أَحْبَبَهُ رَبُّهُ، فَنَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَى ﴿١٢٢﴾ (سورة طه: ١١٦-١٢٢)

- 20:116. And [remember] when We said to the angels: Prostrate before Adam, and they [all] prostrated except Iblees; he refused.
- 20:117. We said: O Adam, verily this is an enemy to you and your wife; do not let him drive you both out of paradise, for then you will be put to toil.
- 20:118. [But] here [in paradise] it is granted to you that you will not go hungry or be naked,
- 20:119. Nor will you be thirsty here [in paradise] or suffer from the sun's heat.
- 20:120. Then Shayṭān whispered to him, saying: O Adam, shall I show you the tree of immortality and a dominion that will never decay?
- 20:121. So they both ate from the tree, then their private parts became visible to them, so they began to put together leaves from the garden to cover themselves. Thus Adam disobeyed his Lord, and fell into error.
- 20:122. Then his Lord brought him close, accepted his repentance, and guided him.

That is, after He had finished creating Adam with His Hand, and after He had taught him the names of all things and favoured and honoured him, He commended the angels to prostrate to him by way of honour and respect, and they hastened to prostrate in obedience to the command. But among them was Iblees, who was too arrogant to obey the command of his Lord. He refused to prostrate to Adam and he said:

﴿...I am better than he; You created me from fire and You created him from clay.﴾ (al-A'râf 7: 12)

At that point his extreme animosity towards Adam and his wife became clear, because he was an enemy to Allah. He also showed his envy, which was the reason for his animosity. So Allah warned Adam and his wife against him, saying: ﴿do not let him drive you both out of paradise, for then you will be put to toil﴾ if you are driven out of it. For in it you have readily available provision and a life of ease.

﴿[But] here [in paradise] it is granted to you that you will not go hungry or be naked, nor will you be thirsty here [in paradise] or suffer from the sun's heat﴾. Thus he was guaranteed a perpetual supply of food, drink, clothing and water, with no toil or exhaustion, but He forbade him to eat from a particular tree, and said:

﴿...but do not approach this tree, or else you will both become transgressors.﴾ (al-A'râf 7: 19)

But Shayṭân kept on inciting them and making the idea of eating from that tree fair-seeming to them, saying:

﴿O Adam, shall I show you the tree of immortality﴾ that is, a tree which whoever eats from it will live forever in paradise.

﴿and a dominion that will never decay﴾ that is, it will never end, if you eat from it. He approached him as a sincere adviser, using gentle words, and Adam was deceived by him. They both ate from the tree, then they fell into despair; their clothes fell from them and their sin became apparent to them. The private parts of each of them became visible to the other, after they had been covered, and they began to put together leaves from the garden to cover themselves. They felt very embarrassed before Allah, the extent of which only Allah knows.

﴿Thus Adam disobeyed his Lord, and fell into error﴾, but they both hastened to repent and turn back to Allah. They both said:

﴿...Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be among the losers.﴾ (al-A'râf 7: 23)

So his Lord brought him close, chose him and enabled him to repent.

﴿accepted his repentance, and guided him﴾. After repenting, he was better than he had been before, so this scheme of his enemy backfired and his plot failed. The blessing was perfected for Adam and his offspring, and it became obligatory for them to show gratitude for the blessing and acknowledge it, and to beware of this enemy who was always with them, watching out by night and day.

﴿O children of Adam, do not let Shayṭān deceive you, as he caused your parents to be expelled from the garden, stripping them of their garments and making their private parts visible to them. For he and his offspring see you from where you cannot see them. We have made the devils friends and allies of those who do not believe.﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 27)



﴿ قَالَ أَهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَأَمَّا يَا أَيُّدِكُمْ مَنِي هُدًى  
فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ  
مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ  
كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٥﴾ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَنتَ ءَايَتُنَا فَنَسِينَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ نُنْسِي ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ  
أَسْرَفَ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ۗ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشْدُّ وَأَبْقَى ﴿١٢٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ١٢٣-١٢٧)

20:123. Allah said: Go down from here, all of you, as enemies to one another. Then when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance will not go astray or suffer wretchedness.

20:124. But whoever turns away from My Reminder [the Qur'an] will have a miserable life, and on the Day of Resurrection We will raise him up blind.

20:125. He will say: O my Lord, why have You raised me up blind, when I was able to see before?

- 20:126. Allah will say: Just as Our revelations came to you and you disregarded them, so will you, on this day, be disregarded.
- 20:127. Thus do We requite him who transgresses beyond bounds and does not believe in the revelations of his Lord; and the punishment of the hereafter is more severe and more lasting.

Here Allah tells us that He instructed Adam and Iblees to go down to the earth, and He decreed that Adam and his offspring should take the Shaytān as their enemy and beware of him, and they should take precautions and be prepared to fight him. Allah told Adam that He would send down Books to them and would send Messengers to them to explain to them the straight path that leads to Him and to His paradise, and to warn them against this avowed enemy. Whenever guidance came to them, in the form of the Books and Messengers, whoever followed that guidance, did what he was instructed to do and refrained from what was prohibited, would not go astray in this world or the hereafter, and would not suffer wretchedness in either realm; rather he would be guided to the straight path in this world and the hereafter, and he would attain happiness and safety in the hereafter.

Elsewhere, Allah tells us that such a one will not fear or grieve, as He says:

﴿...whoever follows My guidance will have no fear, nor will they grieve.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 38)

Following true guidance means believing in the text and not rejecting it on the basis of doubts and specious arguments, and complying with the command and not going against it by following whims and desires.

﴿But whoever turns away from My Reminder﴾ that is, My Book by means of which he will be reminded of all sublime aims and goals; whoever turns away from it due to lack of interest in it or – what is worse – turns away from it because he rejects it and does not believe in it

﴿will have a miserable life﴾ that is, his requital will be that We will make his life difficult and hard; this cannot mean anything other than a life of pain and suffering.

The phrase ﴿miserable life﴾ has also been interpreted as referring to the punishment in the grave, for his grave will be narrow and he will be compressed in it and punished, as a requital for turning away from the reminder of his Lord. This is one of the verses that point to the punishment in the grave; the second such verse is:

﴿...If you [O Muhammad] could but see the evildoers when they are in the throes of death and the angels are stretching out their hands...﴾  
(*al-An'ām* 6: 93)

The third verse is:

﴿We will surely cause them to taste a lesser punishment before the greater punishment...﴾ (*as-Sajdah* 32: 21)

– and the fourth verse is that in which Allah said concerning the people of Pharaoh:

﴿The fire, which will be shown to them morning and afternoon...﴾  
(*Ghâfir* 40: 46)

What made some of the earlier scholars think that this refers to the punishment of the grave only and limit its interpretation to that only – and Allah knows best – is the end of the verse (20: 124) quoted above, at the end of which Allah mentions the punishment of the Day of Resurrection.

Some commentators thought that the phrase ﴿miserable life﴾ applies to this world, and what befalls the one who turns away from his Lord's reminder of distress, grief and pain, which is a kind of hastened portion of the punishment, as well as what will befall him in *al-barzakh* and in the hereafter, because the phrase ﴿miserable life﴾ is mentioned in general terms and is not specific, so it may refer to any stage.

﴿and on the Day of Resurrection We will raise him up blind﴾ in a real, physical sense, according to the correct view. This refers to the one who turns away from the reminder of his Lord. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...On the Day of Resurrection, We will gather them on their faces, blind, dumb and deaf...﴾ (*al-Isrâ' 17: 97*)

He (the one who is raised in such a manner) will say, by way of feeling humiliation, enquiring, expressing pain and complaining about his situation:

﴿O my Lord, why have You raised me up blind, when I was able to see before?﴾ – that is, in the previous world. What has brought me to this horrible situation?

﴿Allah will say: Just as Our revelations came to you and you disregarded them﴾ by turning away from them  
 ﴿so will you, on this day, be disregarded﴾ that is, you will be left to suffer the punishment.

So the answer will be that this is exactly what you did, for the requital is of the same nature as the deed. Just as you were blind to the remembrance of your Lord, and you turned away and forgot Him, and you forgot your share of the reminder, Allah will make you blind in the hereafter, and you will be resurrected to the fire, blind, deaf and dumb, for He will have turned away from you and forgotten you, leaving you to suffer the punishment.

﴿Thus﴾ with this punishment  
 ﴿do We requite him who transgresses beyond bounds﴾ by overstepping the mark and going beyond the bounds of what is permissible to commit what is prohibited  
 ﴿and does not believe in the revelations of his Lord﴾ that clearly point to the requirements of faith; Allah will not have wronged him and will not have punished him when he did not deserve it; rather the reason for that is his transgression and lack of faith.



«and the punishment of the hereafter is more severe» that is, many times more severe than punishment in this world «and more lasting» because it never ends, unlike worldly punishment, which does come to an end. So what is required is to fear Allah and beware of the punishment of the hereafter.



﴿أَفَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ  
لِّأُولِي النَّهْيِ﴾ (سورة طه: ١٢٨)

20:128. Has it not become clear to them how many nations We destroyed before them, in whose dwelling places they now walk about? Surely in that there are signs for people of sound intellect.

That is, has it not become clear to these disbelievers who turn away? They should be prompted to follow the path of guidance and to avoid the path of misguidance and wickedness, by the punishment that Allah sent down upon the disbelievers who came before them, of past nations and successive nations whose stories they know, and they tell one another about their stories, and they see with their own eyes the dwellings left behind by those people, such as the people of Hood, Ṣāliḥ, Looṭ and others. When they rejected Our Messengers and turned away from our Books, we sent upon them the painful punishment.

What guarantee do these people have that the same fate will not befall them as befell those people?

﴿Are your disbelievers [O Quraysh] better than those, or have you been promised immunity in the [earlier] scriptures? Or do they say: We are a united group, bound to prevail?﴾ (al-Qamar 54: 43-44)

The answer is none of these; these disbelievers are no better than those of the past, such that the punishment could be warded off from

them because of their goodness. In fact they are worse than them, because they disbelieved in the noblest of the Messengers and the best of the Books. They have not been granted any immunity in the scriptures or any covenant with Allah, and they are not as they say, that their large number and unity will benefit them and protect them, for they are too insignificant for that.

The destruction of previous nations for their sins is one of the means of guidance, because it is one of the signs that point to the truthfulness of the message brought to them by the Messengers and the falseness of the path they were following. But not everyone benefits from the signs; rather it is people of sound intellect and upright nature who benefit, as these characteristics restrain them from doing that which is not appropriate.



﴿وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ﴿١٢٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ آنَاءِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَىٰ ﴿١٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٢٩-١٣٠)

20:129. Were it not for a prior decree from your Lord, and a term [of respite] already fixed, [their punishment in this world] would have been inevitable.

20:130. So bear patiently what they say, and glorify and praise your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him during the night and during the day, so that you may be pleased [with the reward that Allah will give you].

These words offer consolation to the Messenger (ﷺ) and encourage him to be patient and not hasten to seek the destruction of the disbelievers who turn away, for their disbelief and rejection in

and of themselves form a good reason for punishment to inevitably befall them, because Allah has made the punishments to be the result and inevitable consequence of sin.

These people have done that which leads to the cause of punishment, but what delayed its coming was the decree of your Lord, which dictated that they should be given respite and the punishment should be delayed, and the duration of the respite had already been determined. It is the predetermined period of respite, in fulfilment of the divine decree, that caused the punishment to be delayed until the time for it came, so that they might pay heed to the command of Allah and repent, so that He might accept their repentance and lift the punishment, if it had not yet become inevitable.

Therefore Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to be patient in bearing their offensive words, and He instructed him to seek His help by glorifying and praising his Lord at these times of virtue, before sunrise and sunset, and during the day, and at some times of the night. (In other words,) perhaps if you do that, you will be content with what your Lord has given you of reward in this world and the hereafter, your heart will be reassured, you will find joy in worshipping your Lord, and you will be distracted thereby from thinking about their offensive words, and thus patience will become easy for you.



﴿وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ حَيْرٌ وَابْقَىٰ﴾ (سورة طه: ١٣١)

20:131. Do not look longingly at the good things We have given some among them to enjoy, the splendour of the life of this world, so that We may test them thereby. The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting.

That is, do not be unduly impressed and do not look repeatedly and admiringly at different aspects of this world and those who are enjoying them, such as delicious food and drink, fine clothing, beautiful houses, and adorned women, for all of that is merely the splendour of the life of this world. People who are deceived by this life are excited about these things and they dazzle the eyes of those who turn away from the truth, and the wrongdoers enjoy these things without paying any attention to the hereafter. But this world will soon come to an end, and everything in it will cease to be; it destroys those who love it and are infatuated by it, but they will regret it at a time when regret will be of no benefit, and they will realise, when the Resurrection comes, that what they were pursuing was no more than a trial and test from Allah, to find out who would make this world his sole concern and be deceived by it, and who would do good, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«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. And verily We will reduce all that is on it to a barren wasteland.» (*al-Kahf* 18: 7-8)

«The provision of your Lord» in this world of knowledge, faith, and righteous deeds, and in the hereafter of eternal bliss and a good life in closeness to the Most Gracious Lord, «is better» in essence and attributes than enjoyment in this life, «and more lasting» because it will never end; its food and shade will be perpetual, as Allah says elsewhere:

«But you [O humankind] prefer the life of this world, even though the hereafter is better and more lasting.» (*al-A'la* 87: 16-17)

This verse indicates that if an individual notices in himself any aspiration for the adornment of this world and finds himself interested in pursuing it, he should remind himself of what lies ahead of the provision of his Lord, and he should weigh up the two matters.



﴿وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَنْزِلُكَ الرِّزْقَ وَالْعِشْقَةَ لِلنَّقْوَى﴾

(سورة طه: ١٣٢) ﴿١٣٢﴾

20:132. Enjoin your family [and your people] to establish prayer and remain steadfast therein. We do not ask you for provision; rather it is We who provide for you. And the best outcome is for those who fear Allah.

That is, encourage and urge your family to establish prayer, both obligatory and supererogatory. Enjoining prayer also implicitly enjoins everything without which it cannot be done. Hence this is a command to teach them how to pray, teach them what could invalidate the prayer, and teach them how to pray properly.

﴿and remain steadfast therein﴾ that is, remain steadfast in performing the prayer in the proper manner, paying attention to its essential parts, etiquette and focus of mind. If anyone finds that difficult, he should force himself to do it and strive to achieve that, and he should be patient in so doing. If he performs his prayer in the manner enjoined, he will be more careful and observant with regard to other matters of his religion, but if he neglects it, he will be more careless with regard to other matters. Then Allah (ﷻ) guarantees provision to His Messenger (ﷺ), so he should not be distracted by thinking of it from carrying out the commands of his religion.

﴿rather it is We who provide for you﴾ that is, your provision is due from Us and We guarantee it, just as We guarantee the provision of all creatures, so how about one who complies with Our commands and focuses on remembering Us? The provision of Allah is guaranteed to all, both those who fear Him and others, so we should focus our attention on that which will bring eternal happiness, which is piety or fear of Allah (*taqwā*). Hence Allah says:

«And the best outcome» in this world and the hereafter  
 «is for those who fear Allah», which means doing what is enjoined  
 and refraining from what is prohibited. Whoever does that will have  
 the best outcome, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«...and the best outcome is for those who fear Allah.» (al-A'raf 7: 128)



﴿ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا يَا أَيُّهَا بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ؕ أَوْلَمْ تَأْتِهِمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مَّا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَوْ  
 أَنَّا أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنُنَبِّئَكَ  
 مِن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَنْزِلَ وَنُخْرِقَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ قُلْ كُلُّ مَتْرَبٍصٍ فَتَرَبِّصُوا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَن أَصْحَابُ  
 الصِّرَاطِ السَّوِيِّ وَمَنِ اهْتَدَى ﴿١٣٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ١٣٣-١٣٥)

- 20:133. They say: Why does he not bring us a sign from his Lord? Has there not come to them that which explains and confirms what was in the earlier scriptures [namely the Qur'an]?
- 20:134. If We had destroyed them with a punishment before this, they would have said: Our Lord, why did You not send to us a Messenger so that we could have followed Your revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced?
- 20:135. Say: Each of us is waiting; so wait, and you will come to know who is following the straight path and who is rightly guided.

Those who disbelieved in the Messenger (ﷺ) said: Why does he not bring us a sign from his Lord? What they meant was the signs that they themselves demanded. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

«They say: We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us; or you have a garden of date palms and vines, and you cause rivers to gush forth in their midst; 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. ﴿al-Isrâ' 17: 90-92﴾

This was obstinacy, stubbornness and wrongdoing on their part, for they and the Messenger (ﷺ) were all humans and slaves of Allah, so it was not appropriate for them to demand signs according to their own whims and desires; rather it is the One Who sends down the signs Who chooses them according to His wisdom, and that is Allah.

Because their words ﴿Why does he not bring us a sign from his Lord?﴾ implied that he had not brought them a sign to confirm his truthfulness, these words are to be regarded as a lie and fabrication, because he had indeed brought clear miracles and overwhelming signs, any one of which would be sufficient to achieve the purpose. Hence Allah says:

﴿Has there not come to them﴾, if they are sincere in what they say and are really seeking truth that is based on evidence, ﴿that which explains and confirms what was in the earlier scriptures?﴾ namely this Qur'an, which confirms that which was in the earlier scriptures, such as the Torah, Gospel and so on, with which it is in harmony, and it tells of what they told before, and they also offer testimony for the Qur'an and foretell of the Messenger (ﷺ). This is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book [Qur'an] which is recited to them? Verily, in that is mercy and a reminder for people who believe.﴾ (al-'Ankaboot 29: 51)

The signs benefit the believers, and increase them in faith and certainty; as for those who turn away from them and oppose them, they will not believe in them and will not benefit from them.

﴿Verily, those against whom the decree of your Lord is fulfilled will not believe, even if every sign were to come to them, until they see [for themselves] the painful punishment.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 96-97)

Rather the benefit in showing them Our signs is to establish the proof of Allah against them, lest they say when the punishment befalls them: «Our Lord, why did You not send to us a Messenger so that we could have followed Your revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced» by the punishment? For His Messenger did indeed come, bringing with him His signs and proof; so if you are as you claim, then believe in him.

Say, O Muhammad (ﷺ), to those who reject you and who say: wait for some misfortune to befall him

«Say: Each of us is waiting», so wait for my death, and I will wait for the punishment to befall you.

«Say: Are you waiting for anything to happen to us except one of the two good things [victory or martyrdom]? But we are waiting for Allah to afflict you with a punishment, either from Himself or at our hands...» (at-Tawbah 9: 52)

«so wait, and you will come to know who is following the straight path and who is rightly guided» in his attitude, me or you, because the one who has the right attitude is the winner and is rightly guided, and he will be saved and will triumph. But the one who diverts from that path will be a loser and a failure, and he will be punished.

Thus it is known that it is the Messenger (ﷺ) who is like that, and his enemies are something other than that. And Allah knows best.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat Tâ Hâ.

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.

