



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ
مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ
﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنِ
ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ
﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ
يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١-١١)

- 23:1. The believers have indeed attained true success,
23:2. Those who humble themselves in their prayers,
23:3. who turn away from all that is vain,
23:4. who are active in giving zakâh,
23:5. and who restrain their carnal desires,
23:6. except with their wives or any slave women they may own, for
then they are free of blame.

- 23:7. But whoever seeks anything beyond that, such are the transgressors.
- 23:8. Those who are faithful to their trusts and pledges,
- 23:9. and who are diligent in their prayers,
- 23:10. such will be the heirs
- 23:11. who will inherit paradise; they will abide therein forever.
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Here Allah praises and commends His believing slaves, highlighting their success and bliss, and the means by which they attain that. This implicitly urges us to acquire the same characteristics and encourages us to do so. So the individual should take stock of himself and others, measuring against these standards; thus he will know what he and others have of faith, and the level and extent of that faith.

«The believers have indeed attained true success» that is, they are victorious, blessed and successful, for they have attained everything that one may seek. Among the perfect attributes of the believers who believe in Allah and in the Messengers is the fact that they «humble themselves in their prayers».

Humble focus in prayer means presence of mind before Allah (ﷻ), bearing in mind how close He is. Thus the believer's heart is comforted, his mind is put at rest, his movements become still and he is not distracted, as he stands humbly before his Lord, focusing on everything that he says and does in his prayer, from beginning to end. Thus he dispels devilish whispers and bad thoughts. This is the essence and purpose of prayer, and this is what will be written down in the individual's record.

With regard to prayer in which there is no humility and focus of mind, even though it may be valid and rewardable, the reward for it will be commensurate with the person's level of focus and understanding of what he says.

«who turn away from all that is vain», which is words in which there is nothing good and no benefit. They turn away from it out of dislike for it, and so as to protect themselves and rise above it; if they pass by (people engaged in) idle talk, they pass by with dignity (25: 72). As they turn away from all that is vain, it is even more apt that they should turn away from that which is prohibited.

If a person can rein in his tongue and keep it under control – speaking only of that which is good – then he will be in control of all his affairs, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said to Mu'adh ibn Jabal (*raḍiya Allāhu 'anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him) when he gave him advice: «The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Shall I not tell you of the basis of all of that? I said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He took hold of his own tongue and said: Restrain this.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

One of the praiseworthy characteristics of the believers is that they restrain their tongues and refrain from vain talk and saying that which is prohibited.

«who are active in giving zakâh» that is, they give zakâh on their wealth of all types, thus purifying themselves by giving up bad attitudes and bad deeds. So they do well in worshipping the Creator and in focusing humbly in their prayer, and they do good to His creation by giving zakâh.

«and who restrain their carnal desires» and refrain from *zinâ* (unlawful sexual relationships). Part of restraining their carnal desires is avoiding anything that leads to that which is unlawful, such as looking, touching and so on. So they restrain their carnal desires and refrain from illicit relationships with anyone except «their wives or any slave women they may own, for then they are free of blame» if they have intimate relations with them, because Allah (ﷻ) has permitted that.

«But whoever seeks anything beyond that» that is, beyond the wife or the female slave

﴿such are the transgressors﴾ who have gone beyond what Allah has permitted to that which He has prohibited, and have the audacity to transgress the limits set by Allah.

The general meaning of this verse indicates that *mut'ah* marriage (temporary marriage) is prohibited, and the woman in such a marriage is not a wife in a true sense, with the intention of permanent marriage, nor is she a slave. *Tahleel* marriage²⁵ is prohibited for the same reason.

The words ﴿or any slave women they may own﴾ indicate that in order for it to be permissible to have intimate relations with a slave woman, it is stipulated that one should own her entirely. If a man has a part-share in ownership of a slave woman, it is not permissible to have intimate relations with her, because he does not fully own her; rather she belongs to him and to someone else. Just as it is not permissible for two husbands to share a free woman, it is not permissible for two masters to share a slave woman.

﴿Those who are faithful to their trusts and pledges﴾ that is, they are faithful to them, knowing the terms thereof and adhering to them, and they are keen to fulfil the conditions and implement what they promised. This is general in meaning and applies to all trusts that have to do with the rights of Allah and those that have to do with the rights of people. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it. But man undertook it...﴾ (*al-Ahzāb* 33: 72)

²⁵ *Tahleel* marriage: after a third *talāq*, a woman cannot go back to her husband unless she has married another man, in a genuine marriage, then been divorced by him:

﴿And if he divorces her [the third time], she will not be lawful for him again until she has married another husband...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 230)

Tahleel marriage is a marriage for the purpose of making her permissible for her first husband by marrying her, consummating the marriage, and then divorcing her; it is haram, and it does not make the woman permissible for her first husband.

Everything that Allah has enjoined upon His slave is a trust, and the slave must adhere to it by complying with it fully. This also includes things that are entrusted to people, such as property or wealth, secrets and so on. The individual must pay attention to both and must fulfil both types of trusts.

﴿Verily, Allah commands you to render back trusts to those to whom they are due...﴾ (*an-Nisā' 4: 58*)

The same applies to pledges, including pledges between people and their Lord, and pledges that people make amongst themselves. They must be faithful to them and fulfil them, and it is forbidden to be heedless and negligent with regard to them.

﴿and who are diligent in their prayers﴾ that is, they persist in offering them on time, in the prescribed manner, fulfilling their conditions and doing all the essential parts thereof. Allah praises them for their humble focus and diligence in prayer, because they cannot be in good shape unless they do both. Whoever persists in praying without humbling themselves, or humbles himself without being diligent in prayer, is falling short.

﴿such﴾ that is, those who are described in these terms ﴿will be the heirs who will inherit paradise﴾. The word translated here as ﴿paradise﴾ (*firdaws*) refers to the highest part of paradise, the middle and best of it, because they attained the best of praiseworthy attributes. Or it may be that what is meant is all of paradise, so that this includes all the believers of varying levels, each according to his situation.

﴿they will abide therein forever﴾ and will never leave it, nor will they want to move from it, because it contains the most perfect, best and most complete delights, without anything to spoil their joy or undermine their happiness.



﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۗ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيْتُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٦﴾﴾ (سورة

المؤمنون: ١٢-١٦)

- 23:12. Indeed We created man from the finest extract of clay,
 23:13. Then We placed him as a drop of semen in a safe repository.²⁶
 23:14. Then We made the drop of semen into a clinging clot, then We made the clinging clot into a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh into bones, and clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation.²⁷ So blessed be Allah, the best of creators.
 23:15. Then after that you will surely die,
 23:16. then on the Day of Resurrection you will surely be raised up.

In this passage Allah mentions the stages through which the human being passes, from the beginning of his creation until his ultimate destiny. He mentions the initial creation of the father of humankind, Adam (ﷺ), and tells us that He created him ﴿from the finest extract of clay﴾ that is, the clay was extracted and taken from all over the earth, hence Adam's descendants vary according to what type of land they were collected from. Therefore some of them are good, some

²⁶ v. 12 refers to the creation of Adam (ﷺ) and the following verse refers to the creation of his offspring.

²⁷ This may refer to when the soul is breathed into the developing foetus, or it may refer to the different stages of human development throughout life. (al-Baghawi)

are bad, and some are somewhere in between; some are easy-going, some are harsh and some are somewhere in between.

«Then We placed him» that is, the human being «as a drop of semen» proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs (86: 7), which then settles «in a safe repository», namely the uterus, where it is protected from harm.

«Then We made the drop of semen» that had settled (in the uterus) before that «into a clinging clot» that is, red blood, forty days after the drop of semen was placed in the safe repository.

«then We made the clinging clot» after forty days «into a lump of flesh» that is, a small piece of flesh, the size of a mouthful of food.

«then We made the lump of flesh» which was soft «into bones» which were hard.

«and clothed the bones with flesh» that is, We made the flesh like a cover for the bones, as We made the bones a framework for the flesh. That is in the third forty-day period.

«and then We brought it forth as another creation» into which the soul is breathed, so it goes from being inanimate to being an animate, living being.

«So blessed be Allah» that is, exalted and glorified be He, the One Who does abundant good, «the best of creators»:

«Who created all things well and initiated the creation of man from clay, then He made his offspring from the extract of an insignificant fluid. Then He fashioned him and breathed into him the soul which He created for him. He gave you hearing, sight and intellect; little it is that you give thanks.» (as-Sajdah 32: 7-9)

He has created all things well and man is one of the best of His creations; indeed he is the best of all, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily We have created man in the best of conditions.» (at-Teen 95: 4)

Hence the elite of humankind are the best and most perfect of creatures.

«Then after that», after being created and after your souls have been breathed into you, «you will surely die» in one of your stages of your journey.

«then on the Day of Resurrection you will surely be raised up», then you will be requited for your deeds, both good and bad. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Does man think that he will be left unchecked? Was he not a drop of semen emitted, then he became a clinging clot, then [Allah] formed him and fashioned him, and made from him two genders, male and female? Is not He Who has done that able to bring the dead to life?»
(*al-Qiyāmah* 75: 36-40)



﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَائِقٍ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَتْهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَى ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَأَنْشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَّكُمْ فِيهَا فَاوَكُةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ بِالذَّهْنِ وَصَبِغٍ لِّلْأَكْلِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١٧-٢٠)

- 23:17. We have created above you seven heavens [one over the other], and We have never been negligent towards Our creation.
- 23:18. We send down water from the sky in due measure and We cause it to remain on the earth; and verily, We are able to take it away.
- 23:19. And by means of this water We bring forth for you gardens of date palms and vines, in which you have many fruits and from them you eat.
- 23:20. And We bring forth a tree [the olive] which grows on Mount Sinai, producing oil and a condiment for all to eat.

Having mentioned the creation of man, Allah (ﷻ) now tells us of his place of dwelling and how plentiful are the blessings of all kinds that He bestows:

﴿We have created above you﴾ as a canopy for the earth and serving the interests of people

﴿seven heavens﴾ that is, seven heavens, one above the other, adorned with the stars, the sun and the moon. And He has placed therein that which serves people's interests.

﴿and We have never been negligent towards Our creation﴾ – just as Our creation encompasses all created beings, Our knowledge also encompasses all that We have created. So We do not neglect any created being or forget it; We do not create anything and then forsake it. We do not neglect the heaven so that it falls upon the earth, and We do not forget the tiniest creature in the depths of the sea or the remotest wilderness. There is no creature but We send its provision to it.

﴿There is no creature that lives on the earth but its sustenance is guaranteed by Allah. He knows its dwelling place and its resting place...﴾ (Hood 11: 6)

Allah (ﷻ) often mentions together His act of creation and His Knowledge, as in the verses in which He says:

﴿How could He Who created not know His own creation, when He alone is the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware?﴾ (al-Mulk 67: 14)

﴿...He is the Creator of all, the All-Knowing.﴾ (Ya Seen 36: 81)

That is because the creation of all created things is the strongest rational evidence for the knowledge and wisdom of their Creator.

﴿We send down water from the sky in due measure﴾ as provision for you and your livestock, as much as will suffice you. He does not give less, so that it is not enough for the earth and trees, for that would not serve the purpose. And He does not make it excessive so that it could destroy people's houses, and plants and trees would not

be able to survive. Rather He sends it down when it is needed, then He diverts it when it could cause harm if it persisted.

﴿and We cause it to remain on the earth﴾ that is, We send it down to the earth, then it settles there and by the power of the One Who sent it down, all kinds of plants are brought forth. He also causes it to settle and be stored in the ground, readily available; it does not go so deep that no one could reach it.

﴿and verily, We are able to take it away﴾ either by not sending it down in the first place, or by sending it down then letting it disappear into the ground so that not one could reach it, or by causing it not to achieve the purpose intended by it. This is Allah's warning to His slaves that they should show gratitude to Him for His blessings, and they should think, if they were to lose these blessings, what harm would result from that. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: What do you think, if your water were to disappear under the ground, then who could bring you accessible water?﴾ (al-Mulk 67: 30)

﴿And by means of this water We bring forth for you gardens of date palms and vines﴾. Allah (ﷻ) singles out these two plants for mention, even though other kinds of plants also grow by means of it, because of their virtue and benefits that make them superior to other plants. Hence He mentions others in general terms: ﴿in which﴾ that is, in those gardens ﴿you have many fruits and from them you eat﴾, such as figs, citrons, pomegranates, apples, and so on.

﴿And We bring forth a tree [the olive] which grows on Mount Sinai﴾ this refers to the olive tree. It is singled out for mention because the place where it grows is in greater Syria, and because of its benefits, some of which He mentions here: ﴿producing oil and a condiment for all to eat﴾ that is, it produces oil which is used for lamps and as a condiment that is eaten. And it has other benefits also.



﴿وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً لِّتُنذِرُوا بِطَوْبِهَا وَلِكُمْفِيهَا مَنفَعٌ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٢١-٢٢)

23:21. And verily in livestock animals too there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that [milk] which is in their bellies; you have many other benefits from them, and of their [meat] you eat.

23:22. And on them, and on ships, you are carried.

That is, among other blessings that He has bestowed upon you, He has made to be of service to you the livestock animals, namely camels, cattle and sheep. In them there is a lesson for those who reflect, and there are benefits for those who avail themselves thereof.

﴿We give you to drink of that [milk] which is in their bellies﴾, which is produced alongside faeces and blood: pure milk, palatable to those who drink it (16: 66).

﴿you have many other benefits from them﴾, namely their wool and hair; He has given you dwellings made from the skins of livestock, which you find light to handle when you travel and when you halt (16: 80)

﴿and of their [meat] you eat﴾, which is the best food, their meat and fat.

﴿And on them, and on ships, you are carried﴾ that is, He has made them like ships for you on land, on which you and your goods are carried to lands that you could not (otherwise) reach without great hardship (16: 7). And He has also made for you ships which carry you and your goods, whether few or many, across the sea.

The One Who bestowed these blessings and favours of all kinds, and has been very generous towards you, is the One Who deserves

all gratitude and all praise, and deserves that you should strive hard to worship Him and not use His blessings to disobey Him.



﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَتَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَفْضَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ فَمَا يُتَّبِعُونَ بِهِ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ اصْنَعْ الْفُلَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا ووَحِينَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تَخْطِئْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُّغْرَقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنْتَ وَمَعَكَ عَلَى الْفُلِ فَقُلِ السَّلَامَةُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَنَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقُلْ رَبِّ انزِلْنِي مُنزلاً مُّبَارَكاً وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنزِلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ وَإِن كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٢٣-٣٠)

- 23:23. Indeed We sent Nooh to his people. He said: O my people, worship Allah; you have no god but He. Will you not then fear Him?
- 23:24. But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved said: This one is no more than a man like yourselves who wants to make himself superior to you. If Allah had so willed, He could have sent down angels [as messengers]. We have never heard of such a thing from our forefathers.
- 23:25. He is no more than a man in whom there is madness. So bear with him for a while.
- 23:26. Nooh said: My Lord, help me, for they have rejected me.
- 23:27. So We inspired him: Build the ark under Our supervision and in accordance with Our inspiration. Then, when Our command comes and water gushes up out of the earth, let on board a pair

- from every species, and your family, except those against whom the sentence has already been passed. And do not plead with Me concerning those who did wrong, for they will surely be drowned.
- 23:28. Once you and those who are with you are settled on board the ark, say: Praise be to Allah, Who has saved us from the people who are given to wrongdoing.
- 23:29. And say: My Lord, cause me to land at a blessed landing-place, for You are the Best of those who bring to land.
- 23:30. Surely in that there are signs; for, verily, We always put [man] to the test.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the message of His slave and Messenger Nooh (ﷺ), who was the first Messenger whom He sent to the people of this earth. He sent him to his people, who used to worship idols, and he instructed them to worship Allah alone, saying:

﴿O my people, worship Allah﴾ that is, devote your worship to Him alone, because worship is not valid unless it is sincerely devoted to Him alone.

﴿you have no god but He﴾ this is a declaration of the invalidity of the divinity of anything other than Allah, and is an affirmation of the divinity of Allah (ﷻ), for He alone is the Creator and Provider, Who is perfect in all ways; all others are the opposite of that.

﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ And give up what you are doing of worshipping idols and statues that were made in the image of righteous people, and they worshipped them alongside Allah.

He continued doing that, calling them in private and in public, night and day, for one thousand less fifty years, but they only increased in stubbornness and aversion.

﴿But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved﴾ that is, the nobles and leaders

﴿said﴾ by way of objecting to their Prophet Nooh (ﷺ) and warning others against following him:

﴿This one is no more than a man like yourselves who wants to make himself superior to you﴾ that is, he is only a human being like you; his aim in claiming prophethood is to prove his superiority over you, so that he will be followed; otherwise, what makes him superior to you when he is just like you? This objection continued to be raised among those who reject the Messengers.

But Allah gave a sufficient response on the lips of His Messengers, as in the passage in which He says:

﴿...They said: You are but human beings like ourselves! You want to turn us away from that which our forefathers used to worship; then bring us some clear proof. Their Messengers said to them: Indeed, we are but human beings like yourselves, but Allah bestows His favour upon whomever He wills of His slaves...﴾ (*Ibraheem 14: 10-11*)

They stated that this was the blessing and favour of Allah, and they had no right to put restrictions on Allah or object to Him for bestowing His favour on them.

In this case, the people of Nooh said: ﴿If Allah had so willed, He could have sent down angels [as messengers]﴾. They used the concept of the divine will to raise objections on a false basis. Although Allah could have sent down angels as messengers if He had so willed, He is Most Wise, Most Merciful, and His wisdom and mercy dictate that the Messenger should be human, because humans cannot be directly addressed by angels, and an angel could only have appeared to them in the form of a man, in which case they would have become confused and raised the same objections again.

﴿We have never heard of such a thing﴾ namely the sending of a Messenger ﴿from our forefathers﴾. What proof is there in the fact that they never heard of the sending of a Messenger to their forefathers? For they do not have full knowledge of what happened in the past, so they should not make that ignorance the basis of their argument. Even

if we assume that no Messenger was sent to their forefathers, either their forefathers were guided, so there was no need for a Messenger at that time, or they were not guided, so let them praise their Lord and give thanks to Him for singling them out for a blessing that did not come to their forefathers, and they were never aware of it. They should not let the fact that a blessing did not reach others be a cause of ingratitude for a favour bestowed upon them.

﴿He is no more than a man in whom there is madness. So bear with him﴾ and wait ﴿for a while﴾, until death comes to him.

The arguments they gave to justify their rejection of their Prophet are indicative of their extreme ingratitude and stubbornness, and demonstrate that they were extremely ignorant and misguided. These specious arguments do not justify their rejection in any way, as we have mentioned; rather they were self-contradictory and flimsy in and of themselves.

By saying ﴿This one is no more than a man like yourselves who wants to make himself superior to you﴾ (23: 24), they affirmed that he was a man of rational thinking who was scheming against them in order to put himself above them and become their leader, and – moreover – there was a need to warn against him so that no one would be deceived by him.

How could that be in harmony with their other argument against him, when they said: ﴿He is no more than a man in whom there is madness﴾ (23: 25)? Can this be anything other than the specious argument of one who is misguided and confused? All he is trying to do is find any justification for his aversion to the truth, without knowing what he is talking about! But Allah insists on exposing and disgracing those who oppose Him and His Messengers.

When Nooḥ realised that his call was only increasing them in aversion, he said: ﴿My Lord, help me, for they have rejected me﴾. He asked his Lord for help against them out of anger for the sake of

Allah, as they neglected His command and rejected His Messenger. Nooh said:

﴿...My Lord, do not leave on earth a single living soul from among the disbelievers. For if You leave them, they will mislead Your slaves and will beget none but wicked disbelievers.﴾ (Nooh 71: 26-27)

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Indeed, Nooh called upon Us, and how excellent was Our response!﴾ (as-Saffat 37: 75)

﴿So We inspired him﴾ when We answered him, telling him of a means to save himself before the punishment came.

﴿Build the ark﴾ that is, the ship ﴿under Our supervision and in accordance with Our inspiration﴾ that is, in accordance with Our instructions to you and with Our help, for you are under Our care and supervision, as We see you and hear you.

﴿Then, when Our command comes﴾ to send the flood with which they were to be punished,

﴿and water gushes up out of the earth﴾ that is, when springs burst forth from the earth

﴿let on board a pair from every species﴾ that is, take on board the ark a male and female of every animal, so as to maintain the offspring of all animals that were created on earth by divine wisdom.

﴿and your family﴾ that is, take them on board too,

﴿except those against whom the sentence has already been passed﴾, such as his son.

﴿And do not plead with Me concerning those who did wrong﴾ that is, do not pray to Me to save them, for it has already been willed and decreed that they will be drowned.

﴿Once you and those who are with you are settled on board the ark﴾ that is, when you have embarked and it has sailed with you on the waves, then praise Allah for saving you and keeping you safe.

﴿say: Praise be to Allah, Who has saved us from the people who are given to wrongdoing﴾. Allah taught Nooh and those who were with

him to say these words in thanksgiving to Him, praising Him for saving them from the evildoers and from following their path and sharing their punishment.

﴿And say: My Lord, cause me to land at a blessed landing-place, for You are the Best of those who bring to land﴾ that is, there is another blessing that is yet to come, so pray to Allah for it, namely that Allah should make it easy for you to land at a blessed landing-place. And Allah answered his supplication, as He tells us elsewhere:

﴿...and the decree was fulfilled. The ark came to rest on Mount al-Judi and it was said: Away with the wicked people!... It was said: O Nooh, disembark with safety granted by Us, and with blessings upon you and some of the communities [who will spring from] those who are with you...﴾ (Hood 11: 44-48)

﴿Surely in that﴾ that is, in this story ﴿there are signs﴾ which indicate that Allah alone is deserving of worship, and that His Messenger Nooh was truthful and his people were liars. This is indicative of Allah's mercy towards His slaves, as He carried them in the loins of their father Nooh, in the ark, when He drowned the people of the earth.

The ark is also one of the signs of Allah. He tells us elsewhere:

﴿Verily, We have left it as a sign; is there then any who will pay heed?﴾ (al-Qamar 54: 15)

Hence signs are mentioned in the plural, because this refers to a number of signs and indications, ﴿for, verily, We always put [man] to the test﴾.



﴿قُلْ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ أَفَلَا تَنْقُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا الْآخِرَةَ وَأَتْرَفْنَاهُمْ

فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ
 ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَخَسِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَعِدُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ لِمَا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا
 الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا وَمَا
 نَحْنُ لَهُ بِمُعْتَوِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾
 فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الصَّبْحَةَ بِالحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غَسَاءً فَبَعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

(سورة المؤمنون: ٣١-٤١)

- 23:31. Then We raised up after them another nation.
- 23:32. We sent to them a Messenger from among themselves, [who said]: O my people, worship Allah; you have no god but He. Will you not then fear Him?
- 23:33. But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved and denied the meeting in the hereafter, and upon whom We had conferred ease and comfort in the life of this world, said: This one is no more than a man like yourselves who eats what you eat, and drinks what you drink.
- 23:34. If you obey a man like yourselves, then indeed you will be losers.
- 23:35. Does he promise you that when you have died and become dust and bones, you will be brought forth [alive, from your graves]?
- 23:36. Far-fetched, utterly far-fetched is what you are promised.
- 23:37. There is nothing beyond our life in this world; we die and we live,²⁸ and we will not be resurrected.
- 23:38. He is no more than a man who fabricated lies against Allah; we will never believe in him.
- 23:39. [Their Prophet] said: My Lord, help me, for they have rejected me.

²⁸ That is, one generation dies and is succeeded by another. (*al-Kash-shāf*)

23:40. Allah said: Before long they will surely come to regret it.

23:41. So the blast overtook them in all justice and We made them like refuse swept away by a torrent. So away with the wicked people!

Having mentioned Nūḥ and his people, and how He destroyed them, Allah now says:

﴿Then We raised up after them another nation﴾. What appears to be the case is that they were Thamood, the people of Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ), because this story is similar to theirs.

﴿We sent to them a Messenger from among themselves﴾, one of their own people whose lineage, position and honesty they knew well, so that it would be easier for them to follow him, if he was one of them, and they would be less likely to resent him. He proclaimed the same message to them as all the Messengers proclaimed to their nations, calling them to ﴿worship Allah; you have no god but He﴾. All the Messengers brought this message, and it is the first thing to which they called their nations, instructing them to worship Allah and telling them that He alone is deserving of that, and forbidding them to worship anything other than Him, and telling them that doing so is wrong and invalid. Hence he (the Messenger who was sent to that nation) said: ﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ That is, fear your Lord and avoid these images and idols.

﴿But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved and denied the meeting in the hereafter, and upon whom We had conferred ease and comfort in the life of this world﴾ that is, the leaders, who combined disbelief and stubbornness with denial of the resurrection and requital, and whose life of ease in this world had made them arrogant, said, in opposition to their Prophet, rejecting his message and warning others against him:

﴿This one is no more than a man like yourselves﴾ that is, of the same type as you

«who eats what you eat, and drinks what you drink»), so what makes him superior to you? Why was an angel not sent who does not eat or drink?

«If you obey a man like yourselves, then indeed you will be losers» that is, if you follow him and make him your leader, when he is just like you, then you will prove that you are people who have no intelligence and you will regret what you have done. This is very odd, because the losers who will feel true regret are those who do not follow him and do not submit to him, whilst the ignorant and most foolish are those who are too arrogant to submit to a human being whom Allah chose for His revelation and blessed with His message, but they sank to the level of worshipping trees and rocks.

This is like the verse in which Allah tells us that they said:

«They said: What! Are we to follow a single human from among ourselves? Then we would surely have fallen into error and madness! Has the message been sent to him alone, out of all of us? Nay, he is an insolent liar.» (*al-Qamar 54: 24-25*)

When they denied and rejected his message, they denied the teachings he brought about the resurrection after death and requital for deeds, and they said:

«Does he promise you that when you have died and become dust and bones, you will be brought forth [alive, from your graves]? Far-fetched, utterly far-fetched is what you are promised» that is, what he promises you of resurrection after you have disintegrated and become dust and bones is very unlikely. But their view was flawed, because they thought that, according to their own abilities, it was not possible (to be resurrected). They compared the ability of the Creator to their own ability; exalted be Allah far above that. They denied His power to bring the dead back to life, and they thought of Him as lacking in power, but they forgot that He created them the first time, and that for the One Who created them from nothing, recreating them after they have disintegrated is easier, although both are easy for Him. Why did

they not deny their initial creation, and why did they stubbornly reject that which is visible and tangible (their own existence)?

There is further proof, which is that the One Who gives life to an earth that is dead will revive the dead, for He has power over all things. Even more proof is to be found in His response to those who denied the resurrection, as He said:

﴿But they deem it strange that a warner has come to them from among themselves, and the disbelievers say: This is a strange thing indeed! What! When we have died and have turned into dust [will we be brought back to life]? That is farfetched indeed!﴾ (Qâf 50: 2- 3)

Allah said in response to them:

﴿Indeed, We know what the earth consumes of them; with Us is a record that preserves everything.﴾ (Qâf 50: 4)

﴿There is nothing beyond our life in this world; we die and we live﴾ that is, some people die and some people live and we will not be resurrected﴾. ﴿He is no more than a man in whom there is madness﴾ (23: 25), and that is why he brought what he brought, of proclaiming the oneness of Allah and affirming the resurrection. ﴿So bear with him for a while﴾ (23: 25) that is, forget about punishing him by killing him or otherwise, out of respect for him, and because he is insane and is not to be brought to task for what he says. In other words, according to their false claim, there is no reason to argue with him concerning the validity of what he has brought, because they already believed that it was false. Now the issue was whether they should punish him or not. According to their claim, their so-called mature thinking dictated that they should let him be and not punish him, even though they had good reason to do so (according to their claim). Is there any worse stubbornness and disbelief than this?

Because their disbelief was so firmly entrenched, and the warning was to no avail, their Prophet prayed against them and said: ﴿My

Lord, help me, for they have rejected me» that is, by destroying them and disgracing them in this world, before the hereafter. «Allah said», in response to his supplication: «Before long they will surely come to regret it».

«So the blast overtook them in all justice» – there was no injustice or unfairness; rather it was justified because of their wrongdoing. The blast overtook them and destroyed them all.

«and We made them like refuse swept away by a torrent» that is, like dry stubble and refuse swept away by a torrent, that is cast up on the sides of the wadis. Elsewhere Allah says:

«Verily, We sent against them a single blast, and they became like dry sticks...» (al-Qamar 54: 31)

«So away with the wicked people!» That is, in addition to their punishment, they will be cast far away, cursed and condemned by all people.

«Neither heaven nor earth wept for them, nor were they given respite.» (ad-Dukhan 44: 29)



﴿ ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجْلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَجِرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رَسُولَنَا تَتْرًا كُلَّ مَا جَاءَ أُمَّةٌ رَسُولَهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَأَتْبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ فَبِعَدَا لِقَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٤٢-٤٤)

23:42. Then We raised up after them other nations.

23:43. No nation can bring its appointed time forward, nor can they delay it.

23:44. Then We sent Our Messengers in succession; every time there came to a nation their Messenger, they rejected him. So We caused them to follow one another [to destruction], and made

them into cautionary tales. So away with the disbelieving people!

That is, then after these stubborn disbelievers We raised up other nations, each nation at a particular time, for an appointed term that could not be brought forward or put back. And We sent to them Messengers, one after another, so that they might believe and turn to Allah.

But disbelief and rejection of the message continued to be the customary attitude of the wicked, disbelieving and sinful nations. Every time its Messenger came to a nation, they rejected him, even though each Messenger brought signs that would be sufficient basis for humans to believe. In fact the very message and teachings of the Messengers prove that what they brought is true.

﴿So We caused them to follow one another [to destruction]﴾, and none of them remained; their dwellings stood empty after they were gone

﴿and made them into cautionary tales﴾ that those who came after them told about them, and they became lessons to the pious and punishment to the disbelievers; their disgrace was accompanied by their punishment.

﴿So away with the disbelieving people!﴾ How wretched and unfortunate they are and what great losers they are!



﴿ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَأَخَاهُ هَارُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ
فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا عٰلِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَقَالُوا أَنْوْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عٰبِدُونَ
﴿٤٧﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتٰبَ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٤٥-٤٩)

- 23:45. Then We sent Moosâ and his brother Hâroon with Our clear signs and compelling proofs
- 23:46. To Pharaoh and his chiefs. But they showed arrogance and were haughty people.
- 23:47. They said: Should we believe in two men like ourselves, when their people are subject to us?
- 23:48. So they rejected them both, and were among those who were destroyed.
- 23:49. We gave Moosâ the Book so that they might be guided.

A long time ago, I (as-Sa'di) heard one of the scholars whose name I do not remember saying that after sending Moosâ and sending down the Torah, Allah stopped punishing the nations with eradication, and He prescribed jihad as a way to deal with stubborn deniers. I do not know from where he took this opinion, but when I reflected upon these verses, along with the verses in Soorat al-Qaşaş, I realised how he reached that conclusion. As for these verses, Allah referred to the doomed nations who followed the path that led to their destruction, then He tells us that He sent Moosâ after them, and He sent down to him the Torah which contained guidance for people. This cannot be refuted by the suggestion that Pharaoh was punished by drowning, because that was before the revelation of the Torah. As for the verses in Soorat al-Qaşaş, they are very clear; when Allah mentioned the destruction of Pharaoh, He said:

﴿We gave Moosâ the Book after We had destroyed the previous nations, as enlightenment for humankind, and as guidance and mercy, so that they might pay heed.﴾ (al-Qaşaş 28: 43)

This clearly indicates that He gave him the Book (the Torah) after the destruction of the transgressing nations, and Allah tells us that He sent it down as enlightenment for humankind, and as a guidance and mercy.

The same point is made in Soorah Yoonus, where Allah tells us:
 ﴿Then after him, [that is, after Nooh] We sent Messengers to their [own] peoples; they came to them with clear signs, but they would not believe what they had already rejected beforehand. Thus do We seal up the hearts of the transgressors. Then after them We sent Moosâ and Hâroon...﴾ (Yoonus 10: 74-75)

And Allah knows best.

﴿Then We sent Moosâ﴾ ibn 'Imrân, the one who whom the Most Gracious spoke directly (*kaleem ar-Rahmân*)

﴿and his brother Hâroon﴾ when he asked his Lord to make him his partner, and He answered his request.

﴿with Our clear signs﴾ that point to their sincerity and the truthfulness of that which they brought

﴿and compelling proofs﴾ that is, clear evidence that was so powerful that it could overwhelm and impact people's hearts because of its strength. Thus the hearts of the believers submitted to it and clear proof was established against the stubborn. This is like the verse in Soorat al-Isrâ' in which Allah says:

﴿We gave Moosâ nine clear signs [and told him]: Ask for [the release of] the Children of Israel. When he came to them. Pharaoh said to him: O Moosâ, indeed I think you are bewitched. Moosâ said: You know full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these [signs] as clear evidence. Verily, O Pharaoh, I think that you are doomed!﴾ (al-Isrâ' 17: 101-102)

﴿We gave Moosâ nine clear signs﴾; hence the leader of the stubborn recognised the truth but stubbornly rejected it. ﴿[and told him]: Ask for [the release of] the Children of Israel﴾ by means of these clear signs. But ﴿Pharaoh said to him: O Moosâ, indeed I think you are bewitched﴾. So Moosâ said to him: ﴿You know full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down

these [signs] as clear evidence. Verily, O Pharaoh, I think that you are doomed!)). And Allah says:

﴿They rejected the signs, although in their hearts they were certain that they were true, out of wickedness and arrogance...﴾ (an-Naml 27: 14)

Allah says here: ﴿Then We sent Moosâ and his brother Hâroon with Our clear signs and compelling proofs to Pharaoh and his chiefs﴾, such as Hâmân and other leaders

﴿But they showed arrogance﴾ that is, they were too arrogant to believe in Allah and they showed arrogance towards His Prophets.

﴿and were haughty people﴾ that is, their character was haughty and they oppressed people and caused mischief in the land, hence they behaved in an arrogant manner, which was not surprising in their case.

﴿They said﴾ out of arrogance and pride, warning the weak-minded and trying to present an argument in order to mislead: ﴿Should we believe in two men like ourselves...?﴾. This is exactly what those who came before them said; they had a similar mentality in terms of disbelief, so their words and deeds were similar, and they denied the blessing of the message that Allah had bestowed upon them by sending the message to them.

﴿when their people﴾ namely the Israelites ﴿are subject to us﴾ that is, they are enslaved and forced to do heavy labour for us. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

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

– so how can we follow them after having been followed? How can these people become leaders over us?

Their argument was similar to what the people of Nooh said:

﴿...Should we believe in you when only the lowest people follow you?﴾ (ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 111)

«... We do not see you as anything but a human being like ourselves. Nor do we see that any follow you but the lowest among us, those who are rash and undiscerning...» (Hood 11: 27)

But it is well known that this argument is not fit to ward off the truth, and it is merely stubborn denial. Hence Allah says: «So they rejected them both, and were among those who were destroyed» by drowning in the sea, whilst the Israelites were looking on.

«We gave Moosâ the Book» – after Allah destroyed Pharaoh and saved the Israelites along with Moosâ, he was able to lead them on the basis of the teachings he received from Allah and to practise the rituals of His religion openly. Allah promised to send down the Torah to him over forty nights, so he went to meet his Lord as ordained. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

«And We inscribed for him in the Tablets all manner of admonition and an explanation of all things...» (al-A'raf 7: 145)

Hence He says here: «so that they might be guided» that is, by knowing the details of the commands and prohibitions, reward and punishment, and so that they might know their Lord by His names and attributes.



﴿وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ آيَةً وَآوَيْنَهُمَا إِلَىٰ دِيْوَارَيْ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ﴾ (سورة

المؤمنون: ٥٠)

23:50. And We made the son of Maryam and his mother to be a sign; We caused them to dwell on high ground, on a plateau with flowing streams.

That is, We blessed 'Eesâ ibn Maryam, and We caused him and his mother to be among the wondrous signs of Allah, as she conceived

him and bore him without a father, he spoke in the cradle as an infant, and Allah caused other miracles to happen at his hands.

﴿We caused them to dwell on high ground﴾ that is, in an elevated place. This – and Allah knows best – was at the time of giving birth. ﴿on a plateau with flowing streams﴾ that is, with flowing water, based on the fact that Allah says elsewhere:

﴿...for your Lord has provided a stream close at hand.﴾ (Maryam 19: 24)

– that is, beneath the place where you are, because it is high. The word translated here as a ﴿stream﴾ refers to a spring of water.

﴿Shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you; it will drop fresh ripe dates upon you. Eat and drink, and be content...﴾ (Maryam 19: 25-26)



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَذَرَهُمْ فِي عَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ تُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَلْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٥١-٥٦)

- 23:51. O Messengers, eat of that which is wholesome and do righteous deeds, for I am well aware of all that you do.
- 23:52. Verily this religion of yours is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me alone.
- 23:53. But people divided into sects, each group rejoicing in what it has.
- 23:54. So leave them in their confusion for a while.
- 23:55. Do they think, because We grant them wealth and sons,
- 23:56. that We hasten to them all that is good? Nay, they do not understand.

This is a command from Allah (ﷻ) to His Messengers to eat wholesome food, which is goodly and permissible provision, and to show gratitude to Allah by doing righteous deeds that are good for their physical and spiritual well-being in this world and the hereafter. Here He tells them that He is well aware of all that they do, for every deed they do and every effort they make is known to Him, and He will requite them for it in full, with the best reward. This indicates that all the Messengers were all agreed on the permissibility of wholesome food and the prohibition on that which is bad, and they were all agreed on promoting righteous deeds of all types, even though what is enjoined may vary at different times.

Hence the Prophets and their teachings are agreed on those righteous deeds that are appropriate at all times, such as the command to affirm the oneness of Allah, to devote worship solely to Him, to love Him, to fear His punishment and to hope for His reward, as well as righteousness, truthfulness, fulfilling covenants, upholding ties of kinship, honouring parents, showing kindness to the weak, poor and orphans, being kind and compassionate towards people, and other righteous deeds. Hence the scholars, those who had knowledge of the previous scriptures and wise men at the time when Allah sent Muhammad (ﷺ) found as evidence for the truth of his prophethood the type of deeds that he enjoined and forbade, as happened in the case of Heraclius and others. Because he enjoined the same as the Prophets who came before him had enjoined, and he forbade the same as they had forbidden, this proved that he was one of them, unlike liars and charlatans who inevitably enjoined evil and forbade good.

Hence Allah (ﷻ) said to the Messengers: ﴿Verily this religion of yours is one religion﴾ that is, your community – O Messengers – is one community, agreed upon one religion, and your Lord is One. ﴿so fear Me alone﴾ by complying with My commands and refraining from that which I have prohibited.

Allah enjoined upon the believers the same as He enjoined upon the Messengers, because they follow their example. Allah says:

﴿O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 172)

What is required of all those who follow the Prophets and others is to comply with that and act upon it, but the wrongdoers and fabricators insisted on disobedience, hence Allah says:

﴿But people divided into sects﴾ that is, those who claimed to be followers of the Prophets divided their religion into sects, ﴿each group rejoicing in what it has﴾ that is, rejoicing in what it had of knowledge and religion, claiming that they were right and everyone else was wrong, even though those who were right among them were those who followed the path of the Messengers, by eating wholesome and lawful food and doing righteous deeds, whilst all others were wrong.

﴿So leave them in their confusion﴾ that is, in the midst of their ignorance of the truth and their claims to be right

﴿for a while﴾ that is, until the punishment befalls them, for no exhortation or rebuke will benefit them. How could it benefit one who claims to be following the truth and hoping to call others to his path.

﴿Do they think, because We grant them wealth and sons, that We hasten to them all that is good?﴾ That is, do they think that the fact that We give them abundance of wealth and children indicates that they are good and blessed people, and that they will have the best in this world and the hereafter, and that this is only the first portion for them? That is not the case.

﴿Nay, they do not understand﴾ rather We give them respite and a reprieve, and We provide them with blessings so as to increase them in sin and so that their punishment will be stored up for them in the hereafter, and so that they may rejoice in what they are given:

﴿...until, when they were rejoicing in what they had been given, We seized them suddenly...﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 44)



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾
 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
 رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَا تَكُلْفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا
 وُسْعَهَا وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَابٌ يَبْلُغُ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٥٧-٦٢)

- 23:57. Verily those who are filled with reverent awe of their Lord,
 23:58. And who believe in the revelations of their Lord,
 23:59. And who do not ascribe partners to their Lord,
 23:60. And who give what they give [of charity], their hearts filled
 with apprehension, knowing that they will return to their Lord,
 23:61. Those are the ones who hasten to do good deeds, and they are
 foremost in attaining them.
 23:62. We do not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear.
 We have a record [of their deeds] that speaks the truth, and they
 will not be wronged.

Having mentioned those who combined bad deeds with feeling secure, and claimed that the fact that He had given them worldly abundance was indicative of their goodness and virtue, Allah (ﷻ) mentions those who combined doing good with fear of Him:

﴿Verily those who are filled with reverent awe of their Lord﴾ that is, they are apprehensive and their hearts are filled with awe due to fear of their Lord, that He will judge them on the basis of justice; in that case there will be no good deeds left to their credit, and they think negatively of themselves, that they have not carried out their duties towards Allah (ﷻ) in a proper manner, and they are afraid of losing their faith. Because of the knowledge that they have of their Lord and what He deserves of glorification and honour, their fear and worry dictate that they should refrain from that which causes them to fear sin and falling short in obligatory duties.

﴿And who believe in the revelations of their Lord﴾ that is, when His revelations are recited to them, it increases them in faith. They also ponder and reflect upon the verses of the Qur'an, and thus the meanings of the Qur'an become clear to them, as do its majestic nature and harmony; its lack of contradiction; what it calls to of knowing Allah, fearing Him and putting one's hope in Him; and what it says about requital. That will increase them in faith in ways that cannot be expressed in words.

They also reflect upon the signs in the universe, as Allah says elsewhere:

﴿Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, there are indeed signs for people of understanding.﴾ (*Āl 'Imrān 3: 190*)

﴿And who do not ascribe partners to their Lord﴾ that is, they do not openly ascribe partners to Him, by taking anything other than Allah as an object of worship, calling upon it and putting their hopes in it, and they do not ascribe partners to Him in hidden or subtle ways, such as showing off and the like. Rather they are sincerely devoted to Allah alone in their words and deeds, and in all situations.

﴿And who give what they give [of charity]﴾ that is, they give of themselves what they are instructed to give, giving whatever they are able to of prayer, zakāh, Hajj, charity and so on. But at the same time, ﴿their hearts [are] filled with apprehension﴾ that is, they fear that when their deeds are presented to Him and they stand before Him, they will not save them from the punishment of Allah, because they know their Lord and are aware of what He deserves of all kinds of worship.

﴿Those are the ones who hasten to do good deeds﴾ that is, in the arena of competing to do good deeds, their main concern is that which will bring them closer to Allah, and they are focused on that which could save them from His punishment. Whatever good deed they hear

of or have the opportunity to do, they hasten to make the most of it and do that good deed. They look at the close friends and chosen ones of Allah who are ahead of them and on their right and left, hastening to do all that is good and striving to draw close to their Lord, and they try to compete with them. As the one who is racing and competing with others may go ahead because of his efforts and striving, or he may not do so because of his shortcomings, Allah (ﷻ) tells us that these people are among the category who will be foremost, as He says: ﴿and they are foremost in attaining them﴾ that is, good deeds. They will attain the pinnacle, for they competed with the first rank. Moreover, it was already decreed by Allah that they would be among those who are blessed and those who are foremost.

Because Allah mentioned their hastening to do good and their being foremost in that regard, some people may imagine that what is required of them and others is something that is too difficult and hard, He tells us that He does not place ﴿on any soul a burden greater than it can bear﴾ that is, the burden is only as much as a person can bear, and there will still be some strength left over; it is not something that will exhaust all his strength. This is by His mercy and wisdom, so as to make the path to Him easy and so that there will always be people who are racing on that path to Him.

﴿We have a record [of their deeds] that speaks the truth﴾ which is the first Book in which all things are written, and it reflects exactly all that takes place. Hence it is true.

﴿and they will not be wronged﴾ that is, nothing will be detracted from their good deeds and nothing will be added to their punishment or sins.



﴿بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَقٍ مِّنْ هَذَا وَهُمْ أَعْمَلُ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عَمِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
أَخَذْنَا مَتَرَفِهِمْ بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْتَرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ لَا يَجْتَرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنكُرْنَا لَا نُنصِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَذَٰ

كَانَتْ آيَاتِي تُنزلُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ عَلَيَّ أَعْقِبِيكُمْ نُنكِصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ بِهِ سَامِرًا تَهْجُرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٣-٦٧)

- 23:63. But their hearts are utterly heedless of this [the Qur'an]; and they have, besides that, other [evil] deeds which they will continue to do
- 23:64. Until, when We seize the affluent amongst them with punishment, they will cry for help.
- 23:65. [It will be said to them:] Do not cry for help today, for you will receive no help from Us.
- 23:66. My revelations were recited to you, but you used to turn on your heels
- 23:67. Out of pride [in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque], talking nonsense far into the night [about the Qur'an].

Here Allah tells us that the hearts of the disbelievers are utterly heedless, because they are steeped in ignorance, wrongdoing, negligence and aversion that prevent them from reaching out to this Qur'an. Therefore they are not guided by it and nothing of it reaches their hearts.

﴿When you recite the Qur'an, We place between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden barrier,²⁹ and We have placed covers on their hearts so that they will not understand it, and deafness in their ears...﴾ (al-Isra' 17: 45-46)

Because their hearts are utterly heedless of it, their actions are commensurate with their state of stubbornness and disbelief, which will result in their punishment.

﴿and﴾ but ﴿they have, besides that﴾ that is, besides these deeds

²⁹ That is so that they will not understand it, as a punishment for their (stubborn) disbelief. (at-Tabari)

«other [evil] deeds which they will continue to do» that is, they should not find it strange that the punishment has not yet befallen them, because Allah is giving them respite so that they may finish doing all the deeds that they are meant to do according to the divine decree. When they have done that and completed them all, they will move on in the worst state to face the wrath and punishment of Allah.

«Until, when We seize the affluent amongst them» that is, those who live a life of ease and are only used to a life of affluence, luxury and enjoyment, and have not experienced hardship; when We seize them «with punishment», and they feel its touch,

«they will cry for help» that is, they will scream in pain, because something has befallen them other than what they are used to. They will cry for help, but it will be said to them:

«Do not cry for help today, for you will receive no help from Us» – because no help or support will come to them from Allah, they will not be able to help themselves and no one else will be able to help them.

It is as if it will be said to them: What is it that has brought you to this state? «My revelations were recited to you» so that you might believe in them and accept them, but you did not do that; rather «you used to turn on your heels» that is, you went backwards. By following the Qur'an they could have advanced, but by turning away from it they went backwards and became the lowest of the low.

«Out of pride [in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque], talking nonsense far into the night [about the Qur'an]». The commentators said that what is meant is that they were proud of it, and the pronoun (rendered here as «[in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque]») refers to the Kaaba or the Haram. In other words, they felt proud before people because of that, and they said: We are the people of the sanctuary. therefore we are better than others and of higher status than them.

«talking nonsense far into the night» that is, gathering and talking by night around the Kaaba. Talking nonsense refers to saying bad things

about this Qur'an. The way in which the disbelievers responded to the Qur'an was by turning away from it and telling one another to do that.

﴿Those who disbelieved said: Do not listen to this Qur'an; make noise when it is recited, so that you may drown it out.﴾ (Fussilat 41: 26)

And Allah said concerning them:

﴿Do you then wonder at this discourse [the Qur'an] and laugh [at it], and not weep, while you remain heedless?﴾ (an-Najm 53: 59-61)

﴿Or do they say: He has made it [the Qur'an] up himself?...﴾ (at-Toor 52: 33)

As they had all these bad manners and attitudes, it is no wonder that they deserved the punishment, and when they fell into that they had no one to support them or save them, and they were rebuked at that point because of these bad deeds.



﴿أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَاءَهُمْ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِ آبَاءَهُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٨)

23:68. Have they not pondered the words [of Allah], or is it that there has come to them that which did not come to their forefathers?

﴿Have they not pondered the words [of Allah]﴾ that is, have they not reflected on the Qur'an and pondered its meanings? In other words, if they had pondered it, that would have led them to faith and would have prevented them from disbelieving. But the calamity that befell them was due to their turning away. This indicates that reflecting upon the Qur'an leads to all that is good and protects against all that is evil, and what prevented them from reflecting upon it was the fact that there were locks upon their hearts.

﴿or is it that there has come to them that which did not come to their forefathers?﴾ that is, or is what prevented them from believing

the fact that there came to them a Messenger and Book that had not come to their forefathers, so they were content to follow the path of their misguided forefathers, and they objected to anything that differed from that? Therefore they and others like them among the disbelievers said, as Allah tells us:

﴿Likewise, We never sent any warner before you to a city but its affluent ones said: We found our forefathers following a certain path, and we are following in their footsteps.﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 23)

The warner responded to them by saying:

﴿...Even if I bring you better guidance than that which you found your forefathers following?...﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 24)

Will you follow it even if your aim is to follow the truth? And the answer exposed their real thinking, as they said:

﴿...Verily, We disbelieve in that with which you have been sent﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 24)



﴿أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُم مِّنْكَرُونَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٩)

23:69. Or is it that they do not know their Messenger well enough,³⁰ so they reject him?

That is, is what prevented them from following the truth the fact that their Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) was not known to them, therefore they denied him and said: We do not know him, we do not know how sincere he is, so let us wait and see how he is, and ask

³⁰ On the contrary, the disbelievers of Quraysh knew him very well, as he had grown up in their midst, and his good character, honesty and sincerity were so well known to them that they called him *al-Ameen* (the trustworthy one).

those who know him about him? But that was not the case, for they knew the Messenger (ﷺ) very well indeed; young and old alike knew that he had all good characteristics, and they knew him to be sincere and honest, to the extent that before his mission began they used to call him *al-Ameen* (the trustworthy one). So why did they not believe him when he brought them the truth with all honesty and sincerity?



﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلْ جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُم لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ﴾ (سورة

المؤمنون: ٧٠)

23:70. Or do they say that there is madness in him? Rather he has brought them the truth, but most of them are averse to the truth.

﴿Or do they say that there is madness in him?﴾ that is, do they say that he is insane, and this is why he said what he said? For if a person is insane, no one listens to him and his words do not count, because he murmurs nonsense and foolish words.

Allah said, refuting this suggestion on their part: ﴿Rather he has brought them the truth﴾ that is, he has brought them that which is confirmed and based on truthfulness and justice, in which there is no difference or contradiction. So how could there be madness in the one who brought it?! Could he be anything but a person who is at the highest level of perfection in terms of knowledge, rational thinking, and good manners and attitude? Rather the reality is that what prevented them from believing was that ﴿he has brought them the truth, but most of them are averse to the truth﴾. The greatest truth that he brought them was the command to devote worship solely to Allah and to abandon everything else that is worshipped besides Allah. It is well known that they were averse to that and found it strange, so the fact that the Messenger (ﷺ) brought the

truth when they were averse to the truth in the first place is what made them deny the truth. It was not because they doubted or rejected the Messenger (ﷺ) himself. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...It is not you they disbelieve; rather it is the revelations of Allah that the wrongdoers deny.﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 33)

If it is asked: why was not the truth in accordance with their whims and desires, so that they might believe and hasten to submit? The answer is given in the following verse:



﴿وَلَوْ أَتَبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ بَلْ أَتَيْنَهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧١)

23:71. If the truth had been in accordance with their desires, the heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, would have been brought to ruin. In fact We have given them that which would bring them honour [that is, the Qur'an], but they turn away from that which would bring them honour.

﴿If the truth had been in accordance with their desires, the heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, would have been brought to ruin﴾ the reason being that their whims and desires are based on wrongdoing, disbelief, mischief, and bad manners and deeds. Therefore if the truth had followed their whims and desires, the heavens and the earth would have been brought to ruin because of the corruption of conduct and control that would be based on oppression and injustice. Therefore the heavens and the earth can only be kept in good order on the basis of truth and justice.

﴿In fact We have given them that which would bring them honour﴾ namely this Qur'an, which motivates them to do all that is good, and

in which is their pride and honour if they adhere to it, and through it they could become leaders of humankind.

﴿but they turn away from that which would bring them honour﴾ because they are doomed and are not guided;

﴿... They have forgotten Allah, so He has forgotten them...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 67)

– and they:

﴿... forgot Allah, so He caused them to forget themselves...﴾ (al-Hashr 59: 19)

The Qur'an and the one who brought it are the greatest blessing that Allah bestowed upon them, but their only response was to reject it and turn away. Can there be any deprivation worse than this? Can there be anything beyond that but the utmost loss?



﴿أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَجَ رَيْكَ خَيْرٌ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّزِقِينَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٢)

23:72. Or is it that you ask them for some recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is better, and He is the best of providers.

That is, are they being prevented from following you, O Muhammad (ﷺ), by your asking them for payment if they respond:

﴿...recompense which they find too burdensome?﴾ (al-Qalam 68: 46)

– and they find it burdensome to follow you, because of what you would take from them of recompense and payment? That is not the case; ﴿But the recompense of your Lord is better, and He is the best of providers﴾. This is like what the Prophets said to their nations:

﴿O my people, no recompense do I ask of you for this...﴾ (Hood 11: 51)

– and:

﴿...my reward is with Allah alone...﴾ (Hood 11: 29)

In other words, they were not calling people to Allah in hopes of what they could get of their wealth; rather it was out of sincerity towards them and a desire to guide them to that which was in their best interests. In fact the Messengers were more sincere to people than their own selves. May Allah grant them the best of rewards on behalf of their nations and enable us to follow their example in all our affairs.



﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُهُمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنُكَوِّبُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٣-٧٤)

23:73. Surely you [O Muhammad] are calling them to a straight path.

23:74. But indeed those who do not believe in the hereafter are deviating from that path.

In these verses Allah mentions every means that may lead to faith and He mentions obstacles to faith; He highlights how corrupt the obstacles are, one after another. Among the obstacles, He mentions the fact that their hearts are utterly heedless of this (the Qur'an) (23: 63); they did not ponder the words of Allah (23: 68); they followed in the footsteps of their forefathers; and they said that there was madness in their Messenger (ﷺ), as we have discussed above.

Among the things that would lead them to faith, Allah mentioned: reflecting upon the Qur'an; accepting the blessings of Allah with appreciation; acknowledging the sublime attributes, sincerity and honesty of the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), and that he was not asking for any reward, rather his efforts were for their benefit and in their interests, and that what he called them to is the straight path which is easy to follow because it is straight and leads to the goal in the shortest way, and he called them to a religion of ease that is based on pure monotheism. What is meant is: you, O Muhammad

(يَعْبُدُونَ), are calling them to the straight path, which requires the one who seeks the truth to follow you, because what you are calling them to is something that is in harmony with rational thinking and common sense, and through that path they may attain all their interests. What other path will they follow if they do not follow you? They do not have any other alternative that could suffice them so that they would not need to follow you, because they ﴿are deviating from that path﴾, drifting away from the path that leads to Allah and to His paradise; what they are following is nothing but misguidance and ignorance.

The same applies to everyone who goes against the truth; he will inevitably deviate in all his affairs. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿But if they do not respond to you, then know that they only follow their own desires, and who is more astray than one who follows his own desires, without any guidance from Allah?...﴾ (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 50)



﴿وَلَوْ رَحَّمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِمْ مِنْ ضُرِّ لَلْجَوِّ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَنْضَعُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٥-٧٧)

- 23:75. If We showed them mercy and relieved their misfortunes, they would persist in their transgression, wandering blindly in their misguidance.
- 23:76. We have already seized them with punishment, but they did not humble themselves before their Lord, nor did they beseech Him.
- 23:77. Until, when We open upon them a gate of severe punishment, they will be plunged into utter despair.

This highlights the extent of their foolishness and stubbornness: if harm befalls them, they call upon Allah, asking Him to grant them

relief so that they may believe, or He may test them so that they may come back to Him, then if He grants them relief, they persist in their transgression, wandering blindly in their misguidance; that is, they wander blindly in their disbelief.

Similarly, Allah mentioned their state when they board ships: they call upon Him, professing sincere devotion to Him alone, and they forget those whom they ascribed as partners to Him. But when He delivers them, they spread mischief throughout the land by ascribing partners to Allah and otherwise (10: 22-23).

﴿We have already seized them with punishment﴾. The commentators said that what is meant here is the hunger and famine that they experienced for seven years. Allah tested them thereby so that they might turn back to Him in humble submission. But it was to no avail; not one of them benefited from it.

﴿but they did not humble themselves before their Lord﴾ that is, they did not submit to Him

﴿nor did they beseech Him﴾ or acknowledge their need of Him; rather they went through that then they recovered, as if nothing had happened to them, and they continued in their misguidance and disbelief. But ahead of them is a punishment that cannot be warded off, as Allah says:

﴿Until, when We open upon them a gate of severe punishment﴾ such as their being killed on the day of Badr

﴿they will be plunged into utter despair﴾ that is, they will give up hope of all good and will find themselves surrounded by all ills and all causes that lead to that. So let them pay heed, before there befalls them the severe punishment of Allah that cannot be warded off, unlike worldly punishments that may cease, such as those with which Allah disciplines His slaves.

Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Corruption and disorder have appeared on land and sea³¹ because of what people's hands have earned. Thus Allah causes them to taste the consequences of some of what they have done, so that they may turn in repentance.﴾ (ar-Room 30: 41)



﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ اخْتَلَفَ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٨-٨٠)

- 23:78. It is He Who has given you hearing, sight and intellect; little it is that you give thanks.
- 23:79. And it is He Who has created you on the earth, and unto Him you will be gathered.
- 23:80. It is He Who gives life and causes death, and He controls the alternation of night and day. Will you not then understand?

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the blessings that He has bestowed upon His slaves, which should prompt them to give thanks to Him and fulfil their duties towards Him.

﴿It is He Who has given you hearing﴾ so that you may understand what you hear, and benefit with regard to your religious and worldly affairs.

﴿sight﴾ so that you may understand what you see, and benefit from it when you go about your business.

﴿and intellect﴾ that is, reason by means of which you understand things, and by means of which you are distinguished from the animals.

³¹ This refers to the widespread occurrence of troubles such as drought, fires and floods, poor yield of crops, decline of fish stocks, market stagnation and difficulty in earning a living. That is because of people's sins, including neglect and abuse of the natural environment.

If you did not have hearing, sight and intellect, and you were deaf, blind and dumb, what would your condition be? What would you miss out on of essentials and luxuries?

Will you not then give thanks to the One Who has bestowed these blessings upon you, and affirm His oneness and obey Him? Little is it that you give thanks, even though the blessings come to you continuously.

﴿And it is He﴾, may He be exalted, ﴿Who has created you on the earth﴾ and He has caused you to spread throughout the earth, in all directions, and has given you the power to bring forth benefits from the earth; He has made it sufficient for your livelihood and dwelling.

﴿and unto Him you will be gathered﴾ after your death, and He will requite you for what you did on earth of good and evil, and the earth on which you dwelt will speak of what happened.

﴿And it is He﴾ alone, may He be exalted, ﴿Who gives life and causes death﴾ that is, the One Who has control over life and death is Allah alone.

﴿and He controls the alternation of night and day﴾ so if He willed, He could make the day everlasting, then what god other than Allah could bring the night so that you could rest therein? And if He willed, He could make the night everlasting, then what god other than Allah could bring you light? Will you not then see?

﴿By His mercy He has made for you night and day, so that you may rest therein and seek His bounty, and so that you may give thanks.﴾

(*al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 73)

Hence Allah says here: ﴿Will you not then understand?﴾ And realise that the fact that He alone bestowed upon you all these blessings, hearing, sight and intellect, He alone caused you to spread out on earth, He alone gives life and causes death, and He alone controls night and day, dictates that you should devote your worship to Him alone, with no partner or associate, and you should refrain

from worshipping those that cannot bring benefit or ward off harm, and have no control over anything at all; in fact they are incapable in all ways, so if you had any common sense, you would not do that.



﴿ بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالُوا أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَوْنَا لَمَعْبُوثُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ لَقَدْ وَعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَمَا بَأْسُنَا هَذَا مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٨١-٨٣)

- 23:81. On the contrary, they say the like of what the earlier peoples said.
- 23:82. They said: What! When we have died and have turned into dust and bones, will we really be raised up?
- 23:83. We and our forefathers have been promised this before; it is nothing but tales of the ancients.

That is, rather these disbelievers all follow the same path as their predecessors who disbelieved in the resurrection and thought it highly unlikely, and said: ﴿What! When we have died and have turned into dust and bones, will we really be raised up?﴾ That is, this is something that cannot be imagined and is incomprehensible – according to their claim.

﴿We and our forefathers have been promised this before﴾ that is, we are still being promised that the resurrection will happen, we and our fathers before us, but we have not seen it and it has not happened yet.

﴿it is nothing but tales of the ancients﴾ that is, it is nothing more than their stories and nightly entertainment that they used to talk about to pass the time, otherwise it has no reality. Thus they disbelieved when Allah had shown them signs greater than the resurrection, for example:

﴿Indeed, the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater matter than the creation [or recreation] of humankind...﴾ (Ghâfir 40: 57)

﴿Producing arguments against Us and forgetting his own creation. He says: Who can give life to bones that have crumbled to dust?﴾ (Yâ Seen 36: 78)

﴿...You see the earth dry and barren, but when We send down rain upon it, it stirs and swells, and brings forth beautiful plants of every kind.﴾ (al-Hajj 22: 5)



﴿ قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا نُنْقِزُكَ قُلْ مَنْ يَمْلِكُ شَيْئًا وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٨٤-٨٩)

- 23:84. Say [O Muhammad]: To whom does the earth and all that is on it belong, if you know [the answer]?
- 23:85. They will say: To Allah. Say: Will you not then pay heed?
- 23:86. Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?
- 23:87. They will say: [They belong] to Allah. Say: Will you not then fear Him?
- 23:88. Say: In Whose Hand is the dominion over all things, and He protects, while against Him there is no protection,³² if you know [the answer]?

³² Allah may offer protection to whomever He wills against harm intended by others, but no one can offer protection against any harm or punishment that Allah may decree against a person. (at-Ṭabari)

23:89. They will say: In Allah's [Hand]. Say: Then how can you be so deluded?

That is, say to these people who disbelieve in the resurrection and regard others as equal to Allah, using as evidence against them that which they themselves affirm and acknowledge – of the oneness of Allah's Lordship and that Allah alone is the Lord – to prove what they denied of the oneness of Allah's divinity and that He alone is deserving of worship. Thus He uses as evidence that which they affirm and accept about the creation of these mighty created entities, in order to prove that which they deny of His ability to raise the dead, which is easier than the creation of these mighty entities.

﴿To whom does the earth and all that is on it belong﴾ that is, who is the Creator of the earth and everything on it of animals, plants, inanimate objects, seas, rivers and mountains? Who is the Sovereign thereof, who is in control of it? If you ask them about that, they will inevitably say that it belongs to Allah. So if they affirm that, then say to them:

﴿Will you not then pay heed?﴾ That is, will you not think of that of which Allah reminded you, which is known to you and is firmly based on your common sense, but may be absent from your mind when you are heedless on occasion?

In fact, if you think and ponder, you will realise that the Sovereign of all that is the only One Who deserves to be worshipped, and attributing divinity to one who is controlled (by Allah) is one of the most obvious of falsehoods.

Then He moves on to something that is greater than that, as He says:

﴿Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens﴾ and all that they contain of stars and planets

﴿and the Lord of the Mighty Throne﴾ which is the highest, vastest and greatest of all created things. Who is it that created it, controls it and manages it in various ways?

﴿They will say: [They belong] to Allah﴾ that is, they will affirm that Allah is the Lord of all that.

So say to them, when they affirm that: ﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ and avoid worshipping incapable created things, and fear the Almighty Lord Who is perfect in might and great in authority?

Here we see gentle words, as Allah says ﴿Will you not then pay heed?﴾ (23: 85) and ﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ (23: 87). This is exhortation by using gentle words in order to appeal to the heart, as is quite clear.

Then He moves on to their affirmation of that which is more general than all of the above, as He says:

﴿Say: In Whose Hand is the dominion over all things﴾ that is, the sovereignty of all things, in both the upper and lower realms, all that we can see and all that we cannot see?

﴿and He protects﴾ His slaves from evil, warding off hardship from them and guarding them against that which would harm them

﴿while against Him there is no protection﴾ that is, no one can protect anyone against Allah or ward off harm that Allah wills. Indeed, no one can intercede with Him except by His leave.

﴿They will say: In Allah's [Hand]﴾ that is, they will affirm that Allah is the Sovereign of all things, the Protector against Whom there is no protection.

﴿Say﴾ to them, when they affirm that, so as to establish binding proof against them:

﴿Then how can you be so deluded?﴾ That is, have you lost your minds, as you worship that which you know has no sovereignty over you and has no share of dominion, and is incapable in all aspects, and you failed to devote your worship solely to the Almighty, omnipotent Sovereign Who controls all things? The minds that led you to this

conclusion can only be deluded, and they have undoubtedly been deceived by the Shayṭān, who made that fair-seeming to them by turning the facts upside down; thus their minds became deluded.



﴿بَلِ آيَاتِنَاهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَلَّىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٠-٩٢)

(٩٢)

- 23:90. In fact We have brought them the truth, but they are indeed liars.
 23:91. Allah has never begotten a son, nor is there any god besides Him. [In that case,] each god would have taken full control of what he had created, and each would have rushed to gain supremacy over the others. Glory be to Allah and [exalted be He] far above what they ascribe [to Him].
 23:92. Knower of the unseen and the seen; exalted be He far above the partners they ascribe to Him!

Here Allah says: Rather We have brought the truth to these deniers of truth, truth that is based on truthful news and fairness in commands and prohibitions. So what is the matter with them, that they do not acknowledge it, when it is most deserving of being followed? They have no other alternative to that except lies and wrongdoing, hence Allah says: ﴿but they are indeed liars. Allah has never begotten a son, nor is there any god besides Him﴾. We know that this is a lie on the basis of what Allah and His Messengers have told us, and on the basis of sound reasoning. Therefore Allah (ﷻ) pointed out, on the basis of rational evidence, that it is impossible for there to be two gods, as He says: ﴿[In that case]﴾, if there were other gods besides Him, ﴿each

god would have taken full control of what he had created» that is, each of the two gods would have taken control of his own creation, independently of the other, and he would have tried to resist and stand up to the other gods.

«and each would have rushed to gain supremacy over the others», then the one who gained the upper hand would have become the supreme god, otherwise if they continued to resist one another without any gaining the upper hand, then the universe could not have come into existence and it cannot be imagined that it would have existed with such precise order that astounds the mind. Think for example of the sun, moon, planets and stars; you will realise that since they were created they are moving according to one system and one order, and all of that is subjugated to the power of Allah and controlled and directed on the basis of wisdom to serve all people's interests; that is not limited to the interests of some and not others. You will never find any problems or contradictions or resistance in the least of their movements. So could it be imagined that all of that is the work of two gods or two lords? «Glory be to Allah and [exalted be He] far above what they ascribe [to Him]». The way it is run implies and indicates that its controller is One God, perfect in His names and attributes. All created things are in need of His care as their Lord and His divine help. As they cannot exist or continue to exist without His care as their Lord, and their well-being cannot be sound and cannot be maintained except by worshipping and obeying Him alone, Allah points out the greatness of His attributes by referring to one of them, namely His all-encompassing knowledge, as He says:

«Knower of the unseen» that is, that which is hidden from our eyes and our knowledge of what must exist, what cannot exist and what may exist.

«and the seen» which is what we can see of that.

«of the unseen and the seen; exalted be He far above the partners they» namely those who have no knowledge except what Allah has told them «ascribe to Him».



﴿ قُلْ رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيدُنِي مَا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُرِيكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٣-٩٥)

- 23:93. Say: O my Lord, if You show me that which they are warned of,
 23:94. My Lord, then do not include me among the people who are given to wrongdoing.
 23:95. We are surely able to show you that of which We have warned them.

Allah established strong proof against the disbelievers, but they did not pay any attention to it and did not submit to it; therefore the punishment became inevitable and they were warned of its coming, and Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to say: ﴿O my Lord, if You show me that which they are warned of﴾ that is, whenever You show me their punishment and You cause me to be present at that time, ﴿My Lord, then do not include me among the people who are given to wrongdoing﴾ that is, protect me from these sins that they have been committing that incur Your punishment, and protect me also from the punishment that befalls them, because when the general punishment comes, it includes both the sinner and others.

Allah says, regarding the closeness of their punishment: ﴿We are surely able to show you that of which We have warned them﴾ but if We delay it, that is for some reason, otherwise We have the power to inflict it upon them at any time.



﴿ أَدْفَعْ بَالِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ ﴿٩٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٦-٩٨)

- 23:96. Repel evil with that which is better; We know best what they allege.
- 23:97. And say: My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the goading of the devils.
- 23:98. And I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they come near me.

This is part of the good manners and attitude that Allah enjoined upon His Messenger (ﷺ), as He said:

﴿Repel evil with that which is better﴾ that is, when your enemies mistreat you, in word or deed, do not respond with bad treatment, even though it is permissible to react to an offender with an equal offence; rather ward off mistreatment by being kind to them, for that is generosity on your part to the wrongdoer.

The good that is achieved thereby is that his mistreatment towards you will be reduced immediately and in the future, and it is more effective in bringing the wrongdoer back to his senses and is more likely to make him regret it and cause him to repent from what he has done.

It will also cause the one who forgives to attain the description of being a doer of good, by means of which he will suppress his enemy the Shayṭān. Thus he will be entitled to reward from his Lord, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...but whoever forgives and reconciles, his reward is with Allah...﴾
(*ash-Shoorā* 42: 40)

– and:

﴿...Repel evil with that which is good, whereupon he between whom and you there was ill feeling will become like a close friend. But none can attain that except those who are patient, and none can attain it except one who is blessed with a great share of good and righteousness.﴾ (*Fuṣṣilat* 41: 34-35)

«We know best what they allege» that is, what they say of words that imply disbelief and rejection of the truth. Our knowledge encompasses all of that, but We have been forbearing and have given them respite, and We have shown patience towards them, but they are committing wrong against Us and are denying Us, so you – O Muhammad (ﷺ) – should bear with patience what they say, and respond to them with kindness. This is what is expected of the pious slave in response to humans who mistreat them.

As for devils who mistreat people, kindness is of no benefit in this case, for the Shaytân only calls his party to be the inhabitants of the blazing fire. So what is expected (of humans) in response to him is to follow the instructions given by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

«And say: My Lord, I seek refuge with You» that is, I seek protection in Your strength and power, and I acknowledge that I have no power or strength of my own,

«from the goading of the devils. And I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they come near me» that is, I seek refuge with You from the evil that may befall me because of their attempts to harm me, and their goading and their touch; and I seek refuge with You from the evil that results from their coming near and from their whispers. This is seeking refuge with Allah from all evil and its origin, which includes seeking refuge from all the temptations of the Shaytân, and from his touch and whispers. If Allah grants His slave refuge from this evil and answers his prayer, he will be safe from all evil and will be enabled to do all good.



﴿ حَقَّ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ
 كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِن وَرَائِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون:

- 23:99. Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back,
 23:100. so that I may do the righteous deeds that I have failed to do. Nay, it is but a word he says. And behind them is a barrier, until the day they are resurrected.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about what happens to one of the negligent wrongdoers when he is dying: in that situation, when he sees his fate and realises the abhorrent nature of his deeds, he is filled with regret, so he asks to go back to this world, not to enjoy its physical joys and indulge in its pleasures, rather he says: ﴿so that I may do the righteous deeds that I have failed to do﴾, for I neglected my duty to Allah.

﴿Nay﴾ there is no going back and no respite, for Allah has decreed that they will not go back
 ﴿it﴾ that is, his statement that he wishes to go back to this world
 ﴿is but a word he says﴾ that is, it is mere words that will not benefit the one who says them or bring him anything but regret and sorrow. Moreover, he is not sincere in that, for even if he were sent back, he would surely go back to that which was forbidden to him (cf. 6: 28).

﴿And behind them is a barrier, until the day they are resurrected﴾. It is a barrier between two things, between this world and the hereafter. During that period between death and the resurrection, those who obeyed Allah will enjoy bliss and those who disobeyed Him will be punished, so make preparations for that and be ready for it.



﴿ فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴾ (١٠١) ﴿ فَمَنْ ثَقَلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ، فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾ (١٠٢) ﴿ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ، فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ ﴾ (١٠٣) ﴿ تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهُهُمُ النَّارَ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَالِحُونَ ﴾ (١٠٤)

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا تُنذِرُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَكْرَهُمْ بِمَا تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا
 وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ ﴿١٦﴾ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ
 أَخْشِرُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تَكْلِمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَهْمَاءُ فَاعْفِرْ
 لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِحْرًا حَتَّىٰ أَنْسَوَكُم ذِكْرِي وَكُنْتُمْ
 مِنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ قُلْ
 كَمْ لَيْسَتْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالُوا لَيْتَنَّا يَوْمًا آوَيْتُمْ بِبَنِي الْعَادِينَ
 ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ إِنْ لَيْسَتْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا لَّوَأَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ ﴿سورة المؤمنون: ١٠١-١٠٤﴾

(١١٤)

- 23:101. Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of kinship between them on that day, nor will they ask after one another.
- 23:102. Then those whose good deeds weigh heavily in the balance will be the successful ones.
- 23:103. And those whose good deeds weigh lightly in the balance are the ones who will lose their own souls; in hell they will abide forever.
- 23:104. The fire will burn their faces, and they will grin therein, with shrivelled lips.
- 23:105. [It will be said to them:] Were not My revelations recited to you, but you used to reject them?
- 23:106. They will say: Our Lord, our misfortune³³ overwhelmed us, and we were people who went astray.
- 23:107. Our Lord, deliver us from this. Then if we return [to evil], we will indeed be wrongdoers.
- 23:108. Allah will say: Away with you! Be humiliated therein and do not speak to Me.

³³ What is meant is that they were controlled by their whims and desires, which led to them being overwhelmed by that misfortune. (al-Qurtubi)

- 23:109. Among My slaves there were some who said: Our Lord, we believe, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.
- 23:110. But you treated them with ridicule, so much so that [ridicule of them] made you forget all remembrance of Me, and you used to laugh at them.
- 23:111. I have rewarded them this day for their patience and steadfastness; verily it is they who have triumphed.
- 23:112. Allah will say: How many years did you remain on earth?
- 23:113. They will say: We remained there for a day, or part of a day. But ask those who keep count.
- 23:114. Allah will say: You only remained there for a short while, if you had but known.

Here Allah tells us of the horrors of the Day of Resurrection, and what will happen on that day of disturbing and alarming events. When the Trumpet is blown for the resurrection, all people will be gathered for an appointed day, and there will befall them such terror that it will cause them to forget the ties of kinship which are the strongest ties between people, so it is more likely that other ties will be utterly forgotten. No one will ask anyone else about his situation, because each one will be preoccupied only with his own self, for he will not know whether he will be granted salvation after which there will be no misery, or he will be doomed after which there will be no happiness. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that on that day:

﴿...a man will flee from his own brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children. Every one of them, on that day, will have too many concerns of his own to care about anyone else.﴾ (*Abasa* 80: 34-37)

On the Day of Resurrection, there will be some stages during which the hardship will become very intense and will have a great impact, such as when the Balance is set up to differentiate between people's

deeds, and their deeds will be examined on the basis of justice, to measure what is in a person's favour and what is against him. Even the smallest particles of good and evil will show up in that reckoning.

«Then those whose good deeds weigh heavily in the balance» so that their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds, «will be the successful ones», for they will be saved from the fire and will deserve paradise, and they will be praised and commended.

«And those whose good deeds weigh lightly in the balance» so that their bad deeds outweigh their good deeds, and they are overwhelmed by their sins,

«are the ones who will lose their own souls»; in comparison to this loss, any other loss is easy to bear. But this loss will be difficult to bear, for nothing can help them to withstand and recover from this loss, for it is eternal loss and everlasting doom. They will lose their own souls, that could have attained eternal happiness, but they missed out on this everlasting bliss in nearness to the Most Generous Lord. «in hell they will abide forever» and will never emerge from it. This warning is addressed, as we have mentioned above, to those whose bad deeds overwhelm their good deeds. This can only be applicable to the disbeliever. Based on that, he will not be taken to task in the sense of weighing between his good deeds and bad deeds, because the disbelievers have no good deeds to their credit. Rather their deeds will be counted and listed, then they will be shown to them and they will be made to admit them and will be disgraced thereby. As for the one who is basically a believer, but has done so many bad deeds that they outweigh his good deeds, even if he enters hell, he will not abide therein forever, as is indicated by the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Then Allah (ﷻ) mentions the bad fate of the disbelievers:

«The fire will burn their faces» and overwhelm them on all sides, until it touches all parts of their bodies and the flames will burn their faces. «and they will grin therein» that is, they will grimace, and their lips will shrink from the intensity and gravity of the situation with which they are faced.

It will be said to them, by way of rebuke and blame: ﴿Were not My revelations recited to you﴾ and were you not called to believe in them, and were they not presented to you so that you might reflect? ﴿but you used to reject them﴾ wrongfully and stubbornly, even though they were clear revelations that pointed out truth and falsehood, and explained who was in the right and who was in the wrong.

At that point they will admit their wrongdoing, at the time when admitting it will be of no benefit.

﴿They will say: Our Lord, our misfortune³⁴ overwhelmed us﴾ that is, the misfortune that resulted from wrongdoing, turning away from the truth and turning to that which is harmful, forsaking that which is beneficial, overwhelmed us.

﴿and we were people who went astray﴾ in their deeds, even though they knew that they were doing wrong. In other words: we acted in this world like one who is lost, misguided and foolish. This is like another verse which tells us that they will say:

﴿...If only we had listened or understood, we would not be among the inhabitants of the raging fire.﴾ (*al-Mulk* 67: 10)

﴿Our Lord, deliver us from this. Then if we return [to evil], we will indeed be wrongdoers﴾ but they will be lying when they make this promise, for they are as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...And even if they were sent back, they would surely go back to that which was forbidden to them...﴾ (*al-An'am* 6: 28)

Allah (ﷻ) has left them no argument, and has left no excuse for them; He causes them to live in this world long enough to be reminded and understand the reminder, and for the evildoer to be deterred. So Allah will say, in response to their request:

﴿Be humiliated therein and do not speak to Me﴾. These words – we ask Him to keep us safe and sound – are the worst rebuke that the

³⁴ What is meant is that they were controlled by their whims and desires, which led to them being overwhelmed by that misfortune. (al-Qurtubi)

evildoers may hear in terms of shame, censure, humiliation and loss, for it will cause them to despair of all good and will bring tidings of all ills. These words and wrath from the Most Merciful Lord will be harder for them to bear and more effective in causing them pain than the torments of hell.

Then Allah mentions that which brought the punishment upon them and deprived them of mercy:

﴿Among My slaves there were some who said: Our Lord, we believe, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy﴾, so they combined faith which leads to righteous deeds, calling upon their Lord to forgive them and bestow mercy upon them, seeking to draw close to Him by calling upon Him as their Lord, expressing gratitude to Him for blessing them with faith, and speaking of the vastness of His mercy and kindness. This is indicative of their submission, humility and humbleness before their Lord, and their fear of His punishment and their hope for His mercy.

These are the leaders of humankind and the best of them, ﴿But you﴾, O base disbelievers who were lacking in reason and wisdom, ﴿treated them with ridicule﴾ and mocked them and looked down on them to such an extent that you were distracted by that foolish behaviour.

﴿so much so that [ridicule of them] made you forget all remembrance of Me, and you used to laugh at them﴾. This is what made them forget the reminder; they were distracted by the ridicule of them. Their forgetting of the reminder encouraged them to ridicule them, so that the one exacerbated the other. Can there be anything worse than this audacity?

﴿I have rewarded them this day for their patience and steadfastness﴾ in obeying Me and in putting up with your annoyances, until they came to Me.

﴿verily it is they who have triumphed﴾ by attaining eternal bliss and salvation from hell. This is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿But on that day those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers.﴾

(al-Mutaffifeen 83: 34)

﴿Allah will say﴾ to the disbelievers, by way of blame, for they were foolish because, within this short time, they committed every evil that led to them incurring His wrath and punishment, and they did not do what the believers did of good deeds that led to them attaining eternal happiness and the pleasure of their Lord: ﴿How many years did you remain on earth? They will say: We remained there for a day, or part of a day﴾. Their saying this is based on the fact that they will regard their stay on earth as having been very short. This is what it implies, but their words will not tell the exact length of their stay, or specify it. Hence they will say: ﴿But ask those who keep count﴾.

In their case, they will be very distracted with something else, namely the tremendous punishment, from knowing the exact number of years. So Allah will say to them: ﴿You only remained there for a short while﴾ whether you know the number or not, ﴿if you had but known﴾.



﴿أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾ فَتَعَلَىٰ اللَّهُ الْمَالِكُ
الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَبِيرِ ﴿١١٦﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١١٥-١١٦)

23:115. Did you think that We created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us?

23:116. So exalted be Allah, the True Sovereign; there is no god but He, Lord of the magnificent Throne.

﴿Did you think﴾, O people, ﴿that We created you without purpose﴾ that is, in vain, so that you might eat, drink, have fun, and enjoy the pleasures of this world, and We would leave you alone without any commands or prohibitions, reward or punishment? Hence He says:

﴿and that you would not be brought back to Us﴾ – and did this never cross your minds?

﴿So exalted be Allah, the True Sovereign; there is no god but He, Lord of the magnificent Throne﴾ for He is truly the Sovereign of all creation and He is truthful in His promise and warning, and He is the One Who is worthy of worship, because of the perfect attributes He possesses

﴿Lord of the magnificent Throne﴾ so it is more appropriate that He should be the Lord of everything beneath it, and that He would not create you in vain.



﴿وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون:

(١١٨-١١٧)

23:117. Whoever calls upon any other god besides Allah, for which he has no proof, his reckoning will only be with his Lord. Verily the disbelievers will never prosper.

23:118. So say: My Lord, forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of those who show mercy.

That is, whoever calls upon other gods besides Allah, without having any proof or evidence to support what he believes – for everyone who calls upon anything other than Allah has no proof for that; in fact the evidence all points to the falseness of his way, but he turns away from that proof wrongfully and stubbornly – will come to his Lord, and He will requite him for his deeds, and he will not attain anything of success, because he is a disbeliever, and ﴿Verily

the disbelievers will never prosper», because their disbelief is an obstacle to success.

«So say», calling upon your Lord, with sincere devotion to Him alone,

«My Lord, forgive» us so that we may be safe from harm, and have mercy on us, so that by Your mercy we may attain all that is good.

«for You are the best of those who show mercy». Whoever shows mercy to people, Allah is better for them than him, for He is more merciful towards His slave than a mother towards her child, and He is more merciful towards him than he is to himself.

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

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.



24.
Soorat an-Noor
(Madani)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



﴿سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾ (سورة النور: ١)

24:1. [This is] a soorah that We have sent down and ordained; in it We have sent down clear signs so that you may pay heed.

That is, this is ﴿a soorah﴾ of great importance
﴿that We have sent down﴾ as a mercy from Us to Our slaves, and We
have protected it from every devil
﴿and ordained﴾ that is, We have ordained in it what We ordained of
limits, testimony and so on.
﴿in it We have sent down clear signs﴾ that is, important rulings,
commands, rebukes and great wisdom
﴿so that you may pay heed﴾ when We explain to you and teach you
that which you did not know.

Then Allah begins to explain the rulings referred to:



﴿ الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُم بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَشَهِدَ عَنَّا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٢)

24:2. As for the woman and the man who commit fornication, flog each of them with a hundred lashes. Do not let pity for them deter you from obedience to Allah [in carrying out the punishment He has prescribed], if you believe in Allah and the Last Day; and let a group of the believers witness their punishment.

This ruling applies to men and women who are virgins and commit fornication; they are each to be flogged with a hundred lashes. As for the fornicators who were previously married,³⁵ the well-known, ṣaḥeeḥ Sunnah indicates that the *ḥadd* punishment in this case is stoning. Allah (ﷻ) has forbidden us to let pity for them deter us from obedience to Him and prevent us from carrying out the *ḥadd* punishment on them, whether that is natural pity or is because the person is a relative or friend and so on. Faith should lead one not to have that pity which could prevent one from carrying out the command of Allah. True mercy and compassion is in carrying out the *ḥadd* punishment on him that has been prescribed by Allah. Even though one may feel sorry for him because of what is decreed for him, in another way one should not feel sorry for him.

Allah (ﷻ) also commands us that the punishment of the fornicators should be witnessed by a group of the believers, so that it will become widely known and thus disgrace the fornicators and deter others from doing this deed. They should watch the *ḥadd* punishment as it is carried out, because witnessing the rulings actually being carried

³⁵ It refers to anyone who has ever been married and consummated the marriage, whether the marriage still stands or has ended through divorce or death of the spouse. (Translator)

out deepens one's knowledge of them and helps one to understand them better; that is also more likely to lead to accuracy in counting the number of lashes, to make sure that the number is not more or less than it should be. And Allah knows best.



﴿الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحَرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (سورة النور: ٣)

24:3. A man who fornicates may only marry a woman who fornicates or who is a polytheist, and a woman who fornicates may only marry a man who fornicates or who is a polytheist. Such marriages are forbidden to the believers.

This highlights the abhorrent nature of fornication, for it tarnishes the honour of the one who does it and that of the one with whom he does it, in a manner that is not shared by other sins. So Allah tells us that no woman would marry a fornicator except one who commits the same deed, so that they will be a match for one another, or a female polytheist who does not believe in the resurrection or requital, and does not adhere to the commands of Allah.

By the same token, no man would marry a woman who commits fornication except a fornicator or a polytheist.

﴿Such marriages are forbidden to the believers﴾ that is, Allah has prohibited them to marry fornicators. What this verse means is that if a person – man or woman – characteristically commits fornication, and does not repent from it, the one who wants to marry such a person, despite the fact that Allah has forbidden that, must either not be adhering to the rulings of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and such a person can only be a polytheist; or he or she is adhering to the rulings of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), but goes ahead with this

marriage despite being aware of the other person's fornication. In that case, the marriage is fornication and the individual is a fornicator and is immoral, for if he truly believed in Allah, he would not do that. This clearly indicates that it is prohibited to marry a woman who fornicates unless she repents, and it is prohibited to marry a man who fornicates unless he repents. That is because the connection between a husband and wife is the strongest form of companionship and bonds between people.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿[Allah will command:] Gather together those who did wrong, and others of their ilk ...﴾ (as-Saffāt 37: 22)

– that is, their spouses. Allah has forbidden that because of what it leads to of great evil, for it reflects a lack of protective jealousy and leads to the attribution to the husband of children who are not his; moreover, the fornicator or adulterer will be unable to keep his wife chaste because he is distracted by other women. Any one of these reasons on its own is sufficient to make it prohibited. This indicates that the fornicator or adulterer is not a believer, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The fornicator is not a believer at the time when he is committing fornication.» (Bukhari)

Even if he is not a polytheist, he cannot be given the praiseworthy description of being a believer in general terms.



﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ

رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾ (سورة النور: ٤-٥)

- 24:4. As for those who make accusations against chaste women but do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty lashes and never afterwards accept their testimony, for it is they who are the wicked transgressors,
- 24:5. Except those who repent after that and mend their ways, for verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Having highlighted the seriousness of the crime of fornication and adultery, by decreeing that the one who commits this crime should be flogged, or stoned if he or she was previously married, and stated that it is not permissible to marry such a person or mix with him or her in such a way that one cannot be safe from his or her evil, Allah (ﷻ) here highlights the seriousness of violating a person's honour by accusing him or her of fornication or adultery, as He says:

﴿As for those who make accusations against chaste women﴾ that is, women who are free (not slaves) and chaste. This also applies to men, for there is no differentiation between the genders in this regard. What is meant by making accusations is accusations of fornication or adultery, based on the context.

﴿but do not produce four witnesses﴾ that is, men of good character who will testify to that in clear terms.

﴿flog them with eighty lashes﴾ with a whip of moderate thickness, so as to cause pain but not to the point of causing harm, because the aim is discipline, not injury. This verse affirms the ḥadd punishment for slander, but that is on condition that the person who is accused is, as Allah (ﷻ) says, a chaste believer. As for slandering or accusing one who is not chaste, that deserves a disciplinary punishment (*ta'zeer*).

﴿and never afterwards accept their testimony﴾ that is, there is a further punishment in this case, which is that the testimony of the one who made that accusation is not to be accepted, even if he has been punished, unless he repents, as we shall see below.

﴿for it is they who are the wicked transgressors﴾ that is, they have gone beyond the bounds of obedience to Allah, and their evil

has increased, because of this violation of that which Allah has made sacred and this violation of the honour of his brother, because he gave people the opportunity to repeat what he said, thus undermining the bond of brotherhood that Allah has created among the believers, and he loved to see indecency spread among the believers. This indicates that slander or making false accusations is a major sin.

«Except those who repent after that and mend their ways, for verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful». Repentance, in this situation, means that the one who made that accusation admits that he was lying. It is obligatory for him to state that he was lying, even if he was certain that it had happened, because he failed to produce four witnesses. If the slanderer repents and mends his ways, then his bad deeds are turned into good deeds, and he is no longer to be described as a wicked transgressor. Similarly, his testimony may be accepted in the future, according to the correct scholarly view, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful; He forgives all sins for the one who repents and turns back to Him.

The slanderer is only to be flogged for not producing four witnesses if he is not the husband of the woman he accused. If he is the husband, then what is to be done (a procedure called *li'ân*) is described in the following passage:

❁ ❁

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا أَنفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَدُوا أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾ وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٧﴾ وَيَدْرُؤُا عنها الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ ﴿١٠﴾ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٦-١٠)

- 24:6. As for those who make accusations against their wives but have no witnesses except themselves, such a person should testify four times by Allah that he is telling the truth,
- 24:7. And the fifth [oath] should be invoking the curse of Allah upon himself if he is telling a lie.
- 24:8. But it will avert the punishment from her if she testifies four times by Allah that he is telling a lie,
- 24:9. And the fifth [oath] should be invoking the wrath of Allah upon herself if he is telling the truth.
- 24:10. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, and that He is Accepting of repentance, Most Wise, [He would have hastened to punish you].

The reason why the husband's testimony against his wife does not incur the ḥadd punishment is because usually the husband does not accuse his wife, when tarnishing her reputation would also tarnish his, unless he is telling the truth, and because he has the right to do that, for fear of a child being attributed to him who is not his child, as well as other reasons that are absent in regular cases of a person making accusations against a stranger. Hence Allah says:

«As for those who make accusations against their wives» that is, wives who are free women and not slaves «but have no witnesses» to support the accusation «except themselves», as they do not have any witnesses to testify to what they are accusing their wives of, «such a person should testify four times by Allah that he is telling the truth». It is called testimony, because it takes the place of witnesses, when the husband says: I call upon Allah to bear witness that I am telling the truth with regard to what I have accused her of.

«And the fifth [oath] should be invoking the curse of Allah upon himself if he is telling a lie» that is, the fifth time he should add to his testimony something to confirm his previous words, by invoking upon

himself the divine curse if he is lying. When he has completed this procedure of li'ân, the ḥadd punishment for making a false accusation is waived from him.

The apparent meaning of these verses suggests that if he mentions the alleged adulterer by name, he is not to be subjected to flogging because it is connected to the case of his wife. But is the ḥadd punishment to be carried out against her on the basis of the husband's li'ân if she refuses to swear an similar oath, or is she to be imprisoned? There are two scholarly views; the view that is supported by the evidence is that she is to be subjected to the ḥadd punishment, based on the fact that Allah says: ﴿But it will avert the punishment from her if she testifies four times by Allah that he is telling a lie...﴾. Were it not that the ḥadd punishment becomes due because of his li'ân, then her li'ân would not ward it off. This also indicates that the punishment may be averted from her if she responds to her husband's testimony with similar testimony of her own.

﴿if she testifies four times by Allah that he is telling a lie﴾ and the fifth time, to confirm that, she adds an oath invoking divine wrath upon herself if she is lying. Once the li'ân procedure between them has been completed, they become permanently separated, and the child concerning whom the dispute arose is not to be attributed to the man. The apparent meaning of this passage indicates that this wording is required, from both the man and the woman, in the event of li'ân, and it must be done in this order, and nothing of that should be omitted or altered. Li'ân is only for the husband, if he is accusing his wife; the converse does not apply. Once li'ân has been done, it does not matter if the child resembles the husband or not, just as, if a child resembles the alleged adulterer, he is still to be attributed to the husband (if no li'ân has taken place). Rather resemblance is to be taken into account when there is no other factor to indicate either way.

﴿Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, and that He is Accepting of repentance, Most Wise﴾ – the completion

of this sentence is omitted, but is indicated by the context: He would have caused to befall the partner who was lying that which he or she had invoked upon himself or herself. But by His grace and mercy, this ruling was decreed especially for spouses, because there was a need for it, but He has highlighted to you the abhorrent nature of fornication and adultery, and the abhorrent nature of false accusations and He has prescribed repentance from these major sins and others.



إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَا أَكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِفْكِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ تَوَلَّى إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٢﴾ تَوَلَّى جَاءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ فَأُوتِيَتْكُ مِنْهُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِالسِّتْرِ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَبَيِّنَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوبَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوبَ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَا يَأْتِلِ أَوْلُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولَى الْقُرْبَى

وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْلَمُوا وَيَتَفَحَّوْا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَزْمُونَ الْمُحْسَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعُنُوا فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَوْمَ نَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يُوفِّيهِمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ
﴿٢٥﴾ الَّذِينَ يَدَّبُّوا لِلْخَيْثُورِ وَالْخَيْثُورِ لِلْخَيْثُورِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ
لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ أُولَئِكَ مَبْرُؤُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ ﴿ (سورة

النور: ١١-٢٦)

- 24:11. Verily those who propagated the slander were a group among you. Do not think that it was bad for you; rather it is good for you. Each man among them bears [responsibility for] his share in the sin, and as for the one among them who played the major role, for him there will be a grievous punishment.
- 24:12. Why, when you heard it, did the believing men and women not think the best of one another and say: This is obviously a lie?
- 24:13. Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it? As they did not bring the witnesses, they are the liars before Allah.
- 24:14. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you in this world and the hereafter, a grievous penalty would have overtaken you, because of the talk you indulged in,
- 24:15. When you were propagating it with your tongues and saying with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You regarded [your talking about it] as a trivial matter, whereas with Allah it was a grievous offence.
- 24:16. Why, when you heard it, did you not say: It is not right for us to speak of this. Glory be to You [O Allah]!³⁶ This is a monstrous slander!?

³⁶ This is an expression of amazement, shock or surprise, as one would usually say, when seeing or hearing something that is amazing, strange or shocking. "subhān Allāh (glory be to Allah)!"

- 24:17. Allah admonishes you never to repeat such conduct, if you are [truly] believers.
- 24:18. And Allah explains the revelations to you, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.
- 24:19. Verily those who like to see indecency spread among the believers will have a painful punishment in this world and the hereafter; Allah knows, and you do not know.
- 24:20. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, and that He is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, [He would have hastened to punish you].
- 24:21. O you who believe, do not follow the footsteps of the Shayṭān; whoever follows the footsteps of the Shayṭān, he only enjoys indecency and wickedness. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, not one of you would ever have been purified. But Allah purifies whomever He wills, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.
- 24:22. Let not those among you who are people of virtue and wealth swear to cease giving [aid] to their kinsfolk, the needy and those who have migrated in Allah's cause. Rather let them pardon and overlook. Do you not like for Allah to forgive you? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 24:23. Verily those who make accusations against chaste women who are innocent at heart and believers are cursed in this world and the hereafter, and theirs will be a grievous punishment
- 24:24. On the day when their own tongues, hands and feet will testify against them regarding what they used to do.
- 24:25. On that day, Allah will give them in full their due recompense and they will know that Allah is indeed the Truth Who makes manifest [the true nature of all things].
- 24:26. Evil men are for evil women and evil women are for evil men; good words describe good people, and good people are described

by good words.³⁷ Those [good people] are innocent of all that [the slanderers] say; they will have forgiveness and a generous provision.

In the previous verses Allah mentioned the seriousness of false accusations of adultery in general terms; it is as if that was an introduction to this story, which happened to the noblest of women, the Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’ishah (*raḍiya Allāhu ‘anhā* – may Allah be pleased with her). These verses were revealed concerning the well-known story of the slander (*al-ifk*) which is proven in the books of *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, the *Sunans* and the *Musnads* (books of Hadith).

In brief, the Prophet (ﷺ) went out on one of his military campaigns, and took his wife, ‘Ā’ishah aṣ-Ṣiddeeqah bint (Abi Bakr) aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (*raḍiya Allāhu ‘anhuma* – may Allah be pleased with both of them) with him. Her necklace broke, so she stayed behind to look for it, and they moved on with her camel and howdah, not realising that she was not there. The army moved on, and she came back to the place where they had been camping; she knew that once they realised that she was missing, they would come back for her, but they continued on their way. In the meantime, Ṣafwān ibn al-Mu‘aṭṭal as-Sulami (رضي الله عنه), who was one of the best of the Ṣaḥābah, had lagged behind the army, and had stopped at the end of the night to sleep. He now came along and he saw ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) and recognised her, so he made his camel kneel down and she mounted it, without him speaking to her or her speaking to him. Then he came, leading the camel, after the army had halted at noon time. When some of the hypocrites who were accompanying

³⁷ This translation of the meanings is in accordance with the view of the majority of commentators. However, this verse may also mean: “Evil men are for evil women and evil women are for evil men; good women are for good men and good men are for good women”, which indicates that ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), as she was married to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), could not have been anything but good.

the Prophet (ﷺ) on that journey saw Şafwân arriving with her in that state, they began to spread rumours, and the rumours spread far and wide, and people's tongues wagged until even some believers were deceived and began to narrate what they had heard, and the revelations stopped coming to the Messenger (ﷺ) for a long time.

News of what was happening reached 'Ā'ishah sometime after that, and she was very upset by it. Then Allah (ﷻ) sent down revelation confirming her innocence in these verses, in which He admonished the believers, highlighted how serious the matter was, and gave some important instructions.

﴿Verily those who propagated the slander﴾ that is, the abhorrent lie, which was an accusation against the Mother of the Believers ﴿were a group among you﴾ that is, they were a group who belonged to you, O believers, some of whom were sincere believers, but they were deceived by the rumours of the hypocrites, and some of them were themselves hypocrites.

﴿Do not think that it was bad for you; rather it is good for you﴾ because of the outcome of the matter, namely the declaration of the innocence and chastity of the Mother of the Believers, and the mention of her in the highest terms; that praise went even further, to include all of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ); and because of what this incident led to of the revelation of some verses that people needed, which will remain applicable until the Day of Resurrection. All of this was great goodness that, were it not for the rumours spread by those who initiated the slander, would not have been achieved. If Allah wills something, He creates a cause for it. Therefore these words are addressed in general terms to all the believers, as Allah told them that impugning one another is like impugning their own selves. Hence the verse implies that the believers, in their mutual love, compassion, mercy and unity are like a single body, and the believers as a whole are like a structure, parts of which support other parts. Just as any individual would hate his honour to be impugned, he should hate

for anyone to impugn the honour of his fellow believer, who is like himself. Unless a person reaches this level, he is lacking in faith and in sincerity towards his brother.

«Each man among them bears [responsibility for] his share in the sin» this is a warning to those who produced this slander that they will be punished for what they said of such things. And in fact the Prophet (ﷺ) carried out the ḥadd punishment on some of them. «and as for the one among them who played the major role» namely the evil hypocrite ‘Abdullâh ibn Ubayy ibn Salool (may Allah curse him)

«for him there will be a grievous punishment» namely eternity in the lowest level of hell.

Then Allah advises His slaves as to what they should do if they hear such talk:

«Why, when you heard it, did the believing men and women not think the best of one another» that is, the believers should think well of one another, which means assuming that they are innocent of what they are accused of, because what they have of certain faith should ward off any false accusations made against them.

«and say» because of that positive thinking of one another

«This is obviously a lie» that is, a fabrication, one of the most abhorrent and most obviously mendacious of things. This is the way of thinking that is required when the believer hears such things about his fellow believer; he should state his innocence verbally and tell the one who says that: You are lying.

«Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it?» That is, why did those who made this accusation not bring four witnesses of good character to testify to it?

«As they did not bring the witnesses, they are the liars before Allah». Even if they are certain of that, according to the rulings of Allah they are liars, because Allah has forbidden them to speak of that unless they can produce four witnesses. Hence Allah says: «As they did

not bring the witnesses, they are the liars before Allah». All of this serves to emphasise the sanctity of the Muslim's honour, as it is not permissible to make an accusation against him without having the required number of witnesses to confirm it.

«Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you in this world and the hereafter», as His kindness encompasses you in both realms, in both your religious and worldly affairs, «a grievous penalty would have overtaken you, because of the talk you indulged in» with regard to the slander, because you deserve that as a result of what you said. But by Allah's grace and mercy towards you, He prescribed repentance for you and made the punishment a means of purification.

«When you were propagating it with your tongues» that is, spreading it and passing it to one another, whispering the gossip when it was a false story, «and saying with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge». There are two forbidden matters here: speaking on the basis of falsehood and speaking without knowledge «You regarded [your talking about it] as a trivial matter», therefore some of the believers did that, who later repented and purified themselves «whereas with Allah it was a grievous offence». This is an emphatic rebuke against indulging in some sins because one thinks that they are trivial. But what a person thinks will not avail him anything and will not reduce the punishment for that sin; rather it makes him get carried away in sin and makes it easy for him to do it again.

«Why, when you heard it» that is, why – O believers – when you heard what the people of the slander said «did you not say», denouncing it and regarding it as a serious matter, «It is not right for us to speak of this» that is, we should not speak of this, and it is not appropriate for us to speak of this obvious lie, because the believer's faith prevents him from committing abhorrent deeds

«This is a monstrous slander» that is, a monstrous lie.

«Allah admonishes you never to repeat such conduct» that is, accusing the believers of immorality; Allah admonishes you and advises you not to repeat that, and what a beautiful admonition and advice from our Lord. Therefore we should accept it and submit to it, and give thanks to Him for what He has explained to us.

«...How excellent is the exhortation Allah gives you!...» (*an-Nisā'* 4: 58)

«if you are [truly] believers». This indicates that sincere faith prevents a person from committing prohibited actions.

«And Allah explains the revelations to you» that contain the explanation of rulings, admonition, rebukes, encouragement and warnings. He explains them to you clearly,

«for Allah is All-Knowing» that is, His knowledge is perfect and His wisdom is all-encompassing, and by His knowledge and wisdom He has taught you what He taught you, and that is in your best interests at all times.

«Verily those who like to see indecency» that is, abhorrent and grievous things «spread among the believers will have a painful punishment in this world and the hereafter» that is, a punishment that will hurt them emotionally and physically, because of their insincerity towards their Muslim brothers and their loving bad things for them, and their audacity in impugning their honour. If this warning is for merely liking indecency to be spread, and finding it exciting, then how about that which is worse than that, of showing that and transmitting it? It is the same whether the immoral act is actually committed or not.

All of this is by the mercy of Allah towards His believing slaves, and in order to protect their honour, as He protected their lives and wealth. Allah enjoined them to have a sincere relationship with one another, and instructed them that one of them should love for his brother what he loves for himself, and hate for his brother what he hates for himself.

﴿Allah knows, and you do not know﴾ therefore He has taught you and explained to you that of which you are not aware.

﴿Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you﴾ that encompass you on all sides, ﴿and that He is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful﴾, He would not have explained these rulings to you and would not have exhorted you, and He would not have given respite to those who go against His commands. But by His grace and mercy, which are His constant attributes, this matter resulted in some goodness for you in this world and in the hereafter, that is more than you can count or enumerate.

Having forbidden this sin in particular, Allah then forbids sins in general terms, as He says:

﴿O you who believe, do not follow the footsteps of the Shayṭān﴾ that is, his ways and whispers. The footsteps of the Shayṭān include all the sins having to do with the heart (beliefs and intentions), tongue (words) and body (physical actions).

By His wisdom, Allah (ﷻ) has explained the ruling, which is the prohibition on following the footsteps of the Shayṭān, and the wisdom behind the ruling, by highlighting the evil of the prohibited deed, which dictates that one should stay away from it:

﴿whoever follows the footsteps of the Shayṭān, he﴾ namely the Shayṭān ﴿only enjoins indecency﴾ that is, major sins that are regarded by common sense and religious teachings as indecent, even though there may be some inclination towards them

﴿and wickedness﴾ – this refers to something that is denounced on the basis of reason and no one would approve of it. The sins that are described as being the footsteps of the Shayṭān do not go beyond that. Allah has forbidden them to His slaves as a favour from Him, so they should give thanks to Him and remember Him, because this is protection for them against being contaminated with abhorrent and evil deeds.

By His kindness towards them, He has forbidden these sins to them, as He has forbidden them to consume lethal poison and the like.

﴿Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, not one of you would ever have been purified﴾ that is, they would never have been purified from following the footsteps of the Shayṭān, because the Shayṭān and his troops strive hard to call people to sins and make them appear fair-seeming, and the *nafs* is inclined towards evil and prompts one to do it. Man by nature is prone to shortcomings in all aspects, and faith is not strong, so if man were to be left (without help) under the influence of these factors, no one would be purified by cleansing himself of sins and bad deeds, and by starting to do good deeds. Purification requires cleansing oneself and doing good deeds. But Allah's grace and mercy dictate that some of you should be cleansed and purified. One of the supplications of the Prophet (ﷺ) was:

«O Allah, grant my soul piety and purify it, for You are the best to purify it, You are its Guardian and its Lord.» (Muslim)

Hence Allah says:

﴿But Allah purifies whomever He wills﴾, who He knows is fit for that; hence He says: ﴿and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing﴾.

﴿Let not those among you who are people of virtue and wealth swear to cease giving [aid] to their kinsfolk, the needy and those who have migrated in Allah's cause. Rather let them pardon and overlook﴾.

One of those who were involved in spreading the slander was Miṣṭah ibn Athāthah, who was a relative of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq. Miṣṭah was a poor man, one of those who had migrated in Allah's cause. Abu Bakr swore that he would no longer spend on him, because of what he had said. But then this verse was revealed, forbidding them to swear that they would no longer spend on them, and urging him to pardon and overlook, promising the forgiveness of Allah, if he forgave his relative:

«Do you not like for Allah to forgive you? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful»; if you are forgiving towards His slaves, by pardoning and overlooking, then Allah will treat you likewise. When Abu Bakr heard this verse, he said: Nay, by Allah I like that Allah should forgive me. And he resumed spending on Mistah.

This verse indicates that it is prescribed to spend on relatives, and one should not stop doing so, or stop showing kindness towards them, because of a sin that a person may commit. It is encouraged to pardon and overlook, no matter what sins a person may commit.

Then comes a stern warning against making accusations against chaste women:

«Verily those who make accusations against chaste women» that is, women who refrain from immoral acts

«who are innocent at heart» and such things never cross their minds «and believers are cursed in this world and the hereafter» the curse can only be because of a major sin. It is highlighted that the curse is ongoing and will impact them in both realms

«and theirs will be a grievous punishment». This is in addition to the curse; Allah will cast them far away from His mercy and will send against them His mighty vengeance.

That punishment will come on the Day of Resurrection, «On the day when their own tongues, hands and feet will testify against them regarding what they used to do». Each of their physical faculties will testify against them, regarding what they did. They will be caused to speak by the One Who will cause everything to speak, so it will not be possible to deny anything. He is just towards His slaves, for He will cause the witnesses to be from their own selves.

«On that day, Allah will give them in full their due recompense» that is, He will requite them for their deeds, giving the due recompense that is based on justice and fairness, and they will find their recompense in full, with nothing missing.

﴿...They will say: Woe to us! What sort of record is this, that leaves no deed, small or great, unaccounted for? They will find all they did recorded there, and your Lord will not wrong anyone.﴾ (al-Kahf 18: 49)

They will realise, in that great place of standing, that Allah is the Truth Who makes manifest all things.

His sublime attributes are true, His deeds are true, worship of Him is true, the meeting with Him is true, His promise, His warning, His religious decree and His judgement are all true, and His Messengers are true, so there is nothing true except that which is with Allah and from Allah.

﴿Evil men are for evil women and evil women are for evil men﴾ that is, everything that is evil of men, women, words and deeds is befitting for the one who is evil, for it is in harmony with him and is similar to him. And everything that is good of men, women, words and deeds is befitting for the one who is good, for it is in harmony with him and is similar to him.

This is general in meaning, and nothing is excluded from that. One of the most important implications of that is the fact that nothing is suitable for the Prophets – especially the Messengers of strong will among them, and especially our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who is the best of all good people in absolute terms – except the best of women.

Casting aspersions upon ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) with regard to this matter is casting aspersions upon the Prophet (ﷺ); he was the intended target of the slander fabricated by the hypocrites. From the mere fact that she was the wife of the Messenger (ﷺ), it is known that she could not be anything but good and pure, innocent of this reprehensible action.

So how about when she is more than that? For she was the *siddeeqah* of women (that is, one who was strong and true in faith), the best, most knowledgeable and most pure of women, the beloved of the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds; revelation never came

down to him when he was under the cover of any of his other wives, apart from her.

Then Allah states that clearly, in such a way that no evildoer would have any justification for saying anything bad about her, and that there is no room left for doubt, as He says: «Those [good people] are innocent of all that [the slanderers] say». This refers primarily to 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), but also to other chaste believing women who are innocent at heart.

«they will have forgiveness» that will cleanse all their sins «(and a generous provision)» in paradise, coming from the Most Generous Lord.



﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلٰى
 أَهْلِهَا ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا
 حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِن قِيلَ لَكُمْ اٰرْجِعُوْا فَاٰرْجِعُوْا هُوَ اٰزْكٰى لَكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
 عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُوْنَةٍ فِيْهَا مَتَعٌ لَّكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ
 مَا تَبْدُرُوْنَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٢٧-٢٩)

- 24:27. O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted their occupants; that is better for you, so that you may pay heed.
- 24:28. If you do not find anyone therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. If you are told to go back, then go back; that is more proper for you. And Allah is well aware of all that you do.
- 24:29. There is no sin on you if you enter uninhabited houses, if that serves a useful purpose. And Allah knows what you disclose and what you conceal.

Here Allah instructs His believing slaves not to enter houses other than their own without permission, because that leads to a number of bad consequences, such as the following:

- That to which the Messenger (ﷺ) referred when he said:
 «Seeking permission has only been prescribed so that one will not see that which is not appropriate for him to see.» (Bukhari and Muslim)
 Not following this ruling properly may lead to one's gaze falling upon private things that he is not meant to see inside other people's houses. A person's house, by covering what is private, inside its walls, is like a garment that covers what is private of his body.
- Entering other people's houses without permission may create suspicion about the one who enters them, and he may be accused of evil deeds such as stealing and so on, because entering houses surreptitiously is suggestive of evil intent. Allah forbids the believers to enter houses other than their own until they seek permission; the word used in the original Arabic suggests that seeking permission creates a sense of assurance, whereas entering without permission may cause alarm.

﴿and greeted their occupants﴾ – the manner in which this is to be done is mentioned in the hadith:

«As-salâmu ‘alaykum (peace be upon you); may I come in?»
 (Recorded by Abu Dâwood; al-Albâni graded it as sound)

﴿that﴾ namely seeking permission to enter
 ﴿is better for you, so that you may pay heed﴾, because it will serve many interests, and because it is part of the noble characteristics that are required of the Muslim.

If he is given permission, then he may enter, but ﴿If you do not find anyone therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. If you are told to go back, then go back﴾ that is, do not refuse to go

back, and do not get angry about it, because the owner of the house is not depriving you of a right that you must have. Rather he has the choice: if he wishes he may give you permission to enter, or he may refuse. So no one should feel offended or annoyed in that case.

﴿that is more proper for you﴾ that is, it is more effective in protecting you from falling into sin, and it helps you to do more good.

﴿And Allah is well aware of all that you do﴾; He will requite each person for his deeds, whether they were many or few, good or otherwise.

This ruling applies to inhabited houses, whether one is going there for a purpose or not, and to uninhabited houses for which one has no need to enter them.

In the case of houses that are not inhabited, but they contain the belongings of the person who needs to enter the house, but there is no one present whose permission he may seek to enter – which applies to rented accommodation and so on – Allah has mentioned them in the following verse:

﴿There is no sin on you﴾ that is, there is no blame on you. In contrast, entering the houses mentioned above without permission is deemed to be prohibited because it is described as blameworthy.

﴿if you enter uninhabited houses, if that serves a useful purpose﴾. This is an example of the amazing wisdom and prudence of the Qur'an: the words ﴿do not enter houses other than your own﴾ are general in meaning and apply to all houses that do not belong to the individual, but Allah (ﷻ) excluded from that houses that do not belong to him, but he has some interest there, and no one lives there. In that case, blame is waived for the one who enters them.

﴿And Allah knows what you disclose and what you conceal﴾ – He knows your inward and outward condition, and He knows what is in your best interests; therefore He has prescribed for you what you need and cannot do without of laws and teachings.



﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَرَادَ لَكُمْ إِنَّا اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ يَمَّا يَصْنَعُونَ﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٠)

24:30. Tell the believing men to avert their gaze [from that which is forbidden] and restrain their carnal desires; that will be more conducive to their purity. Verily Allah is well aware of all that they do.

That is, instruct the believers and tell those who have faith that prevents them from doing that which undermines faith:

﴿to avert their gaze﴾ from looking at nudity, or at *non-mahram* women or beardless youths, where there is the fear that looking at them may lead to temptation; and tell them to avert their gaze from looking at worldly adornments that may be tempting and cause them to fall into that which is prohibited.

﴿and restrain their carnal desires﴾ from prohibited sexual acts, in the vagina, anus or otherwise, and from allowing others to touch or look at their private parts

﴿that﴾ caution with regard to the gaze and carnal desires

﴿will be more conducive to their purity﴾ that is, it will be purer and better, and more effective in helping them to do righteous deeds. The one who restrains his carnal desires and his gaze will be pure and free of the evil that contaminates those who commit immoral deeds, and it will make his deeds pure, because of giving up the prohibited actions to which the soul may be inclined and may prompt one to do. Whoever gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will compensate him with something better than it; whoever averts his gaze (from that which is forbidden), Allah will give him enlightenment. If a person restrains his carnal desires and averts his gaze from that which is forbidden, and that which leads to it, despite the pressure of desire,

then he is more likely to refrain from other things. Therefore Allah describes this as *hifdh* (lit. guarding, translated here as “restraining”) because if a person does not try hard to keep watch over the thing that he is guarding, and take proper measures to guard it, it will not be guarded. The same applies to the gaze and carnal desires: if he does not try hard to guard them and restrain them, they will cause him to fall into troubles and problems.

Think about how Allah gives instructions to restrain their carnal desires completely, because allowing them free reign is not permissible under any circumstances. But with regard to the gaze, He says ﴿to avert their gaze﴾; the wording of the original Arabic suggests that this is only to be done in part, because it is permissible to look in some cases, if there is a need for that, as in the case of one who is giving testimony, or one who wants to propose marriage, and so on. Then Allah reminds them that He is aware of all that they do, so that they will strive hard to protect themselves against that which is prohibited.



﴿ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِمَخْمَرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرَابَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٣١)

24:31. Tell the believing women to avert their gaze [from that which is forbidden] and restrain their carnal desires, and not to show

their adornments except what ordinarily appears thereof.³⁸ And let them draw [part of] their headcovers over their chests and not show their adornments except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their [fellow Muslim] women, slaves whom they own, male retainers³⁹ who are free of physical desire, or small children who still have no awareness of the private aspects of women. Nor let them stamp their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And, O believers, turn all together towards Allah in repentance, so that you may prosper.

Having instructed the believing men to avert their gaze and restrain their carnal desires, Allah now instructs the believing women to do likewise:

«Tell the believing women to avert their gaze» and avoid looking at that which they are not supposed to look at, such as looking at men with desire and other kinds of prohibited looking.

«and restrain their carnal desires» by not allowing anyone to have intercourse with them, touch them or look at them in prohibited ways.

«and not to show their adornments» such as beautiful clothes and jewellery; the entire body comes under the heading of adornment.

Because the outer garment is something that cannot be concealed, Allah says: «except what ordinarily appears thereof» that is, the outer garment that is usually worn, so long as there is nothing in it that could cause temptation.

«And let them draw [part of] their headcovers over their chests». This is in order to perfect their covering up. This indicates that the adornment that is prohibited to show includes the entire body, as

³⁸ «what ordinarily appears thereof»: this refers to the outer garments.

³⁹ This refers to dependants or followers who are attached to a tribe or family.

we have mentioned. Then Allah repeats the prohibition on showing adornment, then makes an exception from that:

﴿except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers﴾ – this includes the father himself, and grandfathers, no matter how far the line of ascent reaches

﴿their sons, their husbands' sons﴾ this includes sons and grandsons, no matter how far the line of descent reaches.

﴿their brothers, their brothers' sons﴾ this includes both full brothers and half-brothers through the father or mother

﴿their sisters' sons, their [fellow Muslim] women﴾ that is, it is permissible for women to look at one another in all cases. It may be that what is meant by “their women” is women of the same religion as them, namely other Muslim women. This is quoted as proof by those who say that it is not permissible for a *dhimmi* (non-Muslim) woman to see a Muslim woman (without hijab).

﴿slaves whom they own﴾ it is permissible for a slave, if the woman owns him completely, to see his mistress, so long as he belongs to her. If that ownership comes to an end, in full or partially, then it is not permissible for him to see her.

﴿male retainers who are free of physical desire﴾ that is, those who are dependent on you and are connected to you of men who have no desire, such as one who has an intellectual disability and is not aware of what is going around him, or one who is impotent and has no desire, physical or otherwise. In this case it is not prohibited for these individuals to look at the woman.

﴿or small children who still have no awareness of the private aspects of women﴾ that is, children below the age of discernment. It is permissible for them to look at non-mahram women. Allah (ﷻ) gives the reason for that, which is that they have no awareness of the private aspects of women. In other words they have no knowledge and no desire yet. This indicates that once the child has reached the age of discernment, women should cover in front of him, because he is now aware of the private aspects of women.

﴿Nor let them stamp their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments﴾ that is, they should not stamp the ground with their feet so that the jewellery they are wearing, such as anklets and the like, makes a noise by which their adornments may be known, and thus become a means of temptation. From this verse and others is derived the principle of barring the means. If something is permissible in and of itself, but it may lead to something that is prohibited, or there is the fear that that may happen, then it is disallowed. Stamping the feet on the ground is permissible in principle, but if it is a means of making hidden adornment known, then it is disallowed.

Having issued these goodly instructions and this excellent advice, because it is inevitable that there will be some shortcomings on the part of the believers, Allah (ﷻ) enjoins us to repent, as He says:

﴿And, O believers, turn all together towards Allah in repentance﴾, because the believer's faith calls him to repent. Then that is made a condition of attaining prosperity, as Allah says:

﴿so that you may prosper﴾, for there is no way to prosper except by repenting, which means giving up that which Allah hates, both inwardly and outwardly, and focusing on that which He loves, both inwardly and outwardly. This indicates that every believer needs to repent, because here Allah is addressing all the believers together. And He urges them to be sincere in repentance, as He says: ﴿turn all together towards Allah in repentance﴾ that is, not for any other purpose except seeking His pleasure; it should not be for any other purpose such as seeking protection from troubles in this world, or showing off and seeking to enhance one's reputation, or other corrupt purposes.



﴿وَأَنكحُوا الْأَيْمَانَ مِنكُمُ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِن عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِن يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ وَلِاسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ

مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَعَأْتُوهُمْ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاكُمْ وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيْنَكُمْ عَلَى الْإِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ تَحْصُنَا لِنَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ يُكْرِهْنَهُنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

(سورة النور: ٣٢-٣٣) ﴿٣٣﴾

- 24:32. Arrange marriages for those among you who are single, and those who are righteous and fit for marriage among your male and female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will suffice them from His bounty, for Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.
- 24:33. Let those who do not have the means to marry keep themselves chaste until Allah suffices them from His bounty. If any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing [to enable them to earn their freedom in return for a certain sum], then write it for them, if you see any good in them,⁴⁰ and give them some of the wealth that Allah has given you. Do not force your slave girls into prostitution, if they want to remain chaste, seeking thereby some worldly gain. But if anyone does compel them, verily Allah, after such compulsion, is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs guardians and masters to arrange marriages for the single people under their care. This refers to those who have no spouses, whether they are men, previously married women or virgins. So relatives and guardians of orphans should arrange marriages for those who wish to get married among those on whom they are obliged to spend. If they are enjoined to arrange marriages for those who are under their guardianship, then it is more appropriate that they should be instructed to get married themselves.

﴿and those who are righteous and fit for marriage among your male and female slaves﴾ it may be that what is meant by the word

⁴⁰ That is, if you deem them able to earn their own livelihood and not become dependent on others.

ṣāliḥeen (translated here as «righteous and fit for marriage») is being righteous in religious terms, and in the case of male or female slaves who are righteous – which refers to those who are not immoral and do not commit fornication – their master is instructed to arrange marriages for them, as a reward to the slave for being righteous and by way of encouraging him to remain righteous. The fact that it is not permissible for anyone to marry one who is immoral and fornicates confirms what is mentioned at the beginning of the soorah, that it is prohibited to marry a man or woman who fornicates until he or she repents. Righteousness is singled out for mention with regard to slaves – as opposed to those who are free – because fornication is usually more common among slaves. Or it may be that what is meant by *ṣāliḥeen* is those slaves, male and female, who are fit and capable for marriage and ready to bear the responsibilities thereof.

The latter view is supported by the fact that the master is not obliged to arrange a marriage for his slave before he needs to get married. And it is not unlikely that both meanings are intended. And Allah knows best.

«If they» that is, married people or those who want to get married «are poor, Allah will suffice them from His bounty». So you should not let what you imagine – that if he gets married, he will become poor because of having too many dependents – prevent you from getting married. This offers encouragement to get married, and is a divine promise to the one who gets married that he will become independent of means after having been poor.

«for Allah is All-Encompassing» and His generosity encompasses all

«All-Knowing» – He knows who deserves His grace and bounty in both religious and worldly terms, or in one of them, and who does not deserve that. So He gives to all in accordance with His knowledge and wisdom.

«Let those who do not have the means to marry keep themselves chaste until Allah suffices them from His bounty». This ruling applies to the one who is unable to get married. Allah instructs him to keep himself chaste, refrain from that which is prohibited and to take measures to restrain himself and prevent thoughts crossing his mind that may prompt him to fall into sin. He should also do what the Prophet (ﷺ) instructed, as he said:

«O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, and whoever cannot, let him fast, for it will be a shield for him.» (Muslim)

«Let those who do not have the means to marry» that is, they are not able to get married, either because they themselves are poor or because their guardians and masters are poor, or because the latter refused to arrange marriages for them, and they do not have the means to force them to do that. This interpretation is better than the interpretation of those who understood it to refer to those who cannot afford the *mahr* (dowry) for marriage. There are two reservations about the latter interpretation:

- 1- The word *mahr* is not mentioned in this verse, so we should not assume that this is what is meant.
- 2- Introducing the idea of the *mahr* would restrict the meaning to free people who can or cannot afford it, and would exclude male and female slaves and those whose marriage is the responsibility of their guardians, as we have mentioned above.

«keep themselves chaste until Allah suffices them from His bounty» – this is a promise to the one who keeps himself chaste that Allah will suffice him and make things easy for him; he is instructed to await relief so that his situation will not become unbearable.

«If any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing [to enable them to earn their freedom in return for a certain sum], then write it for them, if you see any good in them» that is, whoever among your slaves, male or female, seeks a contract of manumission from you in order

to purchase his or her freedom, you should respond to this request and write that contract for him or her.

﴿if you see any good in them﴾ that is, in those who are requesting that contract. What is meant by good here is the ability to earn a living, as well as righteousness and religious commitment, because writing such a contract serves two interests: the interest of manumission and freedom (for the slave), and the interest (or benefit) of the money he pays to his master in order to ransom himself (for the master). Perhaps he will work hard and strive, and be able to earn money for his master during the period covered by the contract of manumission that he could not do as a slave, so there will be no harm done to the master's interests by writing this contract; this is in addition to the great benefits that will be attained by the slave. Therefore Allah enjoined masters to draw up contracts in this way, and that is either obligatory, as appears to be the case, or it is recommended, according to the other opinion. Allah enjoined that slaves should be helped in their manumission, because they need that, as they have no wealth of their own. Therefore He said: ﴿and give them some of the wealth that Allah has given you﴾. This includes a command to the master who writes the contract of manumission to give him some of the costs of his manumission or to waive some of the costs, and He also instructed people in general to help them.

Therefore Allah has allocated a share of zakâh to slaves who seek to buy their freedom, and He encourages people to give it, as He says: ﴿and give them some of the wealth that Allah has given you﴾. That is, as the wealth belongs to Allah, what He has given to you is a gift from Allah to you and is a pure blessing, so show kindness to the slaves of Allah as Allah has shown kindness to you.

What this verse means is that if a slave does not seek manumission, then his master is not obliged to initiate that process. If he does not know of any good in him, in the sense that what he knows of him is the opposite of that, either because he knows that he is not able to earn a living and would therefore become dependent upon people and

destitute, or he fears that if he is manumitted and becomes free, he would spread mischief, then in such cases the master is not instructed to manumit him; rather he is forbidden to do that because of the reservations mentioned above.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Do not force your slave girls into prostitution, if they want to remain chaste﴾ because it is not possible to imagine them being forced into that unless they want to be chaste. If a slave woman does not want to be chaste, then she is immoral and her master must prevent her from doing that. This prohibition is mentioned because they used to do that during the *jāhiliyah* (pre-Islamic period of ignorance), when a master would force his slave woman into prostitution in order to take her earnings. Hence Allah says: ﴿seeking thereby some worldly gain﴾. It is not befitting for your slave women to be better and more chaste than you, when you are doing that to them for the sake of worldly gain and some small fleeting gain that is soon gone.

Attaining dignity, purity and decency – regardless of reward or punishment in the hereafter – is better than acquiring some small gain that causes you to become immoral and vile.

Then Allah calls upon those who forced their slave women into prostitution to repent, as He says: ﴿But if anyone does compel them, verily Allah, after such compulsion, is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾, so let him repent to Allah and give up what he did that incurred divine wrath. If he does that, Allah will forgive him his sins and will have mercy on him, as he had mercy on himself and tried to protect himself from punishment, and as he showed mercy towards his slave woman by not forcing her to do that which would harm her.



﴿وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ مُّبِينَاتٍ وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكَ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

24:34. Verily We have sent down to you revelations making things clear, and an account of those [nations] who passed away before you, and an admonition for those who fear Allah.

This highlights the greatness and high status of these verses that are recited to His slaves, so that they may realise their importance and comply with them in the proper manner.

﴿Verily We have sent down to you revelations making things clear﴾ that is, they are clear in meaning and clarify everything that you need to know of the fundamentals and minor issues of Islam, so that there will be no confusion or ambiguity.

﴿and﴾ We have also sent down to you ﴿an account of those [nations] who passed away before you﴾ that is, stories of the earlier nations, both righteous and otherwise, and a description of their deeds and what happened to them of ease and hardship, so that you may take it as an example and lesson that whoever does what they did will be requited as they were requited.

﴿and an admonition for those who fear Allah﴾ that is, and We have sent down to you an admonition for those who fear Allah, containing the promises and warnings, encouragement and deterrent, by which those who fear Allah may be admonished, so that they will refrain from that which Allah hates and do that which Allah loves.



﴿ اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكُوفٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٥)

24:35. Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His light is that of a niche in which is a lamp; the lamp is in a glass; the glass is like a brightly-shining star. [The lamp is] lit from a blessed tree: an olive, neither of the east nor of the west,⁴¹ whose oil would almost glow [by itself] though no fire touched it. Light upon light; Allah guides to His light whomever He will. Allah sets forth comparisons for people; and Allah has knowledge of all things.

«Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth». This is true in both a literal and metaphorical sense, for Allah (ﷻ) is Himself light and His veil – which, were it not for His kindness, the splendour of His Countenance would have burned everything of His creation as far as He can see – is also light. By that light the Throne, the Footstool, the sun, the moon and all light is illuminated, and by it paradise is illuminated. This is also true in a metaphorical sense. So His Book is light, His law is light, faith and knowledge in the hearts of His Messengers and His believing slaves is light. Were it not for His light, darkness would have accumulated. Therefore every place in which His light is lacking is a place of darkness and constraint.

«The likeness of His light» to which He guides people, which is the light of faith and the Qur'an in the hearts of the believers «is that of a niche in which is a lamp», because the niche concentrates the light of the lamp so that it is not scattered «the lamp is in a glass; the glass» because of its purity and splendour «is like a brightly-shining star» that is, it shines like a star.

That lamp which is in that shining glass is «lit from a blessed tree: an olive» that is, it is lit with olive oil, which shines the brightest when it is lit

⁴¹ This refers to an olive tree in a place that receives sunlight throughout the day, not only when the sun is rising or setting. Olive trees that grow in such locations produce purer and higher-quality oil. (aṭ-Ṭabari; Ibn Katheer; ar-Râzi)

﴿neither of the east﴾ only, so that it does not get any sun at the end of the day

﴿nor of the west﴾ so that it does not get any sun at the beginning of the day. As it is neither of these two, it is in the middle of the earth, like the olive trees of Greater Syria, which get sun at both the beginning and the end of the day, so their oil is of good quality and good taste, and is the purest oil. Hence Allah says:

﴿whose oil﴾, because it is so pure, ﴿would almost glow [by itself] though no fire touched it﴾. So if the fire does touch it, it shines very brightly.

﴿Light upon light﴾ that is, the light of the fire and the light of the oil.

This likeness that Allah gives and applies to the believer, in whose heart is the light of Allah, refers to the natural disposition with which Allah created him. That disposition is likened to the pure oil; it is pure and is receptive to divine teaching and prescribed actions. When knowledge and faith reach his heart, that light will begin to shine in his heart, like the fire in the wick of the lamp. This refers to the heart that is pure and free of bad intentions and misunderstandings of the divine text. If faith reaches that heart, it will be illuminated greatly, because it is pure and free of contamination, like the purity of the shining glass. Thus in that heart are combined the light of sound natural inclinations, the light of faith, the light of knowledge and the purity of proper understanding of faith: light upon light.

Because this comes from the light of Allah (ﷻ), and not everyone is fit to receive it, Allah says:

﴿Allah guides to His light whomever He will﴾ who He knows is pure of heart, so faith will grow in his heart and it will benefit him and have an impact on him.

﴿Allah sets forth comparisons for people﴾ so that they may understand them, out of kindness towards them, and so that the truth may become clear and distinct from falsehood. Comparisons make the intended meanings clear when compared to something physical, so that people may learn those meanings and understand them clearly.

﴿and Allah has knowledge of all things﴾ – His knowledge encompasses all things, so you should realise that when He sets forth comparisons, that is done by One Who knows the reality and details of all things, and that is in the interests of people, so they should strive to ponder and understand them, not turn away and oppose them, for He knows and you do not know.

Because the places where the means of finding the light of faith and the Qur'an are most available are the mosques, Allah mentions them in the context of praise and speaking highly of them, as He says:



﴿ فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ وَيُنذِرَ فِيهَا أَسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ﴿٣٦﴾ رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٣٧﴾ لِيَجْزِيَهمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٦-٣٨)

- 24:36. [Such lamps are lit] in houses [mosques] which Allah has ordained to be built so that His name may be remembered therein. In them His name is glorified morning and afternoon,
- 24:37. By men who are not distracted by buying or selling from the remembrance of Allah, or from establishing prayer or giving zakâh. They fear a day when hearts will quiver and eyes will stare fixedly.
- 24:38. [Their hope is] that Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds and give them yet more out of His bounty, for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whomever He will.

As Allah is worshipped ﴿in houses﴾ of great virtue, which are the dearest of places to him, namely the mosques, He ﴿has ordained﴾

that they ﴿be built so that His name may be remembered therein﴾. These two things summarise the rulings on mosques, which includes building them, constructing them, sweeping them, cleansing them of impurities and dirt, protecting them from insane people and small children who do not know how to clean themselves from impurity, and from disbelievers; mosques are also to be protected from idle talk and the raising of voices in anything other than remembrance of Allah.

﴿so that His name may be remembered therein﴾ this includes all prayers, obligatory and supererogatory, reading Qur'an, *tasbeeh* (glorifying Allah), *tahleel* (reciting the phrase *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* [there is no god but Allah]), and other kinds of dhikr, acquiring knowledge and teaching, discussing issues of religion, *i'tikâf*, and other kinds of worship that are done in the mosques. Hence maintenance of the mosques is divided into two categories: maintaining and protecting the structure, and maintaining remembrance of Allah in them by praying and doing other acts of worship. The latter is the nobler of the two categories.

Hence it is prescribed to offer the five daily prayers and Jumu'ah prayer in the mosques, and this is obligatory according to most of the scholars, or recommended according to others.

Then Allah (ﷻ) praises those who stay in the mosques to worship, as He says: ﴿In them His name is glorified﴾ sincerely ﴿morning﴾ at the beginning of the day ﴿and afternoon﴾ at the end of the day. These two times are singled out because of their high status and because it is easier at these times to turn to Allah in worship.

That includes *tasbeeh* (glorifying Allah) in prayer and otherwise. Therefore it is prescribed to recite the *adhkâr* and *awrâd*⁴² of the morning and the afternoon at those times.

⁴² *Awrâd* (*sing. wird*): Remembrance of Allah and glorifying Him in various phrases that are prescribed at different times as a voluntary act, which a Muslim commits to reciting on a daily basis, such as morning and evening.

﴿By men﴾ that is, at those times they glorify Allah, and what good men they are, for they are not those who give precedence to worldly pleasures or trade, and the distractions of business.

﴿who are not distracted by buying or selling﴾ – this includes any type of earnings through exchange. These men, even if they do engage in trade, buying and selling – and there is nothing wrong with that – they are not distracted by that and they do not give it precedence over ﴿the remembrance of Allah, or from establishing prayer or giving zakâh﴾. Rather they make obedience and worship of Allah their ultimate desire and goal, and whatever gets in the way of that, they reject it.

Because forsaking worldly matters is very hard for most people, and love of earning by means of various kinds of trade is dear to them, and giving it up is very hard for most of them, and it may not come naturally to them to give precedence to the rights of Allah over that, He mentions that which will motivate them to do it by means of encouragement and warnings:

﴿They fear a day when hearts will quiver and eyes will stare fixedly﴾ due to severe terror and emotional and physical turmoil. Hence they fear that day, so it becomes easy for them to do righteous deeds and give up that which distracts them from such deeds.

﴿[Their hope is] that Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds﴾ what is meant by the best of their deeds is their righteous good deeds, because they are the best of all that they do, as they do both permissible deeds and others. The reward will only be for the good deeds. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And Allah will absolve them of the worst of their deeds, and He will surely grant them their reward according to the best of their deeds.﴾

(az-Zumar 39: 35)

﴿and give them yet more out of His bounty﴾ – He will give them much more than the reward that is due for their deeds

﴿for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whomever He will﴾; indeed He will give him a reward much greater than his

deeds deserve, and indeed much more than he ever hoped for. He will give him without counting or measuring. This is indicative of His great abundance.



﴿ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَلُهُمْ كَمَرَلٍ بِقِيَعِهِ يَتَحَسَّبُ الظَّمْثَانُ مَاءً حَقًّا إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ فَوْقَهُ حِسَابُهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّي يَفْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظَلَمْتُ بَعْضَهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكِدْ يَرَهَا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِن نُّورٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة

النور: ٣٩-٤٠)

24:39. As for the disbelievers, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert plain. The thirsty man thinks it is water until, when he reaches it, he finds it to be nothing. But he finds [the punishment of] Allah waiting, thus Allah will requite him in full, for Allah is swift in reckoning.

24:40. Or [their deeds are] like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed by waves, above which are other waves, above which are clouds; layers of darkness, one above another. If a man stretches out his hand [in this darkness], he can hardly see it. The one to whom Allah gives no light will have no light at all.

These are two likenesses that Allah gives of the deeds of the disbelievers in terms of their falseness and how they will be of no avail to them, and how the doers will feel regret.

﴿As for the disbelievers﴾, who disbelieved in their Lord and rejected His Messengers

﴿their deeds are like a mirage in a desert plain﴾ that is, barren flat land in which there are no trees or plants.

«The thirsty man» whose thirst is so intense that he imagines what others do not imagine
 «thinks it is water» because of his thirst, but this is a false perception; so he heads towards it to relieve his thirst.
 «until, when he reaches it, he finds it to be nothing» then he regrets it greatly and that only exacerbates his thirst, because his hopes have been dashed.

Thus the deeds of the disbelievers are like a mirage; they are seen, and the ignorant person who has no knowledge of things thinks that they are beneficial deeds, but he is deceived by their outward appearance, and he thinks that they also serve his own whims and desires. He also needs them and is in fact desperate for them, just as the thirsty man needs water, but when he comes to his deeds on the day of requital, he will find them lost and he will not find anything. But in fact they are not lost; rather he will find «[the punishment of] Allah waiting, thus Allah will requite him in full». For nothing is hidden from Him, not even the smallest of deeds; nothing small or great will be missing.

«for Allah is swift in reckoning», so the ignorant should not think that this promise is slow in coming, for it will inevitably come. Allah likens it to a mirage in the desert plain, a place in which there are no trees or plants. This is the likeness of the hearts, in which there is no goodness and no righteousness by means of which they may be purified or blessed. That is because of the impediment, which is disbelief.

The second likeness of the invalidity of the disbelievers' good deeds is «the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed by waves, above which are other waves, above which are clouds». This refers to the darkness of the vast deep ocean, above which is the darkness of other layers of waves, and above that is the darkness of huge clouds, then above that is the darkness of the dark night. So this darkness is very intense, such that anyone in that situation, if

he «stretches out his hand [in this darkness], he can hardly see it», even though it is so close to him, so how about anything else? This is how the disbelievers are: layers of darkness have accumulated in their hearts: inherent darkness in which there is nothing good, above which is the darkness of disbelief; above that is the darkness of ignorance, and above that is darkness of the deeds which result from that which is mentioned above. Thus they remain confused in the darkness, wandering blindly in their confusion, turning away from the straight path and stumbling along the paths of misguidance. That is because Allah (ﷻ) has forsaken them and has not given them any of His light.

«The one to whom Allah gives no light will have no light at all», because he is a wrongdoer and ignorant, and there is nothing in his heart of goodness and light except what its Lord bestows upon it.

It may be that these two likenesses refer to the deeds of all of the disbelievers, and each is applicable to all of them, so two likenesses are given in order to describe the situation from different angles. Or it may be that each likeness refers to a particular group: the first refers to the leaders and the second refers to the followers. And Allah knows best.



﴿الَّذِينَ يَسْتَعِينُونَ﴾ وَاللَّهُ عَالِمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

(سورة النور: ٤١-٤٢) ﴿٤٢﴾

24:41. Do you not see that all who are in the heavens and on earth glorify Allah, as do the birds with wings outspread? Each knows its [own way] of praying and glorifying Him. And Allah has full knowledge of all that they do.

24:42. To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and unto Him is the return [of all].

Here Allah points out to His slaves His greatness, His perfect power and authority, and the need of all created things for Him to take care of them and their need to worship Him:

﴿Do you not see that all who are in the heavens and on earth﴾ both animate beings and inanimate objects

﴿glorify Allah, as do the birds with wings outspread﴾ that is, with their wings outspread in the air.

﴿Each﴾ of these created things ﴿knows its [own way] of praying and glorifying Him﴾ that is, each has its own way of prayer and worship, according to each situation, as is appropriate for it. Allah has inspired it to pray and glorify Him, either through the Messengers, as in the case of the jinn, humans and angels, or by inspiring it directly, as in the case of all other created things. This interpretation is more likely to be correct, based on the fact that Allah says: ﴿And Allah has full knowledge of all that they do﴾ that is, He knows all their deeds, and nothing of that is hidden from Him, and He will requite them for that. Based on that, this verse combines mention of His knowledge of the deeds of creatures for whom there is no requital, which they do on the basis of inspiration from Him, with mention of His knowledge of the deeds of those for whom there is requital, on the basis of those deeds. This verse is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The seven heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, glorify Him. There is not a thing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification. Verily, He is Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.﴾ (al-Isrā' 17: 44)

Having highlighted their servitude and need for Him – in the sense of worship and affirming His oneness, Allah now mentions their need for His sovereignty, care and control of their affairs, as He says:

﴿To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth﴾, for He is the Creator and provider, and He controls them through His

religious and universal decree in this realm, and what He will decree of requital in the hereafter. This is based on the fact that He says: ﴿and unto Him is the return [of all]﴾ that is, the ultimate return of all creatures is to Him, and He will requite them for their deeds.



﴿الَّذِينَ تَرَىٰ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُرْسِجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ يُجْعَلُهُمْ رُكَّامًا فَتَرَىٰ الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ، وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَقْلِبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٤٣-٤٤)

- 24:43. Do you not see that Allah drives along the clouds, then gathers them together, then piles them into heaps? Then you see the rain coming forth from their midst. He sends down hail from mountains [of clouds] in the sky; He strikes with it whomever He will and He averts it from whomever He will. The brightness of their lightning almost takes away the sight.
- 24:44. Allah alternates the night and the day. Verily in this there is a lesson for those who have insight.

That is, have you not seen with your own eyes the greatness of Allah's might, and how He ﴿drives along the clouds﴾ in scattered pieces, ﴿then piles them into heaps﴾, gathering the pieces together and piling them up like mountains.

﴿Then you see the rain﴾ coming out of the clouds in scattered crops, to bring about benefit without harm. Then the streams and rivers are filled, and water flows through the wadis, bringing forth every type of beautiful plants.

Sometimes Allah sends down from those clouds hail that destroys whatever it strikes, ﴿He strikes with it whomever He will and He

averts it from whomever He will» according to His decree and wisdom, for which He is to be praised.

«The brightness of their lightning» that is, the lightning that emanates from the cloud, because it is so bright, «almost takes away the sight». Is not the One Who creates the clouds and drives them towards His needy slaves, and sends down rain from them in such a way that it brings benefits and does not cause harm, perfect in might, His will is always done, and He is abundant in mercy?

«Allah alternates the night and the day» from hot to cold and from cold to hot, from night to day and from day to night; He causes the days to alternate among His slaves.

«Verily in this there is a lesson for those who have insight» that is, those who have reason with which to understand what they need to understand. Just as one sees physical things with one's eyes, the one who has insight looks at creation, reflects upon it and learns from it the divine wisdom behind its creation, whereas the one who is ignorant looks at it in a heedless manner, just as animals look at it.



﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٥﴾﴾ (سورة النور:

(٤٥)

24:45. Allah has created every living creature from water. Some of them move on their bellies, some walk on two legs and some walk on four. Allah creates whatever He wills; verily Allah has power over all things.

Here Allah draws the attention of His slaves to what they see, for He has created all creatures that are on the face of the earth

﴿from water﴾ that is, the substance of all of that is water, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...And We have made from water every living thing...﴾ (*al-Anbiyā'* 21: 30)

The substance of animals that procreate is the water of the *nutfah* (drop of semen), when the male fecundates the female. With regard to animals that lay eggs in the ground, they only procreate by means of dampness, such as insects; there are none that procreate without water.

The substance is the same, but the nature of each creature is different in many ways:

﴿Some of them move on their bellies﴾ like snakes and the like
 ﴿some walk on two legs﴾ like humans and many birds
 ﴿and some walk on four﴾ like livestock animals, and so on.

These differences in shape – despite having the same origin – indicates that Allah is able to do all that He wills. Hence He says:

﴿Allah creates whatever He wills﴾ of creatures, with the characteristics that He wants

﴿verily Allah has power over all things﴾. As He sent down rain upon the earth, it is one fecundation and the mother – namely the earth – is one, but the offspring (plants and trees) vary greatly in types and characteristics.

﴿And on earth there are adjoining [yet different] tracts of land, and gardens of grapevines, grains and date palms, growing in clusters from one root or standing alone. They are irrigated with the same water, yet We cause some of them to excel others in taste. Surely in that there are signs for people of understanding.﴾ (*ar-Ra'd* 13: 4)



﴿لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُبِينَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾ (سورة

24:46. Verily We have sent down to you revelations making things clear, and Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight.

That is, We had mercy on Our slaves, and We sent down to them clear signs that point to the teachings of Islam, praiseworthy manners and attitude, endowed with all that leads to guidance. Thus the issues become clear and guidance becomes distinct from misguidance. So there is no longer any specious argument to cling to and no reason for the slightest confusion for the one who sincerely seeks the truth, because it has been sent down from One Whose knowledge is perfect, Whose mercy is perfect and Whose explanation is perfect, so no one can explain things any more clearly than He.

﴿...and so that [after 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-Anfāl* 8: 42)

﴿and Allah guides whom He will﴾ of those who are destined for paradise

﴿to a path that is straight﴾ that is, a path that is clear and straightforward, and that leads to Him and to His paradise; it can be reached through knowledge of the truth, giving it precedence and acting upon it.

Allah makes His revelations clear to everyone, but He singles out for His guidance whomever He will. This is His grace and bounty, and by His generosity. That is because He is just and He did not want to leave any excuse for anyone. Allah knows best who is deserving of His generosity.



﴿وَيَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ اطعنا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ﴾

وَلَا يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْمَقِيُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَفِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَوْ آذَانُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ
يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولَهُ بَلْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ (سورة النور: ٤٧-٥٠)

- 24:47. They [the hypocrites] say: We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey. But after that, some of them turn away. Such are not [truly] believers.
- 24:48. When they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he may judge between them, some of them turn away in aversion.
- 24:49. But if the right is on their side, they come to him willingly.
- 24:50. Is it that there is a disease in their hearts? Or are they full of doubt? Or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger might deal unjustly with them? Nay, it is they who are the wrongdoers.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the situation of the wrongdoers, those in whose hearts is a disease, weakness of faith, hypocrisy, doubt or lack of knowledge. They speak words and make a show of commitment to faith and obedience to Allah, but then they do not act in accordance with what they say. Some of them turn away significantly from obedience, based on the fact that Allah says here: «some of them turn away». The one who turns away may have the intention of coming back to that from which he turned away, but in this case what is referred to is the one who turns away and does not turn back at all, and does not look at that from which he is turning away. You will find that this is applicable to many of those who claim to believe in Allah and be obedient to Him, but they are weak in faith; you will find that they do not do many acts of worship, especially those that are hard for many people, such as giving zakâh, spending in ways that are obligatory or recommended, jihad in Allah's cause, and so on.

«When they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he may judge between them» that is, if an issue arises between them and someone else where a judgement is required, and they are called to the judgement of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ),

﴿some of them turn away in aversion﴾ seeking the rulings of the time of ignorance, and preferring the rulings of man-made laws over the rulings of Sharia, because they know that they are in the wrong and that Sharia only judges on the basis of what really is the case.

﴿But if the right is on their side, they come to him﴾ that is, they come to the ruling of Sharia

﴿willingly﴾ but that is not because it is the ruling of Sharia; rather that is because it coincides with their whims and desires. So they are not doing anything praiseworthy in this case, even if they come willingly, because the one who is a slave of Allah in a true sense is the one who follows the truth whether he likes it or not, whether it suits him or not. As for the one who follows Sharia when it coincides with his whims and desires and rejects it when it does not, and gives precedence to his whims and desires over Sharia, he is not a slave of Allah in a true sense.

Allah says, criticising them for turning away from the ruling of Sharia:

﴿Is it that there is a disease in their hearts﴾ that undermines the healthy state of the heart and removes common sense, so that he becomes like a sick person who turns away from that which will benefit him and turns towards that which will harm him?

﴿Or are they full of doubt﴾ that has made them anxious about the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), so that they accused him of not judging in accordance with the truth?

﴿Or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger might deal unjustly with them?﴾ That is, are they afraid that an unfair and unjust ruling will be passed against them? Rather that is how they are, ﴿Nay, it is they who are the wrongdoers﴾. As for the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), it is based on the utmost justice and is in accordance with wisdom.

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

These verses indicate that faith is not just words, unless those words are accompanied by action. Therefore the one who turns away from obedience has no faith.

It is obligatory to submit to the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) in all cases, and if a person does not submit to that ruling, this is indicative of a disease in his heart and weakness in his faith. It is forbidden to think negatively of the rulings of Sharia or to think that they are contrary to justice and wisdom.

Having described the condition of those who turn away from the rulings of Sharia, Allah now describes the condition of the praiseworthy believers:



﴿إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشِ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٥١-٥٢)

- 24:51. The only response of the believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he may judge between them, is to say: We hear and we obey. It is they who will be the successful ones.
- 24:52. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and remains mindful of Him – it is they who will be the triumphant ones.

«The only response of the believers» that is, the true believers whose deeds confirm their faith, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) so that he may judge between them, whether that is in accordance with their whims and desires or otherwise,

«is to say: We hear and we obey» that is, we hear the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), we respond to that to which he called us, and we obey him completely, without any reservation.

«It is they who will be the successful ones» it is only they who will be successful, because success means attaining what is sought and being saved from what one fears, and no one will succeed except the one who refers to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) for judgement, and obeys Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

Having mentioned the virtue of obedience with regard to the rulings in particular, Allah now mentions the virtue of obedience in general terms, in all situations:

«Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger» by believing in what they say and complying with their commands, «and fears Allah» that is, fear accompanied by knowledge, so he refrains from what is forbidden to him and restrains himself from following whims and desires. Hence Allah says, «and remains mindful of Him» by refraining from that which is prohibited, because being mindful of Allah (taqwā) – when it is mentioned in general terms – includes doing what is enjoined and refraining from what is forbidden. When this is mentioned alongside righteousness or obedience – as in this case – it is interpreted as referring to warding off the punishment of Allah by refraining from disobeying Him.

«it is they» namely those who combine obedience to Allah, obedience to His Messenger (ﷺ), fear of Allah and mindfulness of Him

«who will be the triumphant ones» as they will be saved from the punishment, because they avoided the causes that lead to that, and they will attain reward, because they did that which leads to it. So triumph is theirs alone. As for those who were not like that, they will miss out on triumph, according to what they failed to attain of these praiseworthy characteristics.

This verse also refers to the duty that is owed to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), namely obedience that stems from faith. It also mentions a duty that is owed exclusively to Allah, which is fear of Him and mindfulness of Him. There remains a third duty, that is owed exclusively to the Messenger (ﷺ), which is respect and veneration. These three duties are also mentioned together in Soorat al-Fath, where Allah says:

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



﴿وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن أُمِرْتُمْ لَيَخْرُجُنَّ قُلْ لَا تُفْسِمُوا طَاعَةَ مَعْرُوفَةٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِن تُطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٥٤﴾﴾

(سورة النور: ٥٣-٥٤)

- 24:53. They [the hypocrites] swear their most solemn oaths by Allah that, if you give the command, they will surely march forth. Say [O Muhammad]: Do not swear; [the real nature of your so-called] obedience is known. Verily Allah is well aware of all that you do.
- 24:54. Say [O Muhammad]: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty entrusted to him and you are responsible for the duty entrusted to you. If you obey him, you will be rightly guided. The duty of the Messenger is only to convey the message in the clearest way.

Here Allah tells us about the condition of those who stayed behind and did not go out for jihad with the Messenger (ﷺ); these were the

hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease and weakness of faith. They swore by Allah that «if you give the command» in the future, «they will surely march forth». But Allah said, refuting what they said:

«Say [O Muhammad]: Do not swear» that is, we do not need your oaths or excuses, for Allah has told us about you and the real nature of your obedience is known and is not hidden from us. We are aware of your reluctance and slowness with no excuse, so your apology and oath are pointless. Rather the one who may need to give an excuse and swear an oath is the one whose case is unclear. That is the one whose excuse may benefit him and prove his innocence, but in your case that is not acceptable at all. Rather what is expected and feared in your case is the punishment and vengeance of Allah. Therefore He warned them by saying: «Verily Allah is well aware of all that you do». And He will requite them for that in full.

As for the Messenger (ﷺ), his role is to enjoin them to do what is right and to forbid them to do what is wrong. Hence Allah says:

«Say [O Muhammad]: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger» then if they comply, that is because they are fortunate and blessed, «But if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty entrusted to him» of conveying the message, and he has fulfilled that duty. «You are responsible for the duty entrusted to you» of obedience. But now the situation has become quite clear, and it is obvious that you are misguided and are deserving of punishment. «If you obey him, you will be rightly guided» to the straight path in word and deed, but there is no way for you to be guided except through obedience; without that it is not possible for you to be guided, and in fact it is impossible.

«The duty of the Messenger is only to convey the message in the clearest way» that is, to convey it in the clearest manner so that there will be no doubt or confusion left for anyone. And he did indeed do that; he conveyed the message clearly. But the one who will bring

you to account and requite you for your deeds is Allah (ﷻ); the Messenger (ﷺ) has no control over that and he has done what was required of him.



﴿ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا
 اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن
 بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
 هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ (سورة النور: ٥٥)

- 24:55. Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors [to power] in the land, as He made those before them successors; that He will surely establish for them their religion that He has chosen for them; and that He will surely cause their [present] state of fear to be replaced by peace and security. [That is because] they worship Me alone and do not associate anything with Me. If any are ungrateful after this, it is they who are the evildoers.

This is one of the true promises of Allah, the interpretation and fulfilment of which was witnessed. He promised to those of this Ummah who believed and did righteous deeds that He would make them successors to power in the land, and they would become people of authority, in charge of its affairs, and that He would establish for them their religion that He had chosen for them, namely the religion of Islam which is superior to all other religions, which He chose for this Ummah because of its virtue and high status, and because He blessed it by enabling them to establish the religion and to implement its teachings and laws, both visible and hidden, with regard to

themselves and others, because the followers of all other religions, and all the disbelievers, are to be defeated and humiliated; and He promised to replace their fear – because of which a Muslim could not practise his religion openly without suffering persecution from many of the disbelievers, as the number of Muslims was very few in comparison to others, and all the people of earth at that time had ganged up on them and were scheming against them – with peace and security.

So Allah promised these things to them at the time when this verse was revealed, when they had not yet witnessed being made successors in the land and being given authority, or being able to establish the Islamic religion in complete security, so that they could worship Allah, not ascribing any partner to Him, without fearing anybody but Allah. The early generations of this Ummah had such strong faith and did such righteous deeds that they surpassed others, so Allah gave them power in the land and control over people, and they conquered the east and the west of the earth, and they achieved complete security and power. This is one of the dazzling and wondrous signs of Allah, that will continue until the onset of the Hour. Every time they establish faith and do righteous deeds, they will inevitably find what Allah promised them. The disbelievers and hypocrites only gain power over them and sometimes get the upper hand because of the shortcomings of the Muslims in terms of faith and righteous deeds.

﴿If any are ungrateful after this﴾ that is, after you have been given full power and authority, O Muslims

﴿it is they who are the evildoers﴾ who have drifted away from obedience to Allah and have become corrupt, so they are no longer righteous people and are no longer qualified for anything good, because if a person gives up faith when the religion is prevailing and its enemies have been defeated, and there are no impediments to faith, this is indicative of his corrupt intentions and evil nature, because he has no reason to abandon faith except that.

This verse indicates that Allah gave power to those who came before us and made them successors to power in the land, as Moosâ said to his people:

﴿...It may well be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the land, so that He may see how you will do.﴾
(*al-A'raf* 7: 129)

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿But it was Our will to bestow favour upon those who were oppressed in the land, to make them leaders and cause them to inherit [the land], and to establish them in the land...﴾ (*al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 5-6)



﴿وَأَقِمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَيْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٥٦-٥٧)

(٥٧-٥٦)

24:56. Establish prayer, give zakâh and obey the Messenger, so that you may be shown mercy.

24:57. Do not think that those who disbelieve can escape [Allah's punishment] on earth. Their abode will be the fire, a hapless journey's end.

Here Allah enjoins establishing prayer with all of its essential parts, conditions and etiquette, both outwardly and inwardly, and the giving of zakâh from the wealth that Allah has entrusted to His slaves and given to them, by giving it to the poor and others whom Allah has designated as recipients of zakâh. These two are the greatest and most virtuous acts of worship, in which are combined the fulfilment of duties towards Allah and towards His creation, in which the individual shows devotion to Allah and shows kindness to people. That is followed by a general command:

﴿and obey the Messenger﴾, by complying with what he enjoins and refraining from what he forbids.

﴿Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...﴾ (an-Nisá' 4: 80)

﴿so that﴾, if you do this, ﴿you may be shown mercy﴾. Whoever seeks mercy, this is the way to attain it. Whoever hopes to find mercy without establishing prayer, giving zakâh and obeying the Messenger (ﷺ) is indulging in wishful thinking and is lying; his nafs has made him feel content with wishful thinking.

﴿Do not think that those who disbelieve can escape [Allah's punishment] on earth﴾ that is, do not be deceived by what they are given in the life of this world of ease and pleasure. Although Allah gives them respite, He does not forget about them.

﴿We will allow them to enjoy life for a little while, then We will drive them to a harsh punishment.﴾ (Luqmân 31: 24)

Hence Allah says here: ﴿Their abode will be the fire, a hapless journey's end﴾ that is, what a wretched destination is the destination of the disbelievers, for it is a destination of evil, loss and eternal punishment.



﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِيَسْتَفْزِنَكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهْرِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ثَلَاثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَ هُنَّ طَوَّفُوتٍ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ وَأَلَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَفْزِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَفْزَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ ءَ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٥٨-٥٩)

24:58. O you who believe, let any slaves you may own, and those among you who have not yet reached puberty, ask permission [to enter] at three times: before *fajr* prayer, when you have undressed [in order to rest] at midday and after '*ishâ*' prayer; these are three times of privacy for you. Beyond that there is no blame on either you or them in moving about freely, attending to one another. Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

24:59. And when the children among you reach puberty, let them also ask permission [to enter, at all times], as their elders do. Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

Here Allah instructs the believers that their slaves and those among them who have not yet reached puberty should ask permission to enter. He mentions the wisdom behind that, and states that there are three times of privacy when permission to enter must be sought: the time when they go to sleep at night after '*ishâ*' prayer; when they wake up before *fajr* prayer; and during the mid-day siesta. No mention is made of the state of dress in the case of the time after '*ishâ*' and the time before *fajr*, because usually the sleeper at night wears something other than his usual day-time garments. However, with regard to sleeping during the day, because it is usually brief, the individual may sleep in his ordinary, day-time clothes, or he may change his clothes or remove some of his clothes, as mentioned here: «when you have undressed [in order to rest] at midday», which refers to the siesta in the middle of the day; if that is the case, then permission to enter must be sought.

At these three times, slaves and small children, like all others, should not be allowed to enter except with permission. Concerning all other times apart from these three, Allah says:

«Beyond that there is no blame on either you or them» that is, they are not like others, because they are always needed, so it would be too

difficult for them to have to ask permission every single time. Hence Allah says: ﴿there is no blame on either you or them in moving about freely, attending to one another﴾ that is, coming and going among you, doing their work and attending to your needs.

﴿Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations﴾, accompanied by an explanation of His wisdom, so as to increase you in conviction and compliance, and so that you may appreciate the mercy and wisdom of the Lawgiver. Hence He says

﴿for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾. His knowledge encompasses all that must exist, or that cannot possibly exist, or that may possibly exist, and the wisdom on the basis of which everything is put in the right place. Hence He has given every creature the shape and structure that suits its nature, and He issues each ruling in a manner that suits the wisdom behind it, including these rulings which He explains and highlights their beauty.

﴿And when the children among you reach puberty﴾ by the emission of *maniy* (semen) either when awake or asleep, ﴿let them also ask permission [to enter, at all times], as their elders do﴾. Their elders are those whom Allah mentions in a previous verse: ﴿O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted their occupants; that is better for you, so that you may pay heed﴾ (24: 27).

﴿Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations﴾ and He clarifies them, explaining their rulings in detail ﴿for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾.

In these two verses we learn many things, including the following:

- Masters of slaves and guardians of small children are instructed to teach their slaves and the children under their guardianship Islamic knowledge and etiquette, because Allah addresses them here by saying: ﴿O you who believe, let any slaves you may own, and those among you who have not yet reached puberty...﴾.

That can only be done by teaching them and disciplining them, hence He says: ﴿Beyond that there is no blame on either you or them﴾.

- It is enjoined to respect that which is private and take precautionary measures to attain that in all ways. With regard to any place or location in which a person's 'awrah may be seen, it is prohibited to bathe, wash one's private parts and so on in that place.
- It is permissible to uncover the 'awrah when needed, such as when going to sleep, when urinating and defecating, and so on.
- The Muslims used to take a nap or siesta during the day, as they used to sleep at night, because Allah addressed them with reference to the habits and customs that existed at the time of revelation.
- In the case of a small child who has not yet reached the age of puberty, it is not permissible to let him see the 'awrah of any other person, just as it is not permissible to let his 'awrah be seen, because Allah only enjoined that they should seek permission to enter because of something that is not permissible.
- It is also not permissible for a slave to see the 'awrah of his master, or for the master to see the 'awrah of his slave, as we mentioned in the case of the small child.
- Preachers, teachers and so on who speak about issues of knowledge should accompany that with mention of the reason and wisdom behind it, and the basis for it. They should not just tell people about rulings with evidence, without explaining why. That is because when Allah stated the ruling under discussion here, He gave reasons for it by saying: ﴿these are three times of privacy for you﴾.
- Small children and slaves are included in these verses as their guardians and masters are also included, because Allah says: ﴿Beyond that there is no blame on either you or them﴾.

- The saliva of a minor is *tāhir* (pure), even after the occurrence of impurities such as vomiting, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿moving about freely﴾. Furthermore, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, when he was asked about cats:
«They are not *najis* (impure); rather they are among those who move about freely among you.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)
- It is permissible for a person to tell the children under his care to do tasks for him, within reason, so long as it is not too difficult for the child, because Allah says: ﴿moving about freely﴾.
- The rulings discussed in the verse all have to do with children below the age of puberty. After they reach the age of puberty, they can only enter after asking permission.
- The sign of reaching puberty is ejaculation; all the Islamic rulings that are connected to reaching puberty come into effect once ejaculation has occurred. This is a matter concerning which there is scholarly consensus; the differences of opinion have to do with whether age or the appearance of pubic hair count as signs of puberty. And Allah knows best.



﴿وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾
(سورة النور: ٦٠)

- 24:60. With regard to elderly women who have no interest in marriage, there is no blame on them if they put aside their outer garments, without aiming to flaunt their adornments. But if they refrain from doing so, that is better for them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Elderly women are those who no longer hope for marriage and no longer feel desire.

﴿who have no interest in marriage﴾ that is, they do not want to get married, and they are not sought for marriage, because they have grown old and are no longer desirable, or they have lost their looks. They no longer feel desire and they are no longer desirable.

﴿there is no blame﴾ or sin ﴿on them if they put aside their outer garments﴾ such as the face veil and the like, concerning which Allah says to women: ﴿And let them draw [part of] their headcovers over their chests﴾ (24: 31).

In the case of these women, it is permissible for them to uncover their faces, because there is no fear of such a woman causing temptation to others or being tempted herself. As it is stated that there is no blame on them if they put aside their outer garments, one may think that it is permissible for them to adorn themselves; therefore in order to avoid this misunderstanding, Allah says: ﴿without aiming to flaunt their adornments﴾ that is, without showing their adornments to people, such as beautifying themselves by wearing a fancy outer garment whilst covering the face, or stamping the feet in order to make known what is hidden of adornments, because the mere presence of adornment – even if it is hidden, and even if she is not desirable and there is no possibility of being tempted by her – could cause the one who looks at her to fall into sin.

﴿But if they refrain from doing so, that is better for them﴾ refraining means seeking chastity by taking measures to achieve that, such as getting married and refraining from that which it is feared may lead to temptation.

﴿And Allah is All-Hearing﴾ and hears all voices

﴿All-Knowing﴾: He knows people's intentions and aims, so women should beware of all bad words and bad intentions, and understand that Allah will requite them for that.



﴿لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى
 أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ آبَائِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ
 بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
 عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ حَمَلَاتِكُمْ أَوْ مِمَّا مَلَكَتُمْ
 يَمَانِيَهُمْ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا جَمِيعًا أَوْ
 أَشْتَاتًا فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةً
 طَيِّبَةً كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

(سورة النور: ٦١)

24:61. There is no blame on the blind nor any blame on the lame nor any blame on the sick nor on yourselves if you eat from your own houses, or from the houses of your fathers, or from the houses of your mothers, or from the houses of your brothers, or from the houses of your sisters, or from the houses of your paternal uncles, or from the houses of your paternal aunts, or from the houses of your maternal uncles, or from the houses of your maternal aunts, or from houses of which the keys are in your possession, or the houses of your friends. There is no blame on you if you eat together or separately. But when you enter houses, greet one another with *salām*, a greeting from Allah, blessed and good. Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations, so that you may understand.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the blessings that He bestows upon His slaves, and that He has not imposed any hardship on them in religion; rather He has made it very easy:

﴿There is no blame on the blind nor any blame on the lame nor any blame on the sick﴾ that is, there is no blame on these people for not

doing duties for one of the reasons mentioned. This refers to jihad and other things that the one who is blind cannot do because he cannot see, and the one who is lame cannot do because his limbs are not sound, and the one who is sick cannot do because he is not in good health. Because of this general meaning, the words are mentioned in general terms and are not restricted, as is the case with the following phrase: «nor on yourselves» that is, there is no blame on yourselves «if you eat from your own houses» that is, the houses of your children. This is in accordance with the hadith that is proven to be sound:

«You and your wealth belong to your father.» (Recorded by Ibn Mājah; al-Albāni graded it as sound)

– another hadith says:

«The best of what you eat is what you earn yourselves, and your children are included in what you earn.» (An authentic hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

The phrase «from your own houses» does not refer to a person's own house, because that would be stating the obvious, and Allah would not state something that is so obvious; moreover, saying that there is nothing wrong with that may give the impression that there is something sinful in the case of those mentioned here, whereas in the case of a person's own house, no one would think such a thing.

«or from the houses of your fathers, or from the houses of your mothers, or from the houses of your brothers, or from the houses of your sisters, or from the houses of your paternal uncles, or from the houses of your paternal aunts, or from the houses of your maternal uncles, or from the houses of your maternal aunts» these cases are quite clear.

«or from houses of which the keys are in your possession» that is, houses which have been entrusted to you and are under your care, or houses that belong to someone who is under your guardianship, and the like. With regard to the interpretation of this phrase as referring to slaves, that is not valid, for two reasons:

Firstly: it is not said concerning a slave that one “owns his keys”; rather one would say “those whom you own” and the like, because the master owns the entire slave, not just his keys.

Secondly: the houses of slaves are no different from a man’s own house, because the slave and all that he owns belong to his master, so there is no reason to say that there is no blame in eating from your slave’s house.

﴿or the houses of your friends﴾. The statement that there is no blame on eating from these houses applies to cases where that is done without express permission. The wisdom behind it is known from the context: the custom with regard to the people mentioned here is usually to tolerate a person’s eating from them, because of close blood ties, complete authority, or close friendship. But if it is known that a person does not allow that or is stingy with regard to food, then it is not permissible to eat from his house, and blame is not lifted in that case, because of the reason mentioned above.

﴿There is no blame on you if you eat together or separately﴾ – all of that is permissible. If the members of a household eat together, or each one of them eats on his own, this verse says that there is no blame, but that does not mean that eating separately is better, because it is preferable to eat together.

﴿But when you enter houses﴾ – this includes both a person’s own house and the houses of others, whether there is anyone in the house or not. When a person enters a house, ﴿greet one another with salâm﴾.

It is prescribed to say salâm when entering houses, with no differentiation between one type of house and another, whereas with regard to asking permission, there are some differences in the rulings as stated above.

Then Allah praises this salâm, saying: ﴿a greeting from Allah, blessed and good﴾ that is, when you say salâm, by saying *as-salâmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullâhi wa barakâtuhu* (peace be upon you and

the mercy of Allah and His blessings) or *as-salāmu ‘alaynā wa ‘alā ‘ibādillāh is-ṣāliheen* (peace be upon us and upon the righteous slaves of Allah) when you enter houses, this is «a greeting from Allah». That is, He has prescribed it for you and has made it your greeting «blessed» because it implies attaining mercy, blessing, growth and increase «and good» because it is one of the good words that are beloved by Allah, for it shows kindness, love and affection to the one who is greeted.

Having explained to us these sublime rulings, Allah now says: «Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations» that point to His rulings and the wisdom behind them «so that you may understand» what He reveals to you regarding the rulings, so that you may understand them and comprehend them, and so that you may be people of reason and mature understanding, for knowing the rulings and understanding them properly increases one in wisdom and causes understanding to grow, because the meaning of these verses and the etiquette they describe are most sublime, and the reward matches the deed. Just as the individual used his reason in order to understand the revelation of his Lord and to reflect upon His revelations to which He called him, He will increase him in understanding.

This passage points to the general holistic principle that “custom and tradition make exceptions to what is stated in general, just as one statement may make specific what is stated in general.” Although in principle it is not allowed to eat the food of another person, Allah made an exception allowing one to eat from the houses of the people mentioned here, because custom and tradition allow that. With regard to issues that depend on permission from the owner of the thing, if it is known that he gave permission, either verbally or according to custom, it is permissible to go ahead and make use of it.

This indicates that the one who is taking care of a person's house and has authority concerning it, such as his wife, sister and the like, may eat from it according to what is customary, and give to the poor on a reasonable basis.

It also indicates that it is permissible to share food, whether people eat together or separately, even if that leads to some of them eating more than others.



﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ فَإِذَا أَسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأَذِنَ لِمَن شَاءَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ ۗ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا ۗ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا ۗ فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَوْمٌ بَرَجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَيَلْبِسُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾﴾

(سورة النور: ٦٢-٦٤)

- 24:62. The true believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger. When they are with him for a matter of communal concern, they do not depart until they have asked his permission. Those who ask your permission [O Muhammad] are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, so when they ask your permission to attend to some of their own affairs, then give permission to whomever you wish among them and ask Allah's forgiveness for them, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 24:63. Do not regard the summons of the Messenger to you as being like your summoning of one another. Allah surely knows those

of you who try to slip away surreptitiously. So let those who go against His command beware lest some calamity strikes them or a painful punishment befalls them.

24:64. Verily to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. He surely knows your condition [of sincere faith or hypocrisy]. On the day they return to Him, He will inform them about what they used to do. And Allah has knowledge of all things.

Here Allah instructs His believing slaves that when they are with the Messenger (ﷺ) dealing with a matter of communal concern – that is, something that requires all to be present – such as jihad, consultation and similar matters that concern all the believers, what is required is for them all to meet together and not be scattered. So the one who truly believes in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) should not leave for some reason, or go back to his family, or go to attend to some of his own affairs that would keep him away from them, except with the permission of the Messenger (ﷺ) or his representative after he is gone. Allah has made it a condition of faith that no one should leave without permission, and He praised them for doing that and for their good manners with His Messenger (ﷺ) and those in authority over them. Hence He says: ﴿Those who ask your permission [O Muhammad] are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger﴾. But should he give them permission or not? Two conditions are mentioned for giving permission to them:

- 1- That there should be some personal matter or errand that they want to attend to. As for the one who asks for permission to leave with no excuse, he should not give him permission;
- 2- He should agree to give his consent because there is a good reason to do so, and no harm should result to the one who gives permission.

Allah says: ﴿so when they ask your permission to attend to some of their own affairs, then give permission to whomever you wish

among them﴾. If he has good reason to leave and asks for permission to do so, then if there is an interest to be served by his staying and not leaving, such as if he could help by giving his opinion, or because of his courage and the like, then he should not give him permission to leave.

However, even if he asks permission to leave, and is given permission, subject to these two conditions, Allah instructs His Messenger (ﷺ) to pray for forgiveness for him, because perhaps he is falling short by seeking permission to leave. Hence Allah says: ﴿and ask Allah's forgiveness for them, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ – He will forgive their sins and have mercy on them, by allowing them to seek permission to leave even when they have an excuse for doing so.

﴿Do not regard the summons of the Messenger to you as being like your summoning of one another﴾ that is, do not make the Messenger's summoning of you and your summoning of him like your summoning of one another, because if he summons you, it is obligatory for you to respond. It is even obligatory to respond to the Messenger (ﷺ) when one is praying. There is no one whose opinion the Ummah must accept and comply with except the Messenger (ﷺ), because he is infallible and we are commanded to follow him. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿O you who believe, respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life...﴾ (al-Anfâl 8: 24)

The word translated above as ﴿summons﴾ may also mean 'call', therefore another meaning of this verse is: do not make your calling of the Messenger (ﷺ) like your calling of one another. So do not say, "O Muhammad" or "O Muhammad ibn 'Abdullâh", when you call him, as you do when calling one another. Rather, because of his honour and virtue, and because of his being distinct from others, one should say, "O Messenger of Allah" or "O Prophet of Allah".

«Allah surely knows those of you who try to slip away surreptitiously». Having praised those who believe in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), who – when they are with him for a matter of communal concern – do not leave until they have asked his permission, Allah now warns those who do not do that and who leave without asking permission, even though you (O Muslims) were unaware of their sneaking away, which is what is meant by the phrase «those of you who try to slip away surreptitiously» – that is, they hide behind something at the time when they slip away, so as to be hidden from view. Allah is aware of them and He will requite them for that in full. Therefore He warns them by saying:

«So let those who go against His command beware» that is, those who leave to attend to some of their own affairs and go against the command of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ); so how about those who do not leave to attend to some of their own affairs; rather they leave because they are simply going against Allah's command, without any affairs to attend to?

«lest some calamity» that is, something bad «strikes them or a painful punishment befalls them».

«Verily to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth» in the sense that He owns them and they are His slaves, and He controls them by His decree and His religious rulings.

«He surely knows your condition [of sincere faith or hypocrisy]» that is, His knowledge encompasses all that you do of good and evil, and He knows all your deeds, for He encompasses them with His knowledge, His pen has written it all down, and the noble scribes (the angels) are recording it.

«On the day they return to Him» that is, the Day of Resurrection «He will inform them about what they used to do» that is, He will tell them about all their deeds, small and great, exactly what they did, and He will summon their physical faculties to testify against them, and they will be treated on the basis of grace or justice.

Having mentioned that His knowledge specifically encompasses their deeds, Allah now states that His knowledge goes beyond that, as He says: ﴿And Allah has knowledge of all things﴾.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat an-Noor.

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.



25.

Soorat al-Furqân

(Makki, according to
the majority of scholars)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا﴾ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمَلِكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
فَقَدَرَهُ نَفْدِيرًا ﴿٢﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ١-٢)

25:1. Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion [between right and wrong, namely the Qur'an] to His slave, so that it may be a warning to the worlds,

25:2. He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He has never begotten a son, and has no partner in His dominion. He has created all things and determined their design and nature in accordance with a precisely accurate plan.

This is a statement of the perfect might and majesty of Allah, that He is One and unique in all aspects, and that His generosity and kindness are abundant.

«Blessed be He» that is, glorified be He, for His attributes are most perfect and His goodness is abundant. One of His greatest favours and blessings is that He has sent down this Qur'an to differentiate between lawful and prohibited, guidance and misguidance, those who are destined for paradise and those who are destined for hell.

«to His slave» namely Muhammad (ﷺ), who reached the highest level of servitude and surpassed all the Messengers

«so that it may be» – this refers to the sending down of the criterion to His slave.

«a warning to the worlds», warning them of the might and vengeance of Allah and explaining to them how to attain His pleasure and avoid His wrath, so that whoever accepts His warning and acts accordingly will be among those who are saved in this world and the hereafter, those who will attain eternal happiness and everlasting glory. Can there be anything greater than this blessing and this grace and kindness? Blessed be the One Whose kindness and blessings include this.

«He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth» that is, He alone controls them and all who are in them of His slaves submit to His greatness, humble themselves before His Lordship and are in need of His mercy; «He has never begotten a son, and has no partner in His dominion».

How could He have a son or a partner when He is the Sovereign and all others are slaves, He is the Subduer and all others are subdued, He is Self-Sufficient in all aspects, and all created beings are inherently in need of Him in all aspects?

How could He have a partner in dominion, when the forelocks of all people are in His Hand, so they cannot move or halt, or do anything except by His leave? Exalted be Allah far above that; the one who says such a thing has not given due recognition to Him. Hence He says:

«He has created all things» that is, everything that the upper and lower realms contain, including animate beings, plants and inanimate things.

﴿and determined their design and nature in accordance with a precisely accurate plan﴾ that is, He has given each created thing that which befits it and suits it of attributes, in accordance with what His wisdom dictates, so that no sound reason could imagine any created thing to be any different in its shape and image from what we see now. In fact, there is no location for any part or faculty of any created thing that is better suited to it than where it is now. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who created and fashioned in due proportion.﴾ (al-A'la 87: 1-2)

– and:

﴿...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].﴾ (Tā Hā 20: 50)

Having highlighted His perfection in greatness, and His abundant kindness, this dictates that it is He alone Who should be loved, worshipped and venerated, the only One to Whom we should be devoted, with no partner or associate. Therefore it is appropriate to describe as false the worship of anything other than Him.



﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ إِهْلَهِةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٣)

- 25:3. They have taken other gods besides Him that can create nothing but are themselves created; they have no power either to harm or benefit themselves, and they have no power to cause death, give life or resurrect.

That is, one of the strangest things, which is most indicative of their foolishness and lack of reason, and indeed is most indicative

of their wrongdoing and audacity towards their Lord, is the fact that they have taken as gods these things that are completely helpless, that are unable to create anything and are themselves created; in fact they made some of them with their own hands.

﴿they have no power either to harm or benefit themselves﴾ that is, either to a small extent or a great extent.

﴿and they have no power to cause death, give life or resurrect﴾ that is, to raise up after death. One of the greatest conclusions of rational thinking is that these cannot be gods; this idea is corrupt and the minds of those who worship them – taking them as gods and partners to the Creator of all things, Who created them without having any partner in that, the One in Whose Hand is the power to bring benefit and cause harm, the One Who gives life and causes death – are corrupt. He will resurrect those who are in the graves and will bring them together on the Day of Resurrection, and in the hereafter He has created two abodes for them: an abode of doom, humiliation and punishment, for those who took other gods alongside Him, and an abode of triumph, happiness and eternal bliss, for those who took Him alone as their God.

Having affirmed, with clear and definitive evidence, the soundness of His oneness and the falseness of its opposite, Allah then affirms the soundness of the message and the falseness of the views of those who opposed that message and objected to it:



﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ افْتَرْتَهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ آخِرُونَ فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا ﴿٤﴾ وَقَالُوا اسْتَطِيرُ الْأُولِينَ اكَتَبَهَا فِيهِ تُمَلَّى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٤-٦)

- 25:4. The disbelievers say: This [the Qur'an] is nothing but a lie that he has fabricated, with the help of other people. What they say is unjust and false.
- 25:5. And they say: Tales of the ancients that he has written down; they are dictated to him morning and afternoon.
- 25:6. Say: It [the Qur'an] has been sent down by Him Who knows all that is hidden in the heavens and the earth. Verily He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

That is, as for those who disbelieved in Allah, their disbelief led them to say concerning the Qur'an and the Messenger (ﷺ): This Qur'an is a lie; it was fabricated by Muhammad (ﷺ) and falsely attributed to Allah, and some other people helped him with that.

But Allah refuted their words by stating that this was arrogance on their part, and that they were uttering words of injustice and falsehood, that cannot be accepted by anyone. They were the people who knew the most about the Messenger (ﷺ) and his perfect sincerity, honesty and righteousness; they knew that neither he nor anyone else was able to bring something like the Qur'an, which is the most sublime of words, and they knew that he did not meet anyone who could help him with that. Rather what they suggested was unjust and false.

Among other things, they said concerning him: This that Muhammad (ﷺ) has brought is «Tales of the ancients that he has written down» that is, these are stories and fables of the earlier nations that they transmitted from one to another, then Muhammad (ﷺ) wrote them down as they were dictated to him.

«they are dictated to him morning and afternoon». These words of theirs contained a number of grievous accusations, including the following:

- They accused the Messenger (ﷺ), who was one of the most righteous and sincere of people, of lying and committing a gravely audacious deed.

- They said concerning this Qur'an – which is the truest, greatest and most sublime of speech – that it was a lie and a fabrication.
- This implies that they were able to produce something like it, and suggests that man, who is created and is imperfect in all aspects, could compete with the Creator Who is perfect in all aspects, with regard to one of His attributes, namely His words.
- The character of the Messenger (ﷺ) was well known, and they had the most knowledge of his character and were aware that he could not write or meet someone who would write for him, but they made claims to that effect.

Therefore Allah refuted them by saying: «Say: It [the Qur'an] has been sent down by Him Who knows all that is hidden in the heavens and the earth» that is, it has been sent down by One Whose knowledge encompasses all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, both unseen and seen, what is known and what is secret. This is like the verse in which Allah says:

«Verily, this [Qur'an] is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds; the faithful Spirit [Jibreel] has brought it down to your heart so that you may be one of the warners.» (*ash-Shu'arā'* 26: 192-194)

The argument against them here is that the One Who sent it down is the One Whose knowledge encompasses all things, so it is impossible for a created being to make up this Qur'an and say: This is from Allah, if it was not from Him, and to regard it as permissible to fight those who oppose him, and to take their wealth, and to claim that Allah told him to do that, when Allah knows all things, yet He is supporting him against his enemies and giving him control over people and their lands. No one can deny this Qur'an unless he denies the knowledge of Allah, and no group ever said such a thing, apart from the Dahri⁴³ philosophers who do not believe in the hereafter.

⁴³ Dahri: The Dahris were a type of heretical philosophers who did not believe in the hereafter; some Dahris even denied the existence of the Creator Himself.

Moreover, referring to the all-encompassing knowledge of Allah will alert them to the importance of pondering the Qur'an and encourage them to do so, for if they ponder it, they will see in it knowledge and rulings of Allah which will definitively prove that it can only be from the Knower of the unseen and the seen. Despite their denial of Allah's oneness and the message of His Prophet (ﷺ), by His grace towards them, Allah does not leave them in the depths of their disbelief and wrongdoing; rather He calls them to repent and turn to Him, and He promises them forgiveness and mercy, if they repent and turn back to Him.

﴿Verily He is Oft-Forgiving﴾ that is, His characteristic is forgiveness, to those who commit sins and bad deeds, if they take the measures that lead to forgiveness, which means giving up sin and repenting therefrom.

﴿Most Merciful﴾ towards them, for He does not hasten to punish them even when they do that which incurs the punishment, and He accepts their repentance after they have committed sin, and He erases what they did before of bad deeds, and He accepts their good deeds, and He accepts the one who returns to Him after having drifted away from Him and begins to follow the path of obedience towards Him.



﴿وَقَالُوا مَا لِي هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُورُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا ﴿٧﴾ أَوْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْهِ كِتَابٌ أَوْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا ﴿٨﴾ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩﴾ تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ قُصُورًا ﴿١٠﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا ﴿١١﴾ إِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغِيظًا وَزَفِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذَا أَلْقَا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا

هَذَا لِكُتُبُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ لَأَنذَعُوا الْيَوْمَ كُتُبُورًا وَجِدًا وَأَدْعُوا كُتُبُورًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾ (سورة

الفرقان: ٧-١٤)

- 25:7. And they say: What sort of Messenger is this, who eats food and walks about in the marketplaces? Why has an angel not been sent down to him, to be a warner with him?
- 25:8. Or why is not some treasure thrown down to him, or why does he not have a garden from which to eat? The wrongdoers say: [If you were to follow Muhammad] you would be following none but a man who is bewitched.
- 25:9. See what they liken you to! Thus they have gone astray and cannot find a way [to undermine you].
- 25:10. Blessed be He Who, if it were His will, could give you better than that: gardens through which rivers flow, and He could give you palaces.
- 25:11. Rather they deny the Hour,⁴⁴ and for those who deny the Hour, We have prepared a raging fire.
- 25:12. When it sees them from afar, they will hear its raging and roaring.
- 25:13. When they are cast into a narrow place therein, bound together in shackles, they will call out [wishing] for death.
- 25:14. [It will be said to them:] Do not call out once [wishing] for death today; rather call out many times.

This is the argument of those who rejected the Messenger (ﷺ), which they used to cast doubts on his message. They objected by asking: why has an angel not been sent, or why does an angel not

⁴⁴ The reason for their disbelief was not that Muhammad (ﷺ) was a human who ate food like them and walked about in the marketplaces; rather it was because they denied the concept of the resurrection, the hereafter and the judgement. (at-Tabari)

help him? So they said: «What sort of Messenger is this» that is, what sort of person is this who claims to be a Messenger? They said that by way of ridicule and mockery.

«who eats food» – for this is a characteristic of human beings; why was an angel not sent, who does not eat food and does not need what humans need?

«and walks about in the marketplaces» to buy and sell. This – according to their claim – was not befitting for one who was a Messenger, even though Allah says: «We did not send any Messengers before you [O Muhammad] but they ate food and walked about in the marketplaces» (25: 20).

«Why has an angel not been sent down to him» that is, why does an angel not come down with him, to help him and support him?

«to be a warner with him» because, according to their claim, he was not strong enough to deliver the message and did not have the ability to fulfil that mission.

«Or why is not some treasure» that is, wealth that is accumulated without effort «thrown down to him, or why does he not have a garden from which to eat?» For then he would have no need to walk about in the marketplaces in order to seek provision.

«The wrongdoers say» – the reason why they said that was their wrongdoing; it did not stem from doubts or confusion on their part. «[If you were to follow Muhammad] you would be following none but a man who is bewitched». They said this even though they knew that he was wise and mature in his thinking, eloquent in his speech, and free of anything for which he could be criticised.

Because what they said was so strange, Allah (ﷻ) says: «See what they liken you to!» That was because they asked why he was not an angel, free of human characteristics; or why he did not have an angel with him, because they thought that he was not able to do what he said; or why was a treasure not sent down to him, or why was he not

given a garden, so that he would have no need to walk about in the marketplaces; or they said that he was bewitched.

«Thus they have gone astray and cannot find a way [to undermine you]». They said things that were contradictory, all of which were based on ignorance, misguidance and foolishness, and none of which were sound. In fact there was not the slightest reason in any of it to cause any doubt about the message. Once anyone looks at these arguments and tries to examine them, it will become quite clear to the intelligent person that they are flawed, and there is no need to refute them. Hence Allah (ﷻ) instructed us to look at them, reflect on them, and see whether this argument would give sufficient reason to undermine one's certainty of his being the Messenger (ﷺ).

Hence Allah states that He is able to give you much good in this world, as He says: «Blessed be He Who, if it were His will, could give you better than that» that is, better than what they say. Then He explains that:

«gardens through which rivers flow, and He could give you palaces» that is, lofty and ornate palaces. His power and will do not fall short of that, but – because for Him the life of this world is something insignificant – He gives to His close friends and Messengers whatever of its conveniences His wisdom dictates, and this questioning on the part of their enemies as to why they were not given a great deal of provision is wrongdoing and audacity.

Because these arguments of theirs are known to be flawed, Allah (ﷻ) tells us that they did not say it by way of seeking the truth or looking for proofs; rather they said it by way of stubbornness and wrongdoing, rejecting the truth. They said what was in their hearts, hence Allah says:

«Rather they deny the Hour». If a person is stubborn in his disbelief and has no intention of following the truth, there is no way he can be guided and there is no benefit in arguing with him. Only

one thing will work with him, which is for the punishment to befall him. Hence Allah says:

﴿and for those who deny the Hour, We have prepared a raging fire﴾ that is, a great fire that burns intensely and roars and rages against those who are doomed to enter it.

﴿When it sees them from afar﴾ that is, before they reach it and it reaches them

﴿they will hear its raging﴾ against them ﴿and roaring﴾ which will fill them with dread and shatter their hearts. One of them will almost die in fear of it and panic, for its wrath against them stems from the wrath of its Creator, and its flames will increase because of the increase in their disbelief and evil.

﴿When they are cast into a narrow place therein, bound together in shackles﴾ that is, their punishment, when they are in the midst of it, will be a combination of the tight and narrow space and the overcrowding of inhabitants, who will be bound together in chains and shackles. When they reach that dreadful place and think that they have been detained in the worst of places,

﴿they will call out [wishing] for death﴾ that is, they will pray against themselves, calling for death, disgrace and humiliation, and they will realise that they were wrongdoers and transgressors, and that the Creator has been entirely just towards them, as He has caused them to dwell in this abode because of their deeds. But that prayer and call for help will be of no avail, and it will not save them from the punishment of Allah. Rather it will be said to them:

﴿Do not call out once [wishing] for death today; rather call out many times﴾ that is, even if you repeat what you said many, many times, it will not bring you anything but distress, grief and sorrow.

Having highlighted the requital of the wrongdoers, it is appropriate to mention the reward of the pious, those who fear Allah:



﴿قُلْ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَاءً وَمَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾ هُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خَالِدِينَ كَمَا وَعَدَ رَبِّيكَ وَعَدًّا مَسْئُولًا ﴿١٦﴾﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ١٥-١٦)

- 25:15. Say: Is that better, or the garden of eternity which has been promised to those who fear Allah? It will be theirs as a reward and final destination.
- 25:16. There they will have all that they wish for; they will abide therein forever. It is a binding promise given by your Lord, always to be prayed for.

That is, say to them – highlighting the folly of their opinion and their choice of what is harmful over what is beneficial:

﴿Say: Is that﴾ – namely what has been described to you of the punishment

﴿better, or the garden of eternity which has been promised to those who fear Allah?﴾ The provision that helps you to reach it is piety and fear of Allah; whoever fears Allah, Allah has promised this to him.

﴿It will be theirs as a reward﴾ for fearing Him

﴿and final destination﴾ that is, a place of final return, where they will settle and abide forever.

﴿There they will have all that they wish for﴾ that is, whatever they request, wish for and want, of delicious food and drink, fine clothing, beautiful women, lofty palaces, verdant gardens, fruit that is a delight to the eye and a joy to eat because of its beauty and variety, rivers that flow through the gardens of paradise – wherever they want to direct them, they will flow, rivers of water that is not stagnant, rivers of milk in the taste of which there is no change, rivers of wine, delicious to those who drink it, rivers of pure honey – delightful fragrances,

ornate dwellings, lovely voices of astounding beauty; brothers will visit one another and they will enjoy meeting with their loved ones.

Even more sublime than all of that is the joy of gazing upon the Countenance of the Most Merciful Lord, hearing His words, being close to Him, earning His pleasure, being safe from His wrath, abiding in this ever-increasing bliss for all eternity.

«It» namely reaching and entering paradise
 «is a binding promise given by your Lord, always to be prayed for» – His slaves who fear Him ask Him for it, implicitly and explicitly. Which of the two abodes mentioned is better and to be given precedence? Which of the two types of workers – those who are striving for the abode of doom or those who are striving for the abode of bliss – are more virtuous and mature in thinking, and more deserving of pride, if you understand?

As the truth has become clear and the path has been illuminated, there is no longer any excuse for the negligent to ignore the evidence. We implore You, Who has decreed that there should be people who are doomed to hell and people who are destined for paradise, to make us among those for whom You have decreed paradise, and we seek Your help, O Allah, lest we be among the doomed; we ask You to protect us from that.



﴿ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَضَلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَٰؤُلَاءِ أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ﴾ (١٧) قَالُوا سُبْحٰنَكَ مَا كَانَ يُبٰغِي لَنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ مِنْ دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ وَلٰكِنْ مَتَّعْتَهُمْ وَعِآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا بُورًا ﴿١٨﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ بِمَا نَقُولُونَ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا وَلَا نَصْرًا وَمَنْ يَظْلِمِ مِنْكُمْ نُدِقَهُ عَذَابًا كَبِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ١٧-٢٠)

- 25:17. On the day when He gathers them together with those whom they worshipped besides Allah, He will ask:⁴⁵ Did you lead these slaves of Mine astray, or did they stray from the [right] path by themselves?
- 25:18. They will say: Glory be to You! It was not proper for us to take anyone as an ally besides You [and worship him].⁴⁶ But You granted them and their fathers a life of ease until they forgot the message, for they were people devoid of good and doomed.
- 25:19. [Allah will say to the disbelievers:] They [those whom you wrongfully worshipped] have denied what you said, so you cannot avert the punishment nor defend yourselves. Whoever among you does wrong, We will cause him to taste a great punishment.
- 25:20. We did not send any Messengers before you [O Muhammad] but they ate food and walked about in the marketplaces. We have made some of you as a trial for others; will you have patience? For your Lord sees all things.

Here Allah tells us about the state of the polytheists and their so-called partners on the Day of Resurrection, when the so-called partners will disavow them and their deeds will be rendered invalid.

﴿On the day when He gathers them﴾ namely the polytheist disbelievers

⁴⁵ This question will be put to those who were wrongfully worshipped, such as the angels, 'Eesâ (ﷺ), Prophets, righteous people, 'saints', idols and so on.

⁴⁶ A question is implied here: so how could we have asked anyone else to take us as allies and worship us besides You? (ash-Shawkâni)

«together with those whom they worshipped besides Allah, He will ask» that is, Allah will address those who were worshipped, by way of rebuke to those who worshipped them:

«Did you lead these slaves of Mine astray, or did they stray from the [right] path by themselves?» That is, did you instruct them to worship you, and did you make that fair-seeming to them, or is this something that they did on their own initiative?

«They will say: Glory be to You!» That is, they will declare Him to be far above the partners that the polytheists ascribed to Him, and they will declare themselves innocent of that.

«It was not proper for us» that is, it was not appropriate and was not right for us to take anyone besides You as allies, worshipping them and calling upon them. As we need You and we need to worship You, we disavow the worship of anyone other than You, so how could we instruct anyone to worship us? This is something that cannot happen. Or, in other words: Glory be to You, it was not appropriate for us «to take anyone as an ally besides You [and worship him]». This is like what the Messiah ‘Eesâ ibn Maryam (ﷺ) will say:

«When Allah says: O ‘Eesâ son of Maryam, did you say to people: Take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah? He [‘Eesâ] will say: Glory be to You! It would not have been proper for me to say that which I had no right [to say]. If I had said it, You would surely have known it. You know all that I know, whereas I do not know what You know. Verily, You alone are the Knower of the unseen. I said nothing to them except that which You commanded me [to say]: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord...» (*al-Mâ'idah* 5: 116-117)

And Allah 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: Glory be to You! You are our Close Friend, not they. Rather they used to worship the jinn; most of them believed in them.» (*Saba'* 34: 40-41)

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

Having declared their innocence and stated that there is no way they could have called for the worship of anyone other than Allah or misguided them, they will mention the reason why the polytheists went astray. They will say:

﴿But You granted them and their fathers a life of ease﴾ and they indulged in the pleasures of this world and followed their desires ﴿until they forgot the message﴾ and were distracted by worldly pleasures and focusing on their desires, so they cared only for their worldly interests and neglected their religion.

﴿for they were people devoid of good and doomed﴾ that is, they were worthless, with nothing good in them; they were not fit for anything good and they were only fit to be doomed and lost. Thus they will mention the reason that prevented them from following true guidance, which is enjoyment of worldly pleasures which diverted them from guidance. The reason why they were not guided is the fact that there was no good in them. If the reason for guidance is not present but the impediment is present, then whatever evil and corruption you can think of, you will find in them.

When they (those who were worshipped on the basis of falsehood) disavow the polytheists, Allah will say, rebuking those who worshipped others:

﴿They [those whom you wrongfully worshipped] have denied what you said﴾, about them having instructed you to worship them, having been pleased with your deeds and having said that they would intercede for you with your Lord. They have declared those claims to be false and they have become among your greatest enemies, so you deserve the punishment.

﴿so you cannot avert the punishment﴾ for your deeds, or ransom yourselves, or take any other measures

﴿nor defend yourselves﴾ because you are helpless and have no one to support you. This is the ruling on those who were misguided and ignorant, and blindly followed others. As you can see, it is the worst ruling and the worst fate.

As for those among them who were stubborn, who knew the truth but turned away from it, Allah says concerning them:

﴿Whoever among you does wrong﴾ by rejecting the truth, wrongfully and stubbornly,

﴿We will cause him to taste a great punishment﴾ that cannot be estimated.

Then Allah says, responding to the objection of the disbelievers who said: ﴿What sort of Messenger is this, who eats food and walks about in the marketplaces?﴾ (25: 7):

﴿We did not send any Messengers before you [O Muhammad] but they ate food and walked about in the marketplaces﴾. We did not give them bodies that needed no food (21: 8), and We did not make them angels, so you have an example to follow in them.

As for wealth and poverty, these are trials that Allah decrees for a reason, as He says: ﴿We have made some of you as a trial for others﴾. The Messenger (ﷺ) is a trial for those to whom he is sent, a test to see who will obey and who will disobey, and We test the Messengers by giving them the mission of calling people. The rich man is a trial for the poor man, and the poor man is a trial for the rich man – and so on, with all types of people in this world, which is the realm of trials and tests.

The purpose of that test is to see: ﴿will you have patience?﴾ And do what you are supposed to do, in which case your Lord will reward you, or will you fail to be patient and thus deserve the punishment?

﴿For your Lord sees all things﴾ and He knows your circumstances. He selects whoever He knows is fit to convey His message and singles him out for His blessings. He knows your deeds and will requite you

for them: if they are good then the consequences will be good, and if they are bad then the consequences will be bad.



Glossary of Islamic Terms*



<i>abu</i> (or <i>abi</i>)	أبو، أبي	father (of)
<i>adhkâr</i>		<i>see dhikr</i>
<i>ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah</i>	أهل السُّنَّة والجماعة	'people of the Sunnah and the community'
<i>Allâhu akbar</i>	الله أكبر	Allah is the Greatest
angel	ملاك	A being made of light who is totally obedient to Allah and has no free will. Allah has assigned some angels specific tasks, like those who record our good and bad deeds, the Angel of Death, the guardians of hell, etc.
' <i>awrah</i>	عَوْرَة	the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view; for males it is the area between the navel and the knees, and for females it is everything except the hands and the face

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

<i>barzakh</i>	بَرَزَخ	An intermediate state between death and the Day of Resurrection; it is also said to be a 'place' where the souls of the deceased will remain until the blowing of the trumpet
Dahri	دَاهِرِي	the Dahris were a type of heretical philosophers who did not believe in the hereafter; some Dahris even denied the existence of the Creator Himself.
<i>bismillâh</i>	بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ	in the name of Allah
<i>dhikr Allâh</i>	ذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ	remembrance of Allah; specifically, remembering Allah through praising and supplicating to Him
<i>dhimmi</i>	ذِمِّي	protected or covenanted people; non-Muslims who pay <i>jizyah</i> in lieu of <i>zakât</i>
<i>fajr</i>	الْفَجْر	dawn; the obligatory prayer at that time
<i>fatwa (fatwah)</i>	فَتْوَى	religious decision or decree
<i>fiqh</i>	فِقْه	Islamic jurisprudence; understanding or interpreting Islamic law
<i>ḥadd</i>	حَدّ	specific punishments prescribed in Sharia for specific offences such as theft and fornication
Hadith (<i>Hadeeth</i>)	حَدِيث	the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law
hadith (<i>ḥadeeth</i>)	حَدِيث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers

Hajj (<i>Hajj</i>)	حَجَّ	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba in Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his or her lifetime
Haram	حَرَمَ	the sacred area surrounding and including the Kaaba in Makkah; any inviolable or holy area
haram (<i>ḥarām</i>)	حَرَامَ	forbidden according to Islamic law
<i>ḥoor al-'een</i>	الْحَوْرُ الْعَيْنِ	houris, fair women with big, beautiful eyes who are created to be spouses of the believers in paradise
Iblees	إِبْلِيسَ	another name for Satan in Arabic
<i>ifk</i>	إِفْكَ	forged statement; a lie or slander
<i>iḥrām</i>	إِحْرَامَ	the state of consecration for Hajj or 'umrah; the special clothing worn by the pilgrim in such a state
<i>in shā'Allāh</i>	إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ	God willing
' <i>ishā'</i>	عِشَاءَ	late evening; the obligatory prayer at that time
<i>i'tikāf</i>	إِعْتِكَافَ	a spiritual retreat; seclusion in the mosque solely for the purpose of worship
<i>jāhiliyah</i>	جَاهِلِيَّةَ	<i>lit.</i> 'ignorance'; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam
Jibreel	جِبْرِيلَ	the Arabic name for Gabriel (جِبْرِيلُ), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communications from Allah (اللهُ) to Prophet Muhammad (مُحَمَّدٌ)

<i>jinn</i> (plural of <i>jinni</i>)	جِنّ	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'. They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can foretell the future, near or distant, or provide people with riches or some sort of power.
<i>jizyah</i>	جِزْيَةٌ	a tax levied on the People of the Scriptures when they are under the protection of a Muslim government; it is in lieu of the alms tax paid by Muslims
<i>Jumu'ah</i>	جُمُعَةٌ	Friday; <i>also</i> , the midday congregational prayer on that day
<i>juz'</i> (pl. <i>ajzâ'</i>)	جُزْءٌ	a section of the Qur'an equal to one-thirtieth of the text
Kaaba (<i>Ka'bah</i>)	الْكَعْبَةُ	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, which Muslims face when they pray
<i>lâ ilâha illâ Allâh</i>	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ	the Islamic testimony of faith: 'there is none worthy of worship other than Allah'
<i>al-Lawh</i> <i>al-Mahfoodh</i>	اللَّوْحُ المحفوظ	the Preserved Tablet in Heaven on which Allah's words and decrees are written

<i>mahr</i>	مَهْر	obligatory marriage gift presented by the groom to the bride as a necessary stipulation of the marriage contract
<i>maḥram</i>	مَحْرَم	a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may not marry due to the close blood or marriage relationship, e.g., her father, brother, son, uncle, or father-in-law
Marwah	الْمَرْوَة	one of the two hills between which pilgrims must hurry back and forth during the rites of the Hajj and the <i>'umrah</i>
<i>musnad</i>	مُسْنَد	a compilation (made by his student) of the hadiths related by a scholar of Hadith
<i>nafs</i>	نَفْس	inner soul or self
Quraysh	قُرَيْش	the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism
<i>Ṣaḥābah</i>	صَحَابَة	Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)
<i>ṣaḥeeḥ</i>	صَحِيح	a grade of hadith: sound or authentic
<i>Ṣafā</i>	الصَّفَا	one of the two hills between which pilgrims must hurry back and forth during the rites of the Hajj and the <i>'umrah</i>
<i>salām</i>	السلام	<i>lit.</i> 'peace'; the Islamic greeting of peace
<i>shar'ī</i>	شَرْعِي	of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic
Sharia (<i>sharee'ah</i>)	شَرِيعَة	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah

Shaytân	شَيْطَان	Satan
ṣirâṭ	صِرَاط	the path leading to paradise that passes over hellfire; it is found by disbelievers and sinners to be extremely sharp and narrow
soorah or soorat	سُورَة	chapter of the Qur'an
Sunnah	سُنَّة	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
sunnah	سُنَّة	acts that are recommended but not mandatory; one who performs them is rewarded, but one who neglects them is not punished
tafseer	تَفْسِير	exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings (<i>usu.</i> of Qur'anic verses)
tahleel	تَهْلِيل	the act of saying <i>lâ ilâha illâ Allâh</i> (there is none worthy of worship other than Allah)
ṭalâq	طَّلَاق	divorce
taqwâ	التَّقْوَى	fearful awareness of Allah; being mindful of Allah; pious dedication; being careful not to transgress the bounds set by Allah
tasbeeh	تَسْبِيح	the recitation of phrases glorifying Allah; saying <i>subhân Allâh</i> (glory be to Allah)

<i>tawḥeed</i>	التوحيد	the oneness of Allah: the knowledge that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners
Ummah	أُمَّة	community or nation: <i>usu.</i> used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims
' <i>umrah</i>	عُمْرَة	a minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah
unseen	خَفِي	a term used to denote phenomena or aspects that cannot be known using ordinary human faculties
<i>zakât</i> (or <i>zakâh</i>)	زَكَاة	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth that is paid by Muslims and be distributed to others who qualify as recipients
<i>zinâ</i>	زِنَا	fornication or adultery; unlawful sexual intercourse



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